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# **The Human Person and Society**

## **Chinese Philosophical Studies, VIIa**

Edited by  
*Zhu Dasheng, Jin Xiping & George F. McLean*

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy



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# Introduction

*George F. McLean*

This volume presents the work of the second joint colloquium of the Philosophy Department of Peking University and the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. The first, held in 1987 at the University in Beijing, focused upon "Man and Nature" -- the term "man" being taken, of course, in its generic sense. This was published in 1989 under that title in Chinese by Peking University Press and in English by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. The second step of this joint collaboration took place in 1991 in Hong Kong and focused on the problematic relationship of "The Human Person and Society". This work is presented here.

The volume is structured to bring out the dynamics of the issue itself and the multiple levels of work thereupon.

- Part I concerns the nature and problematic of society. It presents the range of related philosophical theories in the history of Chinese thought; considers the present problem of violence in social life at all levels, local, national and international; and raises the issue of universal equality and personal freedom. This generates the agenda for the remainder of the volume, each part of which delves more deeply into the common theme.

- Part II looks at the sciences which are at our disposal and the dimensions of meaning to which they relate. Especially in our information age, unless they are well understood and effectively interrelated the sciences are capable not only of responding to needs, but of them-selves creating problems.

- Part III focuses this upon efforts to understand the properly social character of human beings.

- Part IV goes still deeper to the metaphysical level in order to look into the nature of reality itself and remove the obstacles to under-standing society caused by erroneous presuppositions, to take up the social problematic, and to set this in a more holistic context. Let us look at this in greater detail.

Part I begins with two chapters describing the major contrasting positions in the Chinese tradition regarding society. Chapter I by Professor Zhu Bokun of the University of Peking focuses upon the Confucianism as well as Mohism and Legalism. These stress moral norms, obedience, hierarchy and patriarchy. In contrast, Chapter II by Professor Pan Hungchao of the National University of Singapore focuses upon Daoism and its emphasis upon the individual. He relates this to the strain of individualism in Mill and in Anglo-Saxon thought generally. There is here a keen sense of tolerance, but it is based upon a perceived inability to understand other persons. This negative basis for tolerance invites more positive philosophical work on this topic in our day.

Chapter III by Professor M. Sastrapratedja of Indonesia on "Violence, Justice and Human Dignity" delves more deeply into the pathology of contemporary society. It identifies its three sources: poverty as negation of the human need for subsistence; repression as negation of the human need for growth, and alienation as negation of the human need for transcendence.

In response Chapter IV by Professor Zhen Li provides a major review of society as both benefit and limitation. He appreciates the Greek contribution to understanding how a person's social nature is rooted in his or her reason and points out, with Xun Zi, how this be-speaks today's universally felt need for equality. This is related this to the sense of social responsibility and hence to the importance of Marx's concrete approach. He concludes with the twin challenge guiding the

search for progress in all societies today: to recognize and realize both a universal equality within and between nations and the proper human dignity of each person.

In this noble but challenging task what role can philosophy play? Three roles emerge here and define the division of the succeeding parts: to reflect on the methods of the sciences as means for understanding, to search for a direct understanding of the social nature of the human person, and to look into the deeper metaphysical issues which can open the way for progress in resolving the classical social problems of human freedom and meaning.

Part II takes up the issue of the sciences. Chapter V by Professor Jin Xiping provides an overview of the types of research on the social nature of humankind. He reaches back to Aristotle in ancient Greece to underline the stress there upon individuals as they are related both biologically and as political animals. This retains its foundational importance while being complemented by the work both of Marx on the physical substructures of human life and of the phenomenologists on human consciousness.

Chapter VI by Professor Xu Junzhong of the University of Peking analyses more closely Marx's theory of collectivism. He is concerned that this notion not be reduced to a suppression of the individual and an exaltation of a central authority. To avoid this he points out the historical and dialectical character of Marx's effort to develop a scientific notion of collectivism. While reacting against the bourgeois individualist sense of community, Marx built upon individuals, but saw them as having a highly enlightened self-consciousness and hence as being members of a community.

The implications of this are developed further by Professor Zhu Dasheng, Chairperson of the Philosophy Department of Peking University, in Chapter VII on the relation between the natural and the social sciences. As he acutely points out, the natural sciences are structured to take account of the objective and necessary order of nature. Thus, if one is to make room for the ideals and values of truth, goodness and beauty, it is necessary to pay special attention to the distinctive character of the object and methods of the sciences intended to be properly human and social. Indeed, when this is not done the very meaning of human freedom is degraded, and along with this both human dignity as a goal and the means thereto. This points to the need to develop the distinctive cognitive approaches which make it possible to take full account of these values, and hence to appreciate the ways in which freedom can be more than a means to the ends of consumer society.

The social crises of our day require that this enriched range of the cognitive abilities of the sciences be applied appropriately to the various dimensions of our issue, namely, to the nature or essence of social life and its existential realization. Thus Part III concerns the social *nature* of human beings, while Part IV concerns what it means for humans *to exist* socially.

Professor Shi Defu of Peking University in Chapter VIII begins the study of this social nature by charting the history of this issue. In chapter IX Professor Woo Kun-Yu of National Taiwan University establishes the personal character of human beings, showing them therefore to be essentially both unique and related. This interpersonal relatedness should point beyond alienation to solidarity and require the development of the related virtues.

Professor Lou Yulie of Peking University in Chapter X agrees on the need to ground human sociality. This must not be left merely as an issue of ethics, detached from reality, floating unstably in the air, and hence subject to ideological manipulation. Thus, he points up the importance in the Chinese tradition of Wei Jin metaphysics which looks, beyond any legal or ethical code, to the reality of human nature as characterizing what is distinctively and concretely human in each



person. This foundation must be reflected in any ethical code; it constitutes both the real basis and the norm of righteousness in social life; and it can be appealed to for motivation.

This theme is taken considerably further in Chapter XI by Professor Shu-hsien Liu, Chairman of the Philosophy Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He reflects the work of the neo-Confucians, especially Professor Mou Tsung-san who drew upon both Kant and Confucius. Mou was not satisfied either with the ethics and moral philosophy which could be developed after the manner of Confucius, or with the intricate but unstable combination of phenomena and thing-in-itself possible after the manner of Kant. Instead, he developed a moral metaphysics based upon *hsing* (nature) and *hsin* (mind-heart) and concerned with personal participation in the Way. This enables human beings to be co-creators with Heaven in shaping social reality.

Going further, as a personal contribution, Professor Shu-hsien Liu adopts the formula "*li-i-fen-shu*" (metaphysics) in order to wed tradition and creativity. He builds a moral metaphysics upon commitment to the dignity of the concrete human person in contrast to the Western more abstract notion from which the provisions of a moral life are deduced *a priori*. Shu-hsien Liu's concrete metaphysics is characterized by the equal participation of all in a process constituted through their creative personal freedom.

Part IV takes the issue beyond the social nature of human beings to the classically metaphysical issue of the basis for the actual exercise of this nature, that is, for living socially. The character and importance of this section can be seen from a brief passage in the chapter of Professor Shu-hsien Liu noting a particular limitation of Kant's philosophy. It stems from the fact that he wrote within the Protestant Christian perspective, marked by Luther's exclusive sense of "faith alone". This means not only that salvation is due to faith in distinction from both charity and good works, but that reason needed to be restricted in order to leave room for faith. As a result Kant's conviction regarding free will lacked solid philosophical grounds inasmuch as it needed to be based on a transcendent principle which, however, could be attained not by reason, but only by faith. Ultimately, such a metaphysics could only be theological for it was based upon faith understood in direct contrast to reason. Mou's step was to re-affirm confidence in human reason as able to relate to the transcendent and thereby to enable a properly philosophical foundation for human freedom and sociality. This position has characterized the long Catholic tradition in philosophy from the early days of Christianity till today.

The chapters of Part IV are not inhibited by Kant's limitation of reason, but reflect the longer Western tradition that creation by God ensures the competency of human faculties, including reason as man's most distinctive power. The result is an approach to philosophy which provides not only an ethics based upon the nature or essence of humans, but a metaphysics of human beings as existing and living freely. This makes possible philosophical work on the implications of human transcendence and hence on the social creativity for which Professor Zhu Desheng called in Part I.

Indeed there are important implications for almost all the issues with which this volume has been struggling:

- the origin and basic purpose of human sociality,
- the importance and liberating character of attention to the tradition,
- the essential mutuality of independence and sociality,
- the levels of human freedom and creativity in society,

- the values and virtues in terms of which these can be lived, and
- the foundation, at once immanent and transcendent, for the sense that all men have been created equal and are endowed with their proper dignity, and that this must be respected.

In Chapter XII Tomonobu Imamichi, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University and Director of the International Center for the Study of Comparative Philosophy and Aesthetics, begins his work with a most suggestive step. All the previous chapters had either supposed or left unquestioned Marx's Darwinian supposition that the primordial state of human beings was the result of forces of nature, which joined with others entirely on the basis of externally imposed necessity and hence for simply utilitarian purposes. In consequence, though man might be said to be by nature social, this remained always an imposition. Even in the basic instance of family, this has been understood as a form of slavery which it is the work of history to attenuate. This remains the understanding of the basic character of human reality by modern rationalisms, whether materialist or liberal. No matter what rationalization be put upon the human social dimension, no sublimation can enable human beings effectively to escape the pressures of Xu Junzhong's historical vice: an exaltation of the central authority, on the one hand, and the suppression of the individual, on the other.

Professor Imamichi illustrates deftly, however, that in fact both ancient myth and present practice contradict this Darwinian supposition. If primacy is given to one's presence in the clan this is because the clan and one's presence therein are understood to be divinely given. This is reflected in the almost universal household and clan rituals honoring ancestors. Indeed, Africans criticize Christianity for its comparative weakness in this precise regard.<sup>1</sup>

To this corresponds, as Professor Imamichi shows, the need for cultural and religious remembrance (or *nostos*) which modern rationalisms everywhere have tried to eradicate in their process of educational and political secularization. Professor Woo suggests in Chapter IX above that at a deep level the erotic union of male and female is an effort to reestablish the earlier total unity. Similarly, it should be said that today's spontaneous, if chaotic, effort to recall the cultural traditions and hence the basic identity of peoples is no less natural and inevitable.

Tragically, modern rationalism and its abstract universalism which characterize modern times are insensitive to this; they prevent cultures from exercising their healing potential upon human alienation. If this originating sociality is not integrated as an authentic and indispensable basis for social reconstruction it can only create conflict, be subject to suppression, or both in one of those vertiginous spirals we seem expert in creating.

Chapter XIII by Professor Ellen M. Chen of Shanghai and St. John's University, New York, returns to the Chinese tradition to un-cover a similar metaphysical horizon in order to revalue many of its elements and to point out ways in which they have been endangered and are in need of transformation.

One of the most interesting -- indeed exciting -- sections of her chapter is its introduction of the thought of the late Medieval/early Renaissance thinker, Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa. He was able to draw upon, while exercising independence from, both the Platonic and the Aristotelism lines of Greek philosophy. This enabled him to appreciate that the Transcendent was beyond any quantitative comparison on which a hierarchy might be based, and that for the same reason the Transcendent was equally present to all persons in whatever place or time. By Cusa's logic of the coincidence of opposites "God is both the Absolute-Greatest and the Absolute-Smallest, everywhere and now-here, at the center as well as the circumference, the infinitely above as well as most intimately within." Because all creatures as finite beings are equally distant and equally near to the infinite God, hierarchy collapses and makes room for equality and democracy.

Under Cusa's democratic vision, Aristotle's conviction that "the rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be" and the Confucian belief in the emperor as alone the "son of heaven" lose their cogency. But importantly this is done not by a reductionism either to matter which radically undermines human dignity or to spirit which equally undermines one's uniqueness. Rather, each human creature is as much a child of heaven as is anyone else, commanding equal dignity and respect. "Each person has direct access to God by his conscience and his mind, receiving understanding and revelation directly from God." The human dignity and equality, for which Professor Zhen Li called, regain thereby their absolute warrant in a Transcendent which is as much inner as outer. This constitutes a true basis for a democratic society in which the social character of human persons--their bond with nature and with each other--is fully synchronized with their shared dignity.

Finally, chapter XIV by Professor George F. McLean brings together a number of other basic themes. By identifying a series of levels of freedom he shows that society can destroy man not only by suppressing all freedom, but by focusing restrictively upon a lower sense of freedom to the exclusion of higher ones, thereby destroying the human person's dignity and restricting his or her goals. Thus, freedom often is taken at a first level to mean only an ability to choose among material objects or things. This condemns the person to a slavery to physical objects or to ease, in the service of which one is willing to do all -- even kill if this be but thinly veiled by euphemisms. A second, deontological level of freedom is found in Kant's second critique and its sense of being able to will as one ought. As is deftly indicated by Professor Shu-hsien Liu, being bereft of an ontological foundation, such freedom is unstable for it lacks both direction and

But an even greater danger to this freedom lurks in its rationalist context. Kant's first critique concerning reason at work in the physical order showed it to be coordinated exclusively by universal and necessary laws. As a result the freedom identified in his second critique, if it reaches out beyond the human heart, finds itself in an alien, necessitating universe. The contradiction between the physical and the human worlds would condemn freedom ultimately to being entrapped and entombed within the human heart. This is but a replay of Professor Zhu Dasheng's dilemma in Chapter VII, namely, that creative human freedom is confronted by the aggressive power of the natural sciences and the forces they describe as objective but unfree. This led Kant to develop another set of categories, namely, his third *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*.

There may be a suggestive parallel to this in earlier Chinese efforts at modernization. If Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy have settled in only partly and with difficulty it may be that, like Kant's first two critiques which they closely reflect, they need a third, aesthetic, dimension. This would integrate the properly free human project with the physical universe, enabling the former to be realized not only according to necessary laws -- whether objective as in the first critique or subjective as in the second -- but in terms of that awe before beauty which attracts and inspires, moves and directs.

It is just such a sense of moral or social harmony which the above chapters concur in identifying as most properly Confucian and Chinese. This suggests that many problems cited here in realizing a modern social life may come from the fact that in the 1919 movement Confucius was ushered out unceremoniously just when he was most needed. His sense of harmony enables him uniquely to serve as the gracious host ingeniously coordinating all for the visit of the two Magi from the West so that they might in fact accomplish the good awaited of them. Indeed, who ever heard of only two Magi; or who would be more capable of integrating them than Confucius and his long tradition of the Chinese wisdom of harmony? To do so, however, harmony must be read

not in terms of strict obedience to authority as came to be the case with the neo-Confucians of the Song Dynasty, but in its original open and integrative sense.

The second part of George McLean's chapter takes up issues of truth, goodness and beauty which were cited as in need of reflection by Professor Zhu Dasheng. This makes note of some factors developed in the long tradition of philosophical metaphysics for which Shu-hsien Liu, after Mou Tsung-san, would call. Indeed, this can be expected from the Catholic philosophical tradition. It is set in the context of the Trinity of divine persons and parallels the Hindu tradition centered upon the divine attributes of *sat-cit-ananda* -- existence, conscious-ness (truth) and bliss (good). The Catholic tradition contains a wealth of reflection upon truth, goodness and beauty, as well as work on their relation to modern social developments.

This points as well to the need recognized by Mou to found Kant's hypothetical structure -- according to which thought must proceed "as if" there is an outer Transcendent -- upon a rational and properly philosophical basis, for in order to render effective help in real social life, the Transcendent principle itself must be real.

From this overview it can be seen that the present volume, *The Human Person and Society*, takes us to the richest resources of our cultures East and West and to the most anguished problems of our times. It was the intent of joining the philosophical resources of the Philosophy Department of the University of Peking with those of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy to make a studied effort to respond creatively to present problems with the broadest range of philosophical insight. The authors of this volume can rightly rejoice in the outcome of their work.

## Note

1. See T. Okere's "The Poverty of the Christian Individualist Morality: an African Alternative" in *Identity and Change, Nigerian Philosophical Studies, I* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997). Studies in the evolution of Greek thought suggest that this sense of original fate was gradually transformed into the conscious life of the gods, and thence into Transcendent mind and will, truth and goodness in the thought of the great philosophers. The original insight has remained essential throughout this evolution.

**Part I**  
**The Problematic Relationship of the Human Person and Society**



## 1.

# **The Idea of the Group in Chinese Philosophy**

*Zhu Bokun*

Here the term "Chinese philosophy" refers not to modern or contemporary, but to traditional Chinese philosophy. The chapter concerns the relation between the group and the individual.

In ancient China, philosophy often considered problems of philosophy as issues of heavenly and human ways. The core problem of the latter is the relation between group and individual. Based on answers to problems of human life, the ideas concerning human life and social ethics took shape and developed in traditional Chinese philosophy: the different answers generated the different schools.

There were four influential schools of philosophy during the pre-Qin Dynasty: Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism and Legalism. With regard to the relation between the group and the individual, these four schools could be divided into Confucianism, Mohism and Legalism on the one side, and Daoism on the other. The former emphasized the group and underestimated the individual; the latter attached importance to individuals and looked down upon the group. All Confucianists, Mohists and Legalists thought that the human being could not separate himself from, but found stability and harmony within, group life; hence they opposed any conflict or split, though of course among them there were differences in ways and means to sustain group life. Daoism considered protection of individual life as a starting point and sought to cultivate the human body and to seek absolute freedom for the individual spirit, looking upon group life as a heavy burden. In time this developed into religious Daoism.

Regarding the group, among the four great schools the most influential were the Confucians who struggled against the Daoists for a long time and became the main stream in ancient China. Mencius elucidated five constant relations; Xun Zi constructed a theory for harmonizing the group; they all thought that what differentiated the human being from the animal was that the former was capable of conscious group life. Afterwards no Confucians failed to attach importance to human group life, which was considered the basic human constant. The Confucian idea of the group took the family as the model and then proceeded to extend this to the state and all under heaven. All considered that to sustain group life it is important to harmonize families, administer the state, and make peaceful the land under heaven. They thought that one who was ready to serve heart and soul the interests of group life was a sage.

From the viewpoint of the Confucianists group interests were superior to those of the individual who should try to fulfill his obligation to the group. Based on this principle, there emerged the distinctions between righteousness and benefit, public and private, and principle and desire. In Confucianism, the chief means for upholding group life was to resort neither to a belief in monotheism nor to violent rule, but to ethics in order to cultivate ideas of loyalty, filial piety, humanity, righteousness, rite and so on. Individual interests must be subordinated to group interests.

Moral action was to flow from reason and not be controlled by any external power. Therefore, the Confucian idea of group can be called ethical and normative. These notions of group and ethics tended to relate the characters of individuals from different social levels and were of great perduring force. This enabled feudal economies to develop and flourish. On the basis of this education in a strong sense of the group, there emerged in Chinese history many people with lofty ideas, patriots and national heroes, who sacrificed their lives for the group interest. This notion of

group became a pillar for the harmony of families, the unity of the state and the survival of the nation.

Nevertheless, as a social ideology, Confucianism was marked by a strong sense of hierarchical and patriarchal relations; the stability and harmony which Confucianism pursued was based on regarding the patriarch as the head of the clan, and the monarch as representing the groups and enjoying all privileges. The rest of the group had no alternative but to submit to, or to attach themselves to the patriarch and monarch. Should an individual's words and deeds violate the rules his social status imposed it would be considered to be destructive of group interests; as a result, the individual must be severely punished. Therefore, the idea of the group and ethics as a whole did not strive for individual rights. The obligations one was called to fulfill became tools to preserve the privileges of the upper hierarchy. This suppressed individuality and deprived inferiors of rights, which, in turn, generated social instability so that in modern times it has been criticized by enlightened thinkers.

The group and individual constitute a unity of two opposites which, on the one hand, repel one another and, on the other hand, depend upon each other so that if one opposite is repudiated, the other too will be injured. In this dialectical relation of group and individual, human life and production developed. Confucianism attached importance to group life, and its related discoveries were to be emphasized and carried forward. At the same time, its suppression of individuality, which deprived inferiors of basic rights, must be cast aside. The best of Confucianism should be joined with consciousness of modern democracy. Only in so doing can group life thrive and realize the words of Xun Zi: "First harmony, then unity; if unity, then strength and power triumph over things."



## Daoism as a Source for Democracy in China

*Pan Hungchao, Cedric*

### Western Models

Aristotle said that he who lives alone is either a madman or a saint. This is not to equate the mad with the saintly, but to under-line that human nature is social. Indeed, human beings are able to be defined and understood only in the society within which they function and find their role and meaning. In turn, social rules and regulations shape and fashion one's desires, thoughts and behaviour.

Though it is impossible to overemphasize that humans are social beings, this can further be analyzed into its economic, cultural and historical aspects. But these must not be considered separately since they are intimately interconnected. It was not without cause then that Aristotle studied the histories of some 158 constitutions where he found the relations of human beings in society to be interesting and important, in particular the relation between the ruler(s) and the ruled.

In Plato's *Republic*, the relation of human beings and society is given a most detailed description with regard to education and politics. Over and against the structure of the Greek city-state of Athens, Plato envisioned an Utopia in which a philosopher is king, ruling over the people who were differentiated by their personal attributes, symbolized by gold, silver and bronze, into rigidly stratified classes of rulers, guardians and artisans, respectively.

At first sight, this is an elitist dream come true: to each according to his needs and from each according to his abilities. However, critics of Plato are quick to point out the implications of a closed society without mobility which they generally interpret as authoritarian, if not totalitarian. Should power fall into the 'wrong' hands, those in privileged positions could perpetuate their numerous special privileges and corruption would be rampant. This may be a case of bad philosophy leading to bad politics. But it should be pointed out if Plato was not an apologist for democracy, he was never an ideological demagogue; he held merely that the ideal society should have a place for everyone, and that no one should ever find himself in the wrong place in society. The agony of the person in modern society, namely, not knowing oneself and one's role within a larger whole, would never happen in Plato's model of the human being in society. It is the modern person in contemporary society who experiences to an extreme degree this perplexing societal anxiety.

In a way, this utopian society is echoed by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in his aversion to the state of nature understood as chaos and disorder. For him, the ideal government is a strong government in which the individuals enter into agreement (contract) with an absolute monarch (ruler). He writes:

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them with all. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious Building; no instruments of moving and re-moving such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of time; no Arts; no Letters; no society and worse is of all continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Individuals are seen by Hobbes to surrender their right to self-determination since this is necessary to control conflicting individual interests and desires, including political desires. Individuals must fore-go or suppress their desires in order to enjoy the benefits and survive in a stable and secure monarchical society.

But in *On Liberty*, J.S. Mill wrote as follows:

But I deny the right of the people to exercise such coercion, either by themselves or by their government. The best government has no more title to it than the worst. It is as noxious, or more noxious, when exerted in accordance with public opinion, than when in opposition to it. If all Mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, Mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing Mankind.

This is, by and large, a liberal view of democracy which assumes that each individual has certain basic or 'inalienable' rights which are God-given or natural for him to possess or have. No one should have the right to abridge or deny one's right to certain things and to taking certain courses of actions which are a basic requirement in order to function as a free person and a citizen in a popularly constituted democratic state.

While Thomas Hobbes argues for a monarch with absolute power over all, and J.S. Mill argues for a liberal and tolerant democracy in which all individuals have equal rights, Plato's position is more ambiguous and thus more difficult to render specific. There can be an utopia with ideal differentiation and stratification, but Plato generally is interpreted as arguing for an authoritarian form of government with un-questioning obedience to authority, or worse an autocracy in which one human being has absolute power. This is a kind of dictatorship or despotism whose legitimacy is justified only by its unlimited power over its people, and therefore is opposed to individual freedom, judgment and actions.

As paradigms, we now put the authoritarian or autocratic society at one end of the political spectrum, and liberal democracy at the other. This suits modern consciousness for political bipolarity and is convenient for the following discussion of possible grounds for genuine socio-political and economic transformations consistent with human dignity -- and are therefore non-violent -- which emerge from within the Chinese cultural heritage.

## **Confucianism vs. Taoism**

Though the relation to Western influences has been historically problematic there have been sea changes in this century. Not the least of these is Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's wholesale adaptation of the revolutionary principles, which in the West dated from the French Revolution, for the establishment of the Chinese Republic and, later, Chairman Mao Tze-tung's innovation of Marxist-Leninism arising from the Russian Revolution. China had perhaps never changed so significantly in such a short period.

There is nothing wrong or humiliating about borrowing 'foreign' or 'alien' ideas on democracy if they are good and serviceable to one's country. But it can be argued that there is historical forgetfulness in the Chinese quest for tolerance of differing ideas and judgments. For there is theoretical justification for this basic trait of democracy within the Chinese heritage, and this can be more cogent and telling than a theoretical justification culled from foreign sources and traditions.

It would be a truism to say that Chinese political culture has been affected by Confucian orthodoxy. Though this suggests looking into 'the ways of former sage kings and ruling as parents bringing up children', there is to be found there also a latent individualism and even democratic principles. However, these are expressed more clearly in its intellectual and historical rival, Taoism, especially in the Taoism of Chuang Tzu.

For a theoretical justification of Chinese individualism (more radical than in Confucianism), and a host of democratic sentiments if not principles, we need only refer to the dialectical opposition between Confucianism and Taoism. Though Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu in themselves do not provide an adequate comprehensive and systematic basis for a political theory, we can locate there sources for Chinese democratic ideas based on a radical sense of individualism. As these ideas do not rely on the unfamiliar, 'borrowed' or 'foreign', but are familiar and homegrown, they should be more understandable and acceptable.

### *Family vs. Individual*

Confucian ways modelled themselves on dynastic imperial rule and affirmed the authoritarianism of the central government. While Confucian humanism takes the human being to be the center of all things, the individual is always taken, not as himself, but as immersed in the context of family, clan, bloodline and so on, up to being a member of the community. In this sense, one becomes a truly social being with social responsibilities and their attendant duties and demands. The five relations epitomize this concept of a human as a being who derives meaning only in the context of a family, society and state.

Confucian individualism does exist, but it should be expressed only in familial and social context. One must function together with others and must be aware of the interests of others. In most instances, one is expected to sacrifice one's own interests in deference to communal interests.

One's relations to one's father, elder brother and the related feelings of love, filial piety, respect, reverence and guidance take on a special significance and meaning; this can be extended outside the family context to one's emperor and superiors. The father knows best, and as parent he alone can do any good for the family, from bread-winning to education, choices in marriage, jobs, etc. As such, there is no development of democratic sentiments within the family, since the father's will always prevails and his decisions alone steer the course of the family.

In Taoism, especially in Chuang Tzu, we see the Taoist preference for naturalism or nature mysticism, and by derivation that the human is the measure of all things. Both Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu have taken human beings away from their familial and social context, advocating the abandonment of the social for the embrace of nature. Though there are many interpretations of nature, however it may be interpreted, the individual is now liberated from social, political, and economic constraints and is set upon the path to freedom and happiness.

These pursuits of freedom and happiness are the standard hall-marks of individualism and are emphasized also in democratic ideals. Of course, one may find happiness in the familial and social context, but the happiness upon which the Taoists have focused is strictly that of the self and is even egoistic. Though Taoists reject social responsibilities and contexts, they nevertheless presuppose them; their concern is to distance themselves from activism and the hustle of the mundane, generally to prefer transcendental reality. What is significant here is the radical individualism which negates the familial and social, opting instead for individual freedom and happiness, and thereby freeing humans from social and communal bondage. It is this sense of individualism which is akin to the individualism in democratic ideals.

## *Conformism vs. Difference*

In Confucianism, we observe also that built-in tendency towards conformism, reinforced by respect for the *wen* tradition, reverence for study and learning, and generally knowledge by which one can establish oneself and offer oneself for service to one's country. This is the program which defines, and conforms to, the Confucian Way.

This uniformity in training and moral inculcation is supposed to be good for all reasonable humans who then can follow the way to be-come a gentleman-scholar, that is, a moral being willing and prepared to put himself at the service of others. The family and bureaucracy reinforce this by their rules, regulations and institutions.

Here Taoists lodge their most forceful objection against conformity through enforcement and persuasion by which certain things are deemed to be acceptable, desirable, and therefore good. Though these may well be the good from the viewpoints of parents and autocratic rulers, not only are they arbitrarily arrived at, but Taoists argue that, in view of the given natures of different things, there cannot be a single standard of good and bad which applies to all men. Though conventional judgments imply that such a standard exists, this is a dogmatic assumption.

There is the *this* and there is the *that*; everything is what it is and does what it does. Therefore, we must accept and appreciate the differences of things and not impose uniformity. Individuals all have different natures; only when these natural capabilities are realized can human beings be free and happy. An imposition of norms and conventions would block one's free development and stifle the capacity for creativity; uniformity would be a disaster. Water is good for fish, but a human would drown in it. We must realize that there is no standardized form of value or good, and therefore allow for non-conformism be-cause of the different nature of things. It is important to note both the validity of this Taoist *caveat* against conformity and the possibility of creativity which can arise from non-conformity.

## **Ruling by Nonaction**

The Confucian governmental order is much like that portrayed in Plato's *Republic*. Each one, due to his or her attributes, nature and training, functions in a niche. No one is supposed to move out of his or her own niche, much less change their life's station: the emperor on his throne (ruling by example); the ministers and courtiers doing their work; the people tilling the soil, others engaging in crafts and commerce; scholars learning with teachers; fathers doing their level best at parenting, caring for the family, and doing as much good for it as possible; the emperor caring for the people as a father for his children (benevolent paternalism), and trying to do as much good for the country as possible.

Ideally, the social polity works as smoothly as clockwork and order is guaranteed. The sage-ruler has his reward in seeing the leviathan work such that everyone receives its beneficence. This is the Confucian hope, but the Taoist anathema!

Whereas Lao Tzu still talked and gave advice to rulers, Chuang Tzu asserted that the best government is one which governs least, or not at all. For Chuang Tzu what is of human beings is perverted, while what is of nature is spontaneous, effortless, and provides for inner freedom and happiness. A streak of political anarchism is quite evident in both Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, but this may well be an over reaction and overstatement directed against the Confucian feudal sense of social order.

It cannot be denied that the Lao-Chuang traditions routinely presuppose an organized social order so that their thoughts can be better grasped and they can have the luxury to practice the Taoist ideals in which they believed. The Taoist sage-ruler does not rule: he may set himself up as an example, but has no place for meddling and coercion. The sage-ruler just lets things be, by non-action, by doing nothing, and by not assuming that any good is actually good for every-one. Hence, one can come up with one's own good and not suffer the indignity or agony of imposition. Anarchism develops into something resembling self-initiation and self-determination that are the substance of democracy.

## **Conclusion**

My main argument has been that some Taoist ideas can serve as a homegrown source, foundation and theoretical justification for a Chinese form of democracy. This suggests moving from the dogmatism or certainty of Confucianism to the skepticism or relativism of Taoism.

Confucians are certain that theirs is the only way to achieve social order, and therefore peace and perhaps prosperity; it is universal and can be accepted and practiced by all. But in the Taoist's skepticism and relativism we find a sentiment essential to any type of democracy. This was reflected above as 'Man is the measure of things' and is stated specifically in the doctrine of the equality of things. All opinions, views, beliefs and judgments belong to someone who is a subject; there are no opinions, views, beliefs and judgments which do not belong to subjects. This is to say that all are subjective and as such also relative.

Chuang Tzu seems to suggest that there is a certain blindness in all opinions and views, which renders them partial or at least not absolutely true. One view may engender its opposite, and then another view, and so on. There is an infinite regress in that no view can be affirmed or denied since there is no absolute criteria to endorse opinions, views and judgments so that they can profess to be unassailable. The gist of this skepticism affirms the relativity and equality of views, since the grounds which support them are no more and no less than subjective.

This truth need not be belabored, since it can easily be grasped. We must see all views as relative, carrying no sacrosanctness, extra weight, or strict validity. All are equal and have to be entertained and tolerated. This recalls J.S.Mill, cited above: even if you vanquish me in argument or physically, it is no proof that you are in the right. Chuang Tzu too says the same. This tolerance of a plurality of ideas and action, and the rejection of violence are the essence of any future democracy for China.

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### 3.

## Violence, Justice and Human Dignity

*M. Sastrapratedja*

The warning of J.B. Metz, "never again to do theology in such a way that its construction remains unaffected, or could remain unaffected, by Auschwitz," is appropriate not only for theologians but also for philosophers.<sup>1</sup> Auschwitz is not only a past historical fact, but also a symbol of the possibility of human destruction which may happen now or in the future. Metz's statement suggests Auschwitz should influence our understanding of understanding and of philosophical reflection. History then is not just an object for us, but is constitutive of reflection itself; in other words, historicity is constitutive of our hermeneutic undertaking.

Auschwitz, which manifested and has come to symbolize the various forms of violence, should change our views about human beings, society and state. This means that political philosophy should take into consideration the present day phenomenon of violence. In many cases ethical imperatives cannot be deduced simply from already formulated moral norms which are universal in nature. There are many conflictual cases today which cannot be solved by referring to general traditional moral principles, especially if we deal with very complex problems of justice and injustice.

The traditional concept of justice is not sufficient to judge whether a condition is just or not. Moreover this concept is inadequate for understanding the scope of our responsibility. Traditional ethics distinguishes three kinds of justice:

(a) Commutative justice is formulated as 'to each his own,' (*suum cuique*; it supposes the subject and the terminus to be equal. However, the problem today is precisely the absence of social parity.

(b) Distributive justice is understood as the duty of the whole (society or state) to administer the 'bonum commune' to its parts (citizens). However, in many countries human rights are denied precisely by the 'whole', i.e., by the state or by society, as in the case of racial discrimination.

(c) General justice deals with the duty of citizens to make their contributions to the entire community and is called legal justice if it is supported by the positive juridical order. However, the question is whether the law itself is just or not, for in many countries the law becomes an instrument for obstructing justice. The traditional concept of justice presupposes criteria for identifying the rights and duties of both the state and the citizens.

This paper tries to examine the relationship of violence and justice, and the related ethical imperatives. This may open dimensions for the image of the human and society.

### The Phenomenon of Violence

Violence is as old as humanity itself and is recounted in various mythologies and legends. Javanese shadow play or *wayang* provides us with rich description of violent acts done by human beings and by gods. Hannah Arendt says that although it has always played an enormous role in human affairs, "It is . . . rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration."<sup>2</sup> J.M. Domenach reiterates this judgment by saying that violence, which is so much discussed today, "had never been taken as a theme in itself for great thinkers of the Western

philosophic tradition before the nineteenth century, and had to wait for a George Sorel to make it the centre of his studies."<sup>3</sup>

Johan Galtung says that "Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations."<sup>4</sup> In another place he describes violence as "any avoidable impediment to self-realization."<sup>5</sup>

He stresses that one of the features of violence is that it is avoidable. In the words of Erich Fromm, violence is an 'historical dichotomy' which is the opposite of "existential dichotomy". Existential dichotomies are fundamental facts of existence: that we are born without choice and ultimately die; that our abilities are limited while our desires are unlimited. Historical dichotomies are historical contra-dictions which can be overcome by human efforts, such as the problems of war and hunger in the midst of the progress of technology. All these are instances of violence which can be avoided. Those who benefit from these historical dichotomies try to convince others that they are unavoidable existential dichotomies.<sup>6</sup>

Violence, especially in developing countries, is manifested in at least two forms: personal or direct and structural or indirect. Both types can be physical and psychic and may be related to each other. Violence can be so structured that it engenders direct or personal violence within or between communities. There are cases where crossbreeding between the two exists, for example in the caste system.<sup>7</sup>

### **Violence as the Negation of Fundamental Human Needs**

Violence directed towards human beings can be seen as the negation of basic or fundamental human needs, of which we can identify three clusters:

(a) *Subsistence*. There is need for each human being to maintain his or her existence and individuality, both at the physical and the psychical level. The negation of subsistence needs is manifested in extermination (direct violence) and in misery or poverty (structural violence).

(b) *Growth*. This is the need of every human being to unfold his or her potentialities. We can distinguish two kinds of growth: primary growth which refers to the basic psycho-physical growth in the first years of human life, and maturity growth which is a continuous psychic growth till the end of life. Historically, this is expressed in human rights; its denial is repression.

(c) *Transcendence*. This can be defined as the force which moves the person to go beyond his or her individuality to unite with other natural or meta-empirical entities. The need of transcendence includes also the need to give meaning to life; its denial is alienation.<sup>8</sup>

The relation between human needs and various forms of violence is reflected in the following chart:

Fundamental needs	Structural violence	Main areas
Survival	Poverty	Economic
Necessary means to remain or survive	Misery	
Growth	Repression	Political
Human rights		
Transcendence	Alienation	Cultural
Community, identity, meaning		



Since the three fundamental needs are interrelated with each other and overlap, the negation of one of the three needs may imply an obstacle to the realization of other needs. Moreover, these fundamental needs are developed into derived needs which are culturally determined.

### *Poverty as Violence*

Poverty or misery is institutionalized violence. The specific feature of present day poverty is that it occurs in the midst of progress and is, therefore, also a form of injustice. It is widespread in the Third World where there is a huge gap in wealth and income when compared with the rich countries. This can be illustrated as follows:

Four-fifths of the world's income is earned by the industrialized nations of the world -- North America, western and eastern Europe -- where only one-quarter of the world's population lives. Amidst mass provision of basic services of education, health and social security, average life expectancy in these countries, often referred as the 'North', is about 70 years. In contrast, average life expectancy among the poor nationals of the world--the 'South'--is less than 50 years. In the South's poorest nations, 1 child in 4 dies before reaching the age of 5 and over 50 per cent are destined for lifelong illiteracy. (In the South today, 800 million people live in conditions of absolute poverty or destitution, with some 500 million suffering from a severe degree of protein malnutrition. But not all those living in the South are poor and inequalities within these countries are large: in most less developed countries, the richest 10 per cent of house-holds receive 40 per cent of national income and the poorest 40 per cent receive less than 15 per cent.<sup>9</sup>

Numerous studies have been written on the above topic and its related problems. The above situation is a form of social injustice which is a human responsibility. However, this is not an individualistic responsibility but a social one to create a just system. Since the injustice is rooted in the social structure, it calls for reform in the structure itself.

### *Repression*

Repression is the negation of the fundamental needs of a person to realize his or her potentialities. Historically, these fundamental needs have been expressed in various declarations and charters of human rights. There are at least three basic rights: freedom, participation and equality. Freedom refers to the inviolability of the human person and his or her right to self-determination. Participation is the right to political involvement, especially the right to decision making. Equality is the right of the person to be treated equally before the law and to have the same opportunity in acquiring the necessary means to live in accord with his or her dignity as a human person. These include among others the right to work and to choice of employment, to an adequate standard of living, to education and to free access to culture.<sup>10</sup>

Although human rights are contained in many State Constitutions, they are still far from being concretely realized because their realization depends also on the social, political and economical structures of a given society. The repression of human rights in most Third World countries is concomitant with their national development. In 1980 Herbert Feith identified the emergence of the so-called "repressive-developmental regimes".

## *Alienation*

Many ideas about alienation are intellectually indebted to Marx's analysis of the position of the worker in capitalist society. Marx re-minds us that industrialization creates an alienation of workers from their product, their work and from one another. This kind of alienation is a common phenomenon in many countries in the Third World which are entering the era of industrialization. The low wage of the workers, the exploitation of female workers and of children, make this kind of alienation a form of violence.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, technology has a twofold effect on work. On the one hand, technology creates enrichment and reduces the human burden, on the other hand, it engenders constraints. Industrial development has transformed the relation between humans and between human's and nature into a mediated relationship. Three systems of relation succeed each other: the 'man-product' system, the 'man-machine' system and the 'machine-product' system. Each stage of development engenders a higher degree of alienation.<sup>12</sup> Automation, which is becoming more sophisticated, creates a sense of dehumanization in that one feels himself to be only a part of the machine. This makes the need for transcendence difficult to fulfill.

## **Is Violence Rooted in Human Nature?**

Violence is a specifically human phenomenon; the question is whether it is innate or accidental? It is rooted in human nature in so far as violence consists in the freedom of one person to encroach upon the freedom of another.

Animals seek their prey. Man's prey is freedom. Violence also seeks freedom. Love and sadism, democracy and tyranny, honest reasoning and sophistry --there are always two rival courses of action, one gentle, the other violent. They are mutually antagonistic, but their respective proponents have one point in common where their objective is concerned: in both cases, they are striving to obtain that most precious of indispensable possessions -- the innermost being of the Other, so as to win his good will or force him to submission.<sup>13</sup>

Violence has many dimensions, for instance:

- Hegel shows that consciousness can emerge to become 'for-itself' in negating the Other, an idea continued by Sartre.
- Freud maintains that the Oedipus complex leads to violence towards the father as a necessary factor in order to achieve autonomy.
- Many thinkers show that technology has subjugated nature to humans, and in turn subjugated humans to themselves.
- The State is formed to hold a monopoly of the legitimate use of power.
- Alvin Toffler shows that, compared with other sources of power, knowledge:

Is the most versatile and basic, since it can help one avert the challenges that might require the use of violence or wealth, and can often be used to persuade others to perform in desired ways out of perceived self-interest. Knowledge yields the highest-quality power.<sup>14</sup>

There are many theories explaining causes of violence. According to Robert Gurr there is a linear relation-ship between the frustration of goal-directed activity and violent acts. The discrepancy between people's expectations is a necessary precondition for violent civil conflict.<sup>15</sup>

A second theory proposes that violence is biological-instinctual. Konrad Lorenz has worked out a biological analysis of aggressiveness: it permits the survival and the improvement of the species; it also plays a major role in the structuring of society among more highly biologically developed animals; and it is an essential component in the vital organization of instincts. Some critics reject this theory on the ground that the role of instinct in humans is very low: recent philosophical anthropology argues that it is the deprivation of instinct and consequently also the possibility of culture which distinguishes humans from other species. Ignacio Ellacuria, however, reminds us that Lorenz's critics fail to recognize the positive value of aggressiveness, which should be given direction and sublimated, but definitely not eliminated.<sup>16</sup>

A third theory emphasizes the role of culture in shaping human characters and violence.

In conclusion, we can say that there are to some extent psychological and biological bases of violence in human nature. However, humans are endowed with the freedom to order their own tendencies. Culture is the expression of human freedom ordering chaos into cos-mos. In a broad sense it includes state, society, arts, science and technology, all of which are human creations and in turn shape human behavior and character.

It pertains to human dignity, however, to be able to transcend cultural determination. As institutionalized or structural violence are products of human beings it is their responsibility to change structural violence.

### **Some Moral Norms**

Having considered the dimensions of violence in the present day world we can come to a tentative formulation of moral principles:

1. The basis of any moral principle is the dignity of the human person endowed with reason and freedom of self-determination, but the human person also is vulnerable by nature.
2. Individual freedom and self-determination must be related to the common good.
3. One can realize his or her dignity as a person if one is able to fulfill his or her basic human needs. Hence, the suppression of the fulfillment of basic human needs is violence and is called also injustice. It is manifested in poverty, repression and alienation, which are against human dignity.
4. The main factor of violence is unequal distribution of power. It is imperative to eliminate inequalities by changing unjust structures or by creating institutions which secure the equality of all.
5. The state and society are not identical. The state constitutes the political aspect of society and is dependent upon, and limited by, people whose human dignity it must respect. This distinction is necessary in order to secure the freedom of the people and to prevent totalitarian tendencies.<sup>17</sup>

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### **Notes**

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3. J.M. Domenach, "The Ubiquity of Violence," *International Social Science Journal*, 30 (1978), 717.
4. J. Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (1969), 76.
5. J. Galtung, *The True World, A Transnational Perspective* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 69.
6. J.A.C. Brown, *Freud and Post Freudians* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1983), p. 153.
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10. Cf. Wolfgang Huber, "Human Rights - A Concept and Its History," *Concilium*, 124 (1979), 1-9.
11. Cf. The report of Hans Borkent, et al, *Indonesian Workers and Their Right to Organize* (Leiden: INDOC, 1981), pp. 116-119.
12. Hagues Puel, "New Technical Conditions of Work and the Problems of Employment," *Concilium* (1977), 1-9.
13. J.M. Demenach, *art. cit.*, p. 720.
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15. Ted Robert Gurr, "Psychological Factors in Civil Violence," *Conflict and Violence in Latin American Politics, A Book of Readings*, eds., F. José Moreno and Barbara Mitrani (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell, 1971) pp. 372-407.
16. Ignacio Ellacuria, *Freedom Made Flesh. The Mission of Christ and His Church*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 167-205.
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#### 4.

### Society as Benefit and Limitation

Zhen Li

The nature of the human being and the relation between the human being and society are very interesting, and important themes for philosophy, anthropology, psychology, history and the other branches of social sciences. They are matters not only of theoretical but of practical importance.

#### The Human Being: Individual and Social

What is a human being? Existentialists maintain that being is prior to essence: "At first, there is a human being, he meets himself and appears in the World, then defines himself" (Sartre: *Existentialism is a Humanism*). This thesis does not explain the essence of the human being. Of course, there must be a thing in order to talk of its essence: first a being exists and then its essence develops with the development of the being itself. But this is not the same question as what is the essence of this being.

Two definitions of human nature were suggested by an ancient Chinese philosopher and an ancient Greek philosopher. Xun Zi (c. 296-236 B.C.) said:

What is the human being as a human being? The answer is: he possesses the ability of discrimination (contemplation). . . . What is the human being as a human being is not only that he has two legs and no fur, but that he possesses the ability to discriminate. . . . There are fathers and sons among beasts, but they have no ethical consciousness of the relation between father and son. There are males and fe-males among beasts, but they do not realize the moral distinctions among them. But every human being has the ability to discriminate such relations. The highest degree of this contemplation is division, and the highest division is the rite-law.

Again, he pointed out:

Water and fire have energy but no animation; grass and wood have animation, but no cognition; beasts have cognition, but no social justice. As for the human being, he has energy, animation, cognition and social justice, and therefore is the noblest of the world. The strength of mankind is inferior to that of the ox; man cannot run faster than the horse. But the ox and horse are used by man and serve the human being. Why? Because human beings alone lived in a community, and those other than humans did not have a community (Xun Zi, IX.2).

On the same question Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) expressed his view in other words: "Man is by nature a political animal".<sup>1</sup> But he who is unable to live in society or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself must be either a beast or a god; he is no part of state. A social instinct is implanted in all humans by nature."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, he explained:

For man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; since armed injustice is the more dangerous; he is equipped at birth with arms meant to be used by intelligence and virtue, but which he may use for the worst ends. This is why, if he has not virtue, he is the most unholy and savage of animals.<sup>3</sup>

Here there are two main points. (1) Human beings are social animals or capable of organizing community whose determinant factor is law and justice. (2) Human beings have the highest power of intelligence, i.e., reason.<sup>4</sup>

Plato expressed a similar idea in a myth.<sup>5</sup> After Prometheus found that no arms were given to human beings, he stole Hephaestus' fire and Athena's mechanical skill for humankind. Hence, human beings obtained Wisdom for living. Afterwards, Zeus ordered Hermes to distribute Respect and Justice to every human as the gifts of their political Wisdom.

Thus, association in community is the nature or "instinct" of human beings. The purpose or end of community is to protect and promote the security of self-sufficient social life, that is it is "for the highest good of the people". Therefore, individuals are elements of a society, which is an organized collection of individuals. Thence arise many problems such as: which has priority, the individual or society; what are the freedom or rights of an individual or a society; does every member of a society have equal political rights, etc.? All these are concerned with the basic question: What is social justice?

Roughly speaking, there are two conflicting views regarding social equality. One is that the individuals in a society cannot be equal to each other. For example, there are the structures of master and slave, husband and wife, father and son. As the relations between these correspond to monarchical, constitutional and royal rule, inequality is a fact of nature. Another view is that every individual in society is equal by nature, whereas inequality is due to convention (Law). Aristotle and Xun Zi supported the former.<sup>6</sup> Xun Zi emphasized that the relations between king and subjects, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife are the basic ethical and political relations embodying both the ruler and the ruled. This has been the traditional Confucianist view since Confucius and Mencius. Its main failure is to confuse some features of family relations with political relations, whereas actually they are not the same.

Living in antiquity both Xun Zi and Aristotle supported the systems of slavery and rule by masters: kings or noblemen. This was a limitation of the age. Nonetheless, they thought about some special aspects of social life, and suggested many extremely important theories which manifested profound insight and greatness.

Aristotle emphasized that, although there are many unequal phenomena in social life -- even "slavery being both expedient and right" -- in the sphere of citizens, every freeman, every citizen is naturally equal as a citizen. This means that they share equally in political life:

Among peoples where it is impossible by reason of the natural equality of the citizens, yet at the same time it is just that all should share in the government (whether to govern be a good or bad thing). However an approximation to this is that equals should in turn retire from office and, apart from office position, should be treated alike. Thus the one party rules and the others are ruled in turn, as if they were no longer the same persons.<sup>7</sup>

This description seems an ideal picture for modern democratic life. The doctrine of "natural equality" among citizens is a great democratic principle which has inspired modern history since the so-called "Renaissance". Despite the circumstances of the ancient Greek system of slavery, this theory is one of the greatest cultural heritages of humankind.

There are some similarities between Xun Zi's doctrine and that of Aristotle. But what is notable is that Xun Zi insisted that every human is the same with respect to physical functioning and intellectual activity, such as feeling, desire and physiological faculties. According to Xun Zi,

the differences among individuals come from learning, education, activity, and practice in social life. He pointed out that, as every-one loves and pursues what is pleasant to the senses, human beings are evil by nature. Their good nature comes from rectifying this through remolding human nature by education and the law of society. Therefore, he said, "It is right to say that anyone in the road might become Shun (a legendary archaic great king), but it is not certain that anyone in the road will necessarily become Shun".<sup>8</sup> Xun Zi explained that everyone's situation and surrounding circumstances are quite different from that of the others. So, he continued:

Although one will not necessarily become Shun, this does not change the fact that one might become Shun: just as one's feet might go everywhere in the world, but no one actually goes everywhere in the world. . . . So, from this, we know that what is possible or able to be done, is not actually necessary or need not necessarily be done. Therefore, even though it is not actually necessary or certain that something be done, this will not affect the fact that it is possible that it be done.<sup>9</sup>

What Xun Zi is concerned about is, to a certain degree, an equal opportunity for every member of a community (he talked also about categories of possibility and actuality). This is why he said, "Sages could be formed by accumulating virtue day by day".<sup>10</sup> From this point as well we can trace Xun Zi's thought about the best rulers (the former and contemporary kings) who should love their people and promote their lives by good political rule. It could be said that on the basis of equal opportunity for everyone as his political ideal, Xun Zi suggested rule by a certain kind of philosopher king. But he had no clear notion of equal natural political rights, although he condemned the worst ancient rulers. King Jie and king Zhou were "lonely dictators" and not "parents of the people", so that the revolutionaries killed them in accordance with social justice.<sup>11</sup>

Mencius expressed the same idea as Xun Zi and even maintained that "the people is the most noble; the next is the power of governing the state; which the position of a monarch is lighter". Regrettably such an important idea was not developed by Mencius him-self and the other Confucians until the modern period of the history of Chinese philosophy.

## **Benefits and Limitations from Society**

The establishment of society is decisive for human life. Social co-operation, on the basis of the principle that everyone makes his own contribution, helped greatly to promote and develop the strength of humankind. From this point, we might say that society is like a "superman" with thousands of hands, ears, eyes, feet, minds and so on. Thus, we can describe it as one who exists everywhere, hears every-thing, thinks about everything, and does everything. In one word: it is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. This is why humankind has had so many magnificent and even miraculous achievements in the fields of manufacture, scientific research, the improvement of social life, etc. Actually, "He" is the God of myth. Thus, where some would say that God created the human being according to his own image, I would say that human beings created the image of God according to their own image. This God is human beings themselves combined as a whole in society; all the benefits and advantages for humans come from this source. Under this condition, every member of the society enjoys natural and equal right and freedom.

But, at the same time, we must recognize that there are also limitations imposed on everyone by society, like the so-called "fate" allotted by "the fatal sisters". Although theoretically it seems that every member in a society has equal opportunities, actually, the opportunities for everyone

are quite different. As noted above, Xun Zi was clear on this. Hence, in speaking of the freedom of a citizen we mean that a citizen has a right to decide how to choose according to his own free will from among the possibilities confronting him. This freedom or right is absolute and untransferable, but is limited by conditions in one's natural and social circumstances. In this sense, therefore, freedom is not absolute, but rather relative; in fact, as the limitations are historical, actualized freedom also is historically limited.

For example, according to Xun Zi, even in ancient China, every-one had the freedom or possibility to expect that one could become a sage or a powerful king. And if one were clever and diligent enough, and had excellent gifts, if each day one sought to do good for one's fellow citizens, and if the current ruler were a bad one, then there was an actual possibility for one to become a great king. But, if the current ruler was one of the best and the people loved him or her greatly, if one lacked persistence, or was wounded or even died at an early age, then definitely one could not realize one's will. Thus, one's desire or freedom of choice which set one's aim became only an abstract possibility.

Of course, everyone must choose their own way of life according to their own will: only thus could we call the one independent. One uses oneself as a means for one's own end, which must also belong to oneself; otherwise, one would be imperfect and dependent or, even worse, would lose one's own personality and dignity as a human being.

From this point of view, the basic doctrine of the existentialists would seem to have some validity. As Sartre has written:

If Being is really prior to Essence, man has to take responsibility for the man that he is. Therefore, the first consequence is: let everyone understand his own figure, and bear the responsibility of being himself entirely. . . . When we say man himself makes the choice, indeed we mean that everyone of us must make the choice by himself, but when we speak thus we mean also that when man makes the choice for himself, he makes the choice for all human beings. . . . In molding oneself, I mould man.<sup>12</sup>

But when existentialists emphasize that one can make any choice, and bear the responsibility for that choice, they seem overly optimistic; they forget that in actuality one cannot make any choice whatsoever, but only some choices under certain limitations. The freedom they really have is, therefore, a limited or relative one. This limitation or relativity is historical; liberation or the achievement of freedom lies in the historical progress of society. Only when we understand clearly what limitations we have to deal with and how we should react to those conditions for maximum success can we say that we have a certain degree of freedom. Otherwise, there would be not freedom, but only blindness.

Two kinds of limitations are imposed upon human beings. One is natural limitation, i.e., the outer physical world, one's physiological conditions, etc.; the other is social limitation, i.e., the established social system, social custom, special traditions of certain civilizations, etc. We must face all of these and may change some of them gradually, but we cannot always change them immediately. In some periods of history, human beings have suffered greatly from such limitations. The term "alienation" has been used to describe this situation. Let us take as examples the modern history of the Western and Eastern worlds.

After the Renaissance, Europeans made great progress in their history. The success of the "Industrial Revolution" made for a rapid increase in material production. The great European thinkers rediscovered the theory of natural equality and the equal rights of citizens and in time the



modern Western democratic political system was established. The victory of the anti-feudalism revolution had been won; but at almost the same time, especially in the so-called "primitive accumulative stage", thousands of workers became the modern slaves of the system of machine production. Karl Marx described this "miserable world" in his magnificent work, *Das Kapital*:

Within the Capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborers; all means for the development of production transform them-selves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they change the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of the labor-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labor process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of capital.<sup>13</sup>

Really, it seems that the historical victory of humankind in both its political and productive aspects turned out to be an oppressive force so that many men and women lost their humanity and dignity, becoming "parts of a machine". This strange phenomenon of human history is called "alienation".

At the same time, in the eastern part of the world, a great old kingdom -- "the Heaven Kingdom", the "Central Kingdom", China was ruled by an extremely corrupt feudalistic royal government. It refused political reform and compelled social life to move in a feudalistic orbit. As a result, the Chinese people suffered greatly due to imperialistic aggression from without and feudalistic oppression from within. This too was a special form of "alienation".

Under the imperialist powers the suffering of the people was astonishingly great. It is enough to think about the First and Second World Wars when millions of men and women were killed, their lives squeezed by military machines built by human beings. If the alienation of humankind is the making of "another ego", humankind seems to have made the "other ego" for the purpose of oppressing itself!

### **The Future Authentic Ego -- A Problem to Be Resolved**

Let us return to the thesis of Aristotle that "the end of the state is the good life"<sup>14</sup>; that "a city is not to be termed happy in regard to a portion of the citizens, but in regard to them all."<sup>15</sup> In an ancient Chinese utopia we find the naive expectation of an ideal state: "The Great Harmony". It is said, that in this community, everyone lives a very happy life and achieves the highest good.

The great thinkers, both Eastern and Western, foresaw an ideal human society to secure the realization of human happiness. In this society everyone should possess his or her own ego, and not be inauthentic or an alienated ego. Until now, this has been seen as the noble task and duty of great politicians, honest scientists, profound philosophers, talented poets, famous artists, and all wise common people.

At present, the first urgent task is to maintain world peace and protect the environment and ecosystem. This is a necessary condition for humans to live on this globe, for otherwise we will lose the very bases of life. The achievements of modern science and technology should serve this noble task and benefit the people; they should not be used to kill humankind and satisfy the vicious

greed of a handful of war criminals and butchers. The Gulf War teaches us the lesson that people must be aware of the danger of mad leaders or homicidal satans.

To establish a just, new economic order for the world, it seems a precondition that people, especially in poor countries, improve their material lives. The guarantee of a necessary living standard is essential for the improvement of other cultural and educational conditions. There is a plain truth in the old Chinese proverb that "Only when you have enough clothes and goods, can you talk about rites and justice."

To reform backward political systems is still an important task of humankind. Human beings must struggle consciously for their equality and freedom in order to possess their own lives. Wherever there is no equality and freedom, there will be no authentic ego, because under unfree and unequal social conditions where alienation occurs the authentic ego disappears.

In order to raise the level of the culture and civilization of all people, the decisive step is to rediscover the dignity of humankind. One must raise oneself above the other animals so that one can begin to live a life which befits the essence of a human being. Humans are not merely animals with two legs and no fur; nor are they merely instruments for increasing material wealth or for carrying out the special orders of some "Big man", "noble man" or "leader," either to kill other men or to be killed by them. Human beings are independent persons who possess their own natural rights.

When human persons recognize their own positions, rights and missions in society they will befriend, help, respect, and cooperate with each other in community, for then men will know what it is to be really human and to live a human life. At last, the dream of generations of humankind for an ideal society might be realized. On the flag of such a world might be written: "We are human; we are authentically human!"

## Notes

1. *Politics*, I, 2, 1253a 28-30.
2. *Ibid.*, 1253a 28-30.
3. *Ibid.*, 1253a 31-36.
4. Benjamin Franklin's definition that the human being is an instrument-making animal is also reasonable and was praised by Karl Marx. He maintained that the essence of the human being lies in his labor, which is the foundation of all of human social life and of the history of civilization.
5. Cf. "Protagoras", 320C-322D.
6. Cf. *Politics*, I, 3-7; "Xun Zi", IX.10.
7. *Ibid.*, II, 2, 1261b 1-5.
8. Xun Zi, XIII.5.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. Xun Zi, XVIII.2.
12. "Existentialism Is a Humanism".
13. Vol 1, Ch. 25, sec. 4, p. 604.
14. *Politics*, III, 9, 1280b 39-40.

**Part II**  
**The Nature of the Human Sciences**



## 5.

# **Research on the Social Nature of the Human Being**

*Jin Xiping*

One would suppose that as an object of research the human being would be easier to grasp than other kinds of objects, but in reality it is the contrary. To know the real nature of an ordinary object, observation is the only feasible way. This is the fundamental material for such other scientific acts as induction, deduction, abstraction, mathematization and the stuff of which the different kinds of theories are constituted. I must design experiments according to those theories and carry them out in order to prove whether or not those theories are relevant. This is the normal method for the sciences, and it has been very successful. By scientific methods we acquire much clear and valid knowledge, enough for our daily life in the common sense world.

But if I philosophize, this method does not function for such question as: what do natural objects really do in their movements; or is there any purpose in their doing so? Such kinds of problems cannot be solved by the scientific method because we cannot be within the objects to observe and experience their real interior acting; there is always some distance between the object and the observer.

Further, if we take human beings, namely ourselves, as the object of our research, we find that my Self is quite within this object. I am quite clear and sure of what and how I am, and of what, and why and how I have acted in the past and am doing so now.

It should be easier to know the what, why, and how I am, but we have spent more than years to acquire some clear basic knowledge about our Self. Even now we have quite different understandings, interpretations, doubts and criticisms. We do not hold identical views about the basic idea of a human being, as would natural science. What is the cause of the phenomenon?

The main cause is that in research concerning the human being the object is too close to ourselves, we are too internal or too immanent to our object. In order to observe some object it is necessary that there be some distance between me and the object. For example, I cannot see the spot on my glasses which I am wearing, because they are too close to me. If I want to know whether my glasses are clean, I must take them off and observe them at some distance. If I want to know what my face or nose look like, I can only do so with the aid of a mirror which places some distance between my face and nose in the form of a reflective appearance; otherwise I would not be able directly to see my face and nose. When the human being is myself, it is much closer to me than my face and nose. In order to place the human being in a field of observation, we must find a mirror for it, namely find a way which can help us put some distance between the human as an object of my observation and my real ego in daily life within the common sense world.

## **Aristotle on the Social Nature of the Human Being**

More than 2000 years ago our predecessors began to think about the nature of human beings, but they did not find a suitable method, for they used the same method as for natural objects. Philosophers in ancient times did not have a clear idea about the methodological problem of research regarding the human person. Only in modern time has a clear consciousness of the methodology arisen and a conscious application of appropriate scientific methods to research on humanity. For example, the English philosopher and sociologist John Stuart Mill claimed that "The backward state of the moral sciences can only be remedied by applying to them the methods of

physical science, only extended and generalized." This did not remedy the chaotic state of research regarding the human being.

### *A Biological Basis*

That by nature human beings are social beings (*Zoon politicon*) was not unknown in ancient times, but they could not find its real foundation. Over 2000 years ago Aristotle had noted that "without friends no one would choose to live, though he have all other goods."<sup>1</sup>

Hence, it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity [a beast or a god], he is like the 'tribeless, lawless, heartless one,' whom Homer denounces--the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war. He may be compared to an isolated piece in droughts.<sup>2</sup>

For Aristotle sociality is of interest only to the State. He tried also to find a foundation for human sociality in the natural relationship between human persons:

The friendship between husband and wife appears to be a natural instinct since a man is by nature a pairing creature even more than he is a political creature, inasmuch as the family is an earlier and more fundamental institution than the State, and the procreation of offspring a more general characteristic of the animal creation. So whereas with the other animals the association of the sexes aims only at continuing the species, human beings cohabit not only for the sake of begetting children, but also to provide the needs of life. For with the human race division of labor begins at the outset, and man and woman have different functions. Thus they supply each others' wants, putting their special capacities into the common stock. Hence the friendship of man and wife seems to be one of combined utility and pleasure. And the children and common property "holds people together".<sup>3</sup>

In this text, Aristotle does not find a special method for research on human beings, but takes the daily life experience as raw material and interprets it in order to induce some basic principles about the nature of the human being. Thus he takes the sexual relationship between man and wife as the foundation of sociality: the human is interpreted as a pairing creature. Upon this foundation the family, lineage, cities and states are explained. This can be called the biological interpretation of the sociality of human being.

A similar idea is found in David Hume:

But in order to form society, 'tis requisite not only that it be advantageous, but also that men be sensible of its advantage and 'tis impossible, in their wild uncultivated state, that by study and reflexion alone, they should ever be able to attain this knowledge. Most fortunately, therefore, there is conjoin'd to those necessities, whose remedies are remoter and obscure, another necessity, which, having an apparent and more obvious remedy, may justly be regarded as the first and original principle of human society. This necessity is no other than that natural appetite betwixt the sexes, which unifies them together, and preserves their union, till a new type takes place in their concern for their common offspring. The new concern be-comes also a principle of union betwixt the parents and offspring, and forms a more numerous society.<sup>4</sup>

For Aristotle the human is an animal, but a special animal--the best animal with such special characteristics as language and politics. Modern philosophers can hold Arnold Gehlen's contract thesis according to which, compared with other kinds of animals, the human appears as a "deficient being": "From a biological point of view, in comparison to animals, the structure of the human body appears to be a paradox and stands out sharply."<sup>5</sup> This too is a possible hypothesis, just as good or as bad as Aristotle's. Under this hypothesis, the human is incomplete and unfinished in nature, not yet determined or firmly established. Therefore one's existence is a permanent challenge and one needs to develop an interpretation of oneself. The human is free and has plasticity, and hence the capacity to develop oneself; one is not adapted to a specific environment as are animals, but must transform nature in order to survive by creating a human, cultural world and constituting a second nature. Praxis or work is the only means for this purpose.

### *Individualistic*

The other important, but not necessarily correct point in Aristotle's theory of human being is that one's relation to society is similar to that of "an isolated piece at draughts". He had no idea of the value of the individual, nor of the general dignity of a human being. Regarding the individual he said, "The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part."<sup>6</sup> The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficient, but like a part in relation to the whole." For him the virtuous person will act often in the interest of his friends and of his country, and if need be, will even die for them. One will surrender money, honor, and all goods for which the world contend, reserving only nobleness for oneself. This is true of one who lays down his life for another.

It is not that Aristotle was mistaken in emphasizing that sociality is very important. His only mistake in this theory is that he overlooked the principle of the individual in constituting sociality. He did not say how sociality is constituted or provide a sufficient description of its genetic structure. His sole argument is the relationship between the whole and the parts where the whole is the political institution, interests or benefits. The interests or benefits of the individual are sacrificed for the political whole.

In fact, the purpose or the task of society, namely the state, is to enable the citizen to live a virtuous and happy life. Hence, it is not correct to claim only that the whole is prior to its parts, namely that the state is prior and superior to the individual, families and village communities. Individualism is the foundation of every kind of group or society; this principle is as important as the principle of sociality. The nature of sociality can be explained only by a detailed and concrete study of the shapes and forms of the action of the individual.

But Aristotle had no idea of the dignity of the human being in general. This does not mean that in ancient times there were no philosophers who had such an idea as can be seen from his own *Politics*. In criticizing his opposites he mentioned that "others affirm that the rule of master over slaves is contrary to nature, and that the distinction between slave and freeman exists only by convention and not by nature; and being an interference with nature is therefore unjust"<sup>7</sup>; that all slavery is "a violation of nature"<sup>8</sup>. Aristotle did not mention the names of his opponents, and his report about them is too concise to be able to draw any clear picture about their theory of human nature. It is unfortunate that more material about them cannot be found. Aristotle did not accept that there is something like a dignity of the human being in general. He affirmed that there are two kinds of human beings, one is "intended by nature to be a slave" and the other a ruler: that "some

should rule and others be ruled is not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth some are marked out for subjection, others for rule." "The male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the one rules and the other is ruled; this principle of necessity extends to all mankind", for "in all things which form a composite whole and which are made up of parts, whether continuous or discrete, a distinction between the ruling and the subject element comes to light . . . . Such a duality exists in living creatures originating from nature as a whole."<sup>9</sup> His arguments for this terrible idea are only pseudo empirical ones. The opinion about the relation between the whole and parts is not from the things themselves, but from an idea outside of things. For Aristotle, however, it seemed to be evident and therefore he thought, "There is no difficulty in answering this question [namely, refuting the positive assertion of the dignity of human nature in general] on grounds both of reason and of fact."<sup>10</sup>

## **Research on Human Nature**

### *Ancient Discoveries*

Aristotle's example shows how different our ideas of the human being and its sociality are from our predecessors. The image of the nature of the human being changes continuously in the development of a society, the change of social structures, and the history of different nations and societies. Here are two extreme cases.

Historical Chinese culture generally is held to be a civilized culture which was developed very early and is well-known for its courtesy and etiquette. Before 500 B.C., Mo Ti and Confucius advanced the theory of humanity or kindheartedness. But the discoveries of the archaeologists show us that 500 or 600 years before Mo Ti and Confucius, in the Shang Dynasty (c.16th--11th century B.C.), human sacrifices were being made to petition god and the souls of dead ancestors for blessings, good fortune, rain and so on. In excavating some ancient tombs of the Shang Dynasty many tombs have been found with human sacrifices--in some more than 300 to 400 human skeletons. According to records of the time in the form of inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells discovered at the same ruins, more than 1000 men together with 1000 oxen were offered in one sacrifice.<sup>11</sup> In the excavations of 1959 and 1976, 1179 human skeletons were found. But, according to the 1992 oracle inscriptions on the 1350 pieces of the inscription bones, 13,052 men and women were used in human sacrifices. Furthermore, there are 1145 oracle inscriptions recording human sacrifices but without exact numbers<sup>12</sup>. We cannot say that all the records about human sacrifice have been discovered. Similar cases of human sacrifice are found in the history of the Western countries, for example in Greece and Rome. This discovery was a great sensation, even a shock, for intellectual circles in China and led to heavy debate.

In the Shang Dynasty a highly civilized culture had already been developing; it was not a barbarous society. It had a very organized state with more than 100 different kinds of offices; it had penal law and regular troops with war chariots; there were highly developed agriculture and handicraft industries for bronzeware, textiles and silk; it had a written language. But the people in that time still used men as offerings to the Gods because they had no developed idea about the human being in general. Slaves, prisoners of war and the people from such barbarous nations as Qiang were not held to be human at all, but as Aristotle said, "a kind of instrument", "living possession", "instruments for instruments". Therefore they used the slaves and the people from other nations as well as such other kinds of living instruments as oxen in sacrificial ceremonies. This was no crime at all, but a sacred and necessary activity to them, because it was necessary to



pray to the gods for blessings and defense of state and nation, against illness and ill luck, for rain, good harvests and victories in war. For them this was natural, whereas it is obviously terrible and impossible for us. This means that at the outset of human history the individual was an offering or victim of sociality. We find no vestige of the dignity of the human being, but only of kings and nobles, special races and citizens.

### *Research in the Macroperspective*

Are there any inexorable laws or structures in the process of the development of the social order and the change of ideas regarding human beings? The answer is positive and on two levels of related research: the macro and the micro-perspective. On the macroperspective the research is directed to finding the macrostructure or the general principles of the process of the development of society as a whole. A typical and successful example is the Marxian theory about the development of human society, namely dialectic-historical materialism. Marx tried to offer a scientific account of sociality and to find the laws by which it was governed.

Historical materialism seeks "the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historical events in the economic development of society, in changes in the modes of production and ex-change." Marx contends that the economic structure of society, constituted by its relations of production, is the real foundation of society, from which arise the legal and political structures and a corresponding ideology. The social relations of production themselves correspond to stages of development of material productive force, or are defined by it. In this manner the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. In producing to satisfy our needs, we develop new powers and capacities and in the process, human nature itself develops.

Human nature is then not a permanent character of humankind, an absolute and trans-historical principle or structure. By acting on the external world and changing it, one at the same time changes one's own nature in order to correspond to the stages of the development of the material productive force. When the historical conditions were inhumane or degrading, the corresponding idea of the human being, if there was something of the sort, would be inhumane. This theory can explain the reason for human sacrifice and racial, class and cultural discrimination.

Modern industry and science have created the possibility of developing the idea of the dignity of the human being in general. Marx said, "Industry . . . is the open book of the essential powers of man" and "has prepared the conditions for human emancipation."<sup>13</sup> Therefore historical transformation is a progressive process of the growth and development of human powers and needs, and of human nature generally. The standards of human nature and needs are inescapably historical, relative and ideological.

By the development of electronics, the computer industry, and communication technology the horizons of daily life in which human beings live has been extended and the field of empathy for foreigners and strangers widened:

A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man. The demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion, but motivated by a sense of duty. This demand for freedom in human society chiefly regards the quest for the values proper to the human spirit.<sup>14</sup>

This shows clearly what a great influence industry and science have on shaping human nature.

What Marx discovered is not the surface structure of the development of society, but its substructure. This means that the principles of historical materialism do not appear in daily life. In normal cases, one in a definite society, in one's action, is not conscious of these principles, for the structure or aim of the development of the society do not constitute the motivation for daily life and political behaviors. But the apparent purpose of a personal act or the aim of a political movement or an historical event is not the real aim of the development of society. The relation between the two aims is dialectical and generally contradictory.

Marx knew this well. A typical example is Marx's attitude toward English imperialism in India in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, he evaluated it dialectically in a positive manner:

These small stereotype forms of social organism have been to the greater part dissolved, and are dis-appearing, not so much through the brutal interference of the British tax-gatherer and the British soldier, as to the working of English steam and English free trade. . . . English interference having placed the spinner in Lancashire and the weaver in Bengal, or sweeping away both Hindu spinner and weaver, dis-solved these small semi-barbarian, semicivilized communities, by blowing up their economic basis, and thus produced the greatest, and, to speak the truth, the only social revolution ever heard of in Asia.

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was motivated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfill its destiny without a foundational revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.<sup>15</sup>

Even though someone has understood the principles and aim of development and is willing to do everything following the principles in order to realize that aim, as experiences in socialist countries show us, things always go contrary to his or her will and motives, because the principles of historical materialism can be effective or show their effect only over the long period of the development of history. This is similar to the case of the principles of evolution in biology. The miscarriages of the socialist movement in some socialist countries cannot be considered to falsify the Marxian discoveries in research regarding society; they falsify only the understanding of the practical application and of the expectation of the short-time-effects of Marxian discoveries in daily life and surface political issues.

Politics, as Lenin said, is art or skill. It has nothing to do with the objective, neutral law of the development of the history of human society and the principles of historical materialism. Political activities have their own principles; personal daily life follows other principles.

### *The Microperspective*

Research in a microperspective regarding the human and society would not seek the structure of the society by observing society as a whole for the departure point and the foundation of the microperspective is not society as such, but individuals as the basic elements of society and their intersubjective practice.

Phenomenological research about the sociality of individuals is one of the examples of research done from the microperspective. It does not intend abstractly to reflect or speculate on the nature of human beings as individuals as many philosophers have done in his-tory. Rather its

essential contribution is a detailed and concrete description of the mechanism of the individual's thinking, understanding and acting and of the attempt to discover the real structures and principles in the constitution of social relationships in the everyday life. Concrete research in this direction has been done by Husserl in his investigations of intersubjectivity, and by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, and in his early Freiburg and Marburg Lectures, which can be found in Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*<sup>16</sup>

This is not the place to recapitulate Husserl's and Heidegger's work. I wish only to point out that Marxian historical materialism and the foundational phenomenological investigations from the micro-perspective are really quite different. Precisely for this reason they can complement each other in the continuing investigation of the human being and his or her sociality, as did the theories of Newton and Einstein in physics.

## Notes

1. *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 1155a, 5.
2. *Politics*, 1253a.
3. *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII 1162a, 17-30.
4. *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Part II, Sect. II, p. 486 (Ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 1980), Book II.
5. *Man: His Nature and Place in the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 13.
6. *Politics*, 1253a.
7. *Politics*, 1253b, 20-23.
8. *Politics*, 1254a, 19.
9. *Politics*, 1254a.
10. *Politics*, 1254a, 20.
11. Wu Hao Kun and Pan You, *The History of the Chinese Inscriptions on the Bones and Tortoise Shells*, p. 280.
12. *Idem*, p. 40.
13. K. Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *Early Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 355.
14. *The Documents of Vatican II*, translated from the Latin by J. Gallagher, p. 675.
15. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. by Robert C. Tucker, pp. 657 and 658.
16. Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vols. 17-26.



## Characteristics of the Marxist Theory of Collectivism

*Xu Junzhong*

Scholars have widely divergent views regarding the understanding and evaluation of the Marxist theory of collectivism. Some theoreticians consider its heart to be that individuals and personal interests must be subordinated to the interests of the collectivity. Others confuse Marxist collectivism with centralized autocracy, a throttlehold upon the individual character, and even Fascism. Both fail to grasp the characteristics of the collectivism initiated by Marx. In order to clear up the misunderstandings and answer the objections, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of the Marxist theory of collectivism in connection with Marx's evaluations of primary collectivism and individualism.

### Proto-Historical Collectivism

According to Marx, in the process of human history the primary social values, socially adjustable systems, and moral norms are collectivist. In the first stage of human existence, facing the great power of nature, all individuals were weak and insignificant. They were determined by the real conditions of existence and the human instinct for survival. People had to adopt a way of life based on dependence one upon the other, and to gain collective power by forming groups and communities so as to defend themselves and obtain from nature the material means of livelihood. As a result, the consideration of the collectivity as the highest moral orientation and its collective interests as the highest early became the basic principle of human beings. "Community is an entity," says Marx in describing the relationship between individuals and collectivity in the conditions of that primary collectivism, "Individuals are no more than appendages or natural components of the entity."<sup>1</sup> In this kind of collectivity, it was impossible for individuals to be independent; they had to be integrated into collectivities and to gain certain attributes from that entity so as to have means and rights to existence.

Viewed from modern values, his kind of collectivity engulfs individuals and throttles individual characters. Marx, however, was not bogged down in unhistorical and abstract discussions. He considered as the placenta of human civilization the primary collectivity in which the powers of individuals had not developed and individual characters had not germinated. The primary collectivity made it possible for the human being to succeed as a species and for self-consciousness and the capabilities of individuals to develop and accumulate, so that the human being could evolve toward civilization.

### The Process of Individualization and the Expansion of Social Relations

These historical reasons for its coming into being do not protect the primary and crude nature of that collectivity from criticism. It had, after all, the character of excluding individuality which is incompatible with the further development of human civilization. Marx, therefore, adopts a critical attitude toward it, and regarded the break up of the primary form of collectivity as a bridge leading to the full development of human society and individuals, and, finally, to freedom. Therefore, when the collectivity based on the immediate dependence of one upon others disintegrated due to the division of labor and the development of a commodity economy, people

became independent individual monads; they were highly separated individuals. Marx considers this not only a matter of historical progress, but also a significant form in which human individuals matured. The resultant forms of highly separated human individuals based on the division of labor and commodity production brought about intense competition in the whole society and led society to a number of revolutionary changes.

First, by means of competition among separated individuals, humans broke the "natural blood relationship" and the "local connections based on relationships of ruling and obeying"; society gained the vigor to cast off the yoke of tradition and to move towards modernization.

Second, as the natural blood relationship and the immediate dependence of one upon others were broken, an objective situation arose in which "as separated individuals, people have to depend on themselves."<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the competitive relationship replaced the dependent relationship, so that individuals had to depend on their own energy and capabilities in order to establish a defensible position in the competition. This situation was an important moment for stimulating the formation of the abilities of individuals, guiding the formation of their character and making them into rich and open individuals.

Third, with the aid of intense competition among separated individuals, human beings were able to develop for society increasingly perfect mechanisms for adjustment and a relatively modernized value system. Since society needed an effective control system to deal with competition, it had to remake its originally simple mechanism and create various systems and values for adjusting economic, political and ethical relations. This gave rise to freedom and human rights which protect the independence of individuals, the idea of equal rights which ensures that competition proceeds normally, the democratic system which adjusts relations among different interest groups, and other legal systems which insure the security, rights and property of people. Thus, society is enriched, matured and civilized both in its mechanism and in its functioning.

Finally, with the aid of intense competition among highly separated individuals, human beings achieve world level and historical existence. First, people separated themselves and intensified the competition by means of the division of a labor and commodity economy. As the development of the division of labor and commodity economy proceeded they not only continued to separate themselves, but also created wide-ranging and universal social relations. These brought about unprecedentedly strong combinations and dependencies among individuals. Especially when the division of labor and communication became world-wide, world historical meanings were attached to the existence of individuals and their life activities. That is to say, the separation between humans and the wide expansion of human relations are two sides of the same process. With the aid of this process of universalization, people continuously eliminate their national and regional limitations and become world-wide, historical existences.

Marx attaches high historical significance to the development of separation between human beings. This reflects his critical attitude to-ward autocratic collectivity and the primary collectivism adapted there-to, but Marx does not mean to take individualism as the final answer to the puzzle of history.

As a socio-political philosophy individualism has a long history. According to some textual research, this term was created by Tocqueville, a French political scientist of the nineteenth century. Hobbes and Locke, however, manifested individualist thinking much earlier. This emphasizes the individuals' freedom, self-domination and self-se-lection. It insists that the end is the individual *per se*, which has the highest value. Negatively, it opposes external restraints and various dominations imposed on individuals by authorities, especially by the state. In reality, its emergence reflects the demands of the development of capitalism, and mirrors even more the

separated situation of human beings which results from the competition introduced by a commodity economy. Thus, individualism is a theoretical expression of the individuals' separated situation.

Undoubtedly, this theory does not encourage people to seek personal interests regardless of common interests and of the concerns of others. If everyone were selfish and harmed others to benefit him-self, so-called "personal freedom" and "self-domination" would become impossible. Generally speaking, individualism encourages people to treat others equally and to respect others; it even advocates that individual interest should be subordinated to the interest of state when the two conflict. The interest of state is, as Hegel put it, the incarnation of the general interest, it is the highest good. Therefore, individual interests, family interests and the general interest, that is, the interest of civil society, must be subordinated to the interest of state when they conflict with the latter.<sup>3</sup> But the ultimate aim of this approach remains to ensure the realization of the monadic individual; that is what individualism is.

In the context of the process of history, individualism reflects the development of individual independence. But as history develops, it cannot extricate individuals from their worsening predicament, that is, the contradiction between the separation of individuals and the expansion of social relations.

### **The Return to Collectivity**

As described above, the separation of individuals and the expansion of social relations are two sides of the same process; both are marks of social progress. But they are a pair of opposites, diametrically opposed to each other. Obviously a separated individual has no means to possess and control wide social relations, which are formed by cooperation between many people. Productive forces require combinations of many people; the development of commerce, especially world commerce, makes the relations between supply and demand unpredictable and puts them beyond the reach of separated individuals. Thus, for separated individuals, broad social relations present themselves in the form of things marked by contingency, or alienation.

Here one faces not only the menace of failure in competition, but also the emotional solitude and void caused by one's separated situation. History shows that the only way to eliminate the situation of alienation is to recombine people in keeping with the demands of socialization. Marx points out:

The transformation, through the division of labor, of personal powers (relations) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea, but only by the individual . . . abolishing the division of labor. This is not possible without the community. Only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community.<sup>4</sup>

The return to collectivity and the reconstruction of collectivism as the basic way of overcoming the contradiction between the separation of individuals and the expansion of social relations is Marx's way of going beyond individualism. But what are the nature and characteristics of the collectivity which Marx wanted to reconstruct? This is the key to understanding Marxist theory of collectivism; it is the point which is unclear for those who misunderstand Marxist theory of collectivism.

### *Illusory Collectivity*

Generally speaking, as a form of social combination, collectivity is as old as are human beings. People cannot live in solitude even if the development of society has brought them to a situation of separation. On the contrary, the economic and political lives of people are much more social, and people's connections with various economic, political and other social groups are now much more varied. However, the formation of such groups does not mean that the interests of people are integrated, for it serves only as a necessary means. Although the collectivity in a certain sense represents some common interests on the part of its members, particular and general interests can remain highly separated one from the other. Thus collectivity is a necessary form, but it is independent of individuals who must subordinate themselves to it.

Moreover, since the society is divided into classes, collectivity usually has the brand of class, and becomes a means for one class to fight another. In this case, the collectivity is not only an illusion, but also a new shackle for the oppressed class. Marx names this kind of collectivity 'illusory', 'fictitious' or 'false'. The illusiveness of this collectivity lies in the fact that individuals do not dominate the collectivity, but instead are dominated thereby. This independence originates from the separation of individuals, including, of course, the division of their interests. Obviously, it is not the kind of collectivity Marx wants to re-construct.

### *Marx's Notion of Real Collectivity*

What kind of collectivity then does Marx want to reconstruct? To distinguish it from illusory collectivity, Marx names it "real community". "The illusory community in which individuals have up till now combined always took on an independent existence in relation to them. . . . In real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association."<sup>5</sup>

Since this "real community is to be realized in the future, it is natural that one cannot describe its characteristics in too much detail." We should not look for an exhaustive blueprint, but Marx does describe its nature and essential characteristics. In explaining that to which the term "real community" refers, Marx puts it as "the community of revolutionary proletarians who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control".<sup>6</sup> In so doing, Marx excludes the bourgeois community from this category. "In this community," continues Marx, "individuals participate as individuals for it is the association of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of free development and movement under their control".<sup>7</sup> The characteristics of Marx's autocritical community can be summarized as follows:

First, as it arises from the need to solve the contradiction between the expansion of social relations and the separation of individuals, it must be reconstructed on the grounds of highly developed productive forces, the formation of wide social relations and a comprehensive development of people's personalities and systems of abilities.

Second, it must eliminate the social conditions producing "illusory community" that is, the separation of people in the society. In order to achieve this objective it first must eliminate private ownership, for the separation of people has its root in the division of interests which originate from private ownership of the means of production. Therefore, the sublation of private property, and thereby the integration of the interests of the members of society, is another characteristic of the "real community".



Third, the nature of this community is proletarian and revolutionary, but its most essential characteristic is the control of one's own "conditions of existence and those of all the members of society", which means "putting the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control." Thus, in this community the position of human beings is adequately highlighted; they manipulate things, but not the converse.

Fourth, this community does not negate the individual; on the contrary, it is a community in which "individuals participate as individuals", that is to say, it is above all as a member of the community that a human being must be "individual" above all. Here the word "individual" has two meanings: 1) The individual does not take part in the community "as a member of a class", but as a socialized human individual, and therefore can be free of various limitations caused by class interest and separation from one another. 2) He is not only a human being in the flesh, or a biological individual, but also one who has a developed system of abilities and a highly enlightened self-consciousness, that is, one who has an independent personality and thus can stand up for himself in social life. This determinant means that a "real community" can accommodate individuals and provide adequate social conditions for their self-realization, but that it cannot come into being in a society in which persons are not able to act as 'individuals'.

Fifth, the goal of this community is neither "god" nor things. Its basic value is personal freedom, which in Marx's vocabulary is essentially distinct from that of the bourgeoisie. Freedom in a bourgeois perspective, regardless of whether it concerns property, profession, speech, religion or whatever else, does not go beyond the individualist category of the so-called "independent personality" or "independence of human being". In Marx's perspective, freedom surpasses this bourgeois comprehension, for he sees freedom as the manipulation and domination of the social situation and relations in which one lives. Any discussion of Marxist collectivism which strays from this basic value of "real community" deviates from Marx and blots out the characteristics of notion of collectivism.

Our outline of the Marxist theory of collectivism may not be complete, but it is clear enough that Marx's theory has nothing to do with primary or autocratic collectivism: individualism in some people's favor is not to be compared with the positive significance included in Marxist collectivism. Thus any confusion of Marx's collectivism with centralized autocracy, a throttlehold on individual characters and even Fascism must be rejected. Bourgeois thinkers focus their attention on protecting the independence of individuals; proceeding from this they set boundaries between individuals and society, as well as between different individuals by any possible means, so as to designate some spheres for individuals where society and other people cannot interfere. This effort, obviously, has a progressive significance as compared with primary collectivism which negates the value of individuals. For Marx, however, while protecting the individual's independence is no doubt historical progress, this independence is equal to the individuals' freedom.

The liberation brought about by individuals' independence is limited to extricating people from immediate dependence on others, but in doing so, it also brings about broad social relations, and pro-motes a transition from national history to world history. As these social relations are created by the joint activities of people they cannot be dominated by separated individuals, but instead dominate individuals. Meanwhile, people endure the emotional solitude brought about by separation between them, thereby demonstrating that personal independence results in the loss of personality. Marx focuses precisely on how to overcome this situation. That is to say, what Marxist collectivism tries to solve is the problem which bourgeois thinkers have no means of solving. This

justifies the conclusion that only Marxist collectivism can save human personality and lead the way to personal liberation.

Regarding the questions whether or not the principles that individuals are subordinate to the collectivity, and personal interests to those of collectivities, are the gist of the Marxist theory of collectivism, these principles regulate a society in which subjects act with different interests. This standard must be revered so as to prevent the society from disintegrating. But this situation of subjects with different interests is just what Marxist theory of collectivism intends to sublate.

## Notes

1. *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels* (Chinese edition), vol. 46, part 1, p. 474.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 497.
3. Cf. *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, vol. 1.
4. *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, vol. 3.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*

## **The Relation between the Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences**

*Zhu Dazheng*

"Man and Nature" and "Man and Society" seem to concern different problems, yet this is not really so. To a certain extent the problem of the relation between the human being and nature is the problem of that between human beings and society because the social relation among persons is built upon their remaking of nature. Conversely, the relationship which binds human beings to a society gives them ever greater power for the work of remaking Nature.

Many conflicts in modern society have arisen from a failure to understand the dialectical relation between 'Man and Nature', on the one hand, and 'Man and Society', on the other. The higher the level of the development of human civilization the more significant the dialectical relation. Hence, the two issues are both same and different.

"Dialectical relation" is a very broad term; it is used here with regard to the union of the natural sciences and the social sciences.

### **The Relation of Object and Subject: Nature and Human Beings**

In dealing with the problem of the union of these two types of sciences, we must first acknowledge the scientific status of social studies, otherwise there could be no question of their return to natural sciences. However, though the problem of this relation has been solved partially, in its essence it remains unsolved. The key to the solution of the problem lies in the relation between subject and object. In sense intuition, the subject stands in absolute opposition to the object; this rules out speaking of the social sciences at the same level as the natural sciences.

However, the object does not simply exclude the subject, but sublates the external independence of the subject, and makes the subject an internal element. For the same reason, the subject does not simply exclude the object, but sublates the external independence of the object which is made an internal element of the subject. The reason the relation between subject and object is so understood is a fundamental feature of human existence. Whereas animals and beings other than humans exist and reproduce by adapting to the external world, human beings exist and develop themselves by remaking the external world. If human activity were not objective, human beings would not differ from animals, or would be reduced to the animal level. Hence Marx noted: "Whatever relation exists, it always exists for me. Animals do not enter into a 'relation' to anything," they have no 'relations' at all: animals are not relational beings. This is essential for understanding the real meaning of subject and object, and hence what science is.

As a matter of fact, the human being was not fully aware of the conflict between nature and himself in the early stages of human civilization; he considered himself a part of nature, though an intelligent part. As there was no sharp distinction between the natural and the social, truth was often identical with good and beauty.

Only in modern times when the human capacity of remaking the external world has expanded rapidly have human beings become conscious of their independence from nature. Human beings were under the illusion that their remaking of nature influenced only the external world, whereas it was only by one's own free will that one influenced oneself. Thus, the natural sciences were opposed to the social sciences.

However, as a result of the accelerating development of the human capacity to remake the world, people now notice that in re-making the external world one, at the same time, changes oneself. This synchronous phenomenon appears in the social relations between persons, as well as in the powers of human knowledge, the values chosen, the aesthetic needs, etc.

Therefore, the natural sciences are internally related to the social sciences. Natural scientists are not merely outside observers of the phenomena of nature, and human activity in remaking nature is the same as that in creating human history. On the other hand, social scientists cannot merely observe social phenomena; the various kinds of activity in creating human history proceed only in conditions which enable persons to remake nature and undertake social production.

We conclude that if the natural and social sciences did not permeate and cooperate with each other in the long run human beings and society would fail to develop smoothly.

### **Creativity, Ideals and Truth, Good and Beauty**

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that the mutual permeation and cooperation of these two sorts of science concern only different disciplines and sets of scholars. Rather, new disciplines are produced in this process, which will result further in new syntheses of human knowledge.

In view of the above, philosophers must reflect anew upon the present situation and the future of philosophy. It is my sense that the trends of humanism and of scienticism have both passed, and that the major subject matter of philosophy now promises to be the relation between truth, good and beauty.

The core of this relation consists in the relation between thought and existence, and thus concerns not only the relation between human and thing, but also among persons. Precisely because this is a relation in a double sense, it signifies not only human knowledge, but, more importantly, the unity of truth, good and beauty. Philosophers must focus their efforts on the historical development and intrinsic rules of the interconnection of these three and study the present and future developments of this relationship. Such studies promise to enable humans to find the way to a brighter and happier future.

Generally speaking, the human is an animal struggling for ideals but these are not given once and for all: the past ideal, once realized, is no longer an ideal. Indeed, ideals are called such precisely inasmuch as they are not actual, while the actual is called such because it is not ideal. In human history the ideal and the actual change from one to the other in an endless process of development.

One's practical activity in one's struggle to realize one's ideals is always united with truth, good and beauty as a unity. The form and content of this unity vary with historic periods, nations and states inasmuch as any practical activity is both subject to and transcends existing conditions. If it is not subject to existing conditions, the ideal will not be realizable and will become a fantasy. On the other hand, if it does transcend existing conditions the ideal will lose its proper character and leave humans satisfied with existing circumstances. Generally, practical aims can be reached only according to ideal principles. These can be realized because they are first of all in accord with the objective law of the external world, and moreover include the creative act of the subject. Without this latter, respect for the existing situation will degenerate into the yielding to it, causing thereby a failure to transcend it. The creativity of the subject, on the other hand, is determined to a large extent by one's knowledge of objective laws, the values aimed at, and aesthetic needs.

Thus, studies of nature are not naive picturing or mechanical re-presentation, but imply, consciously or unconsciously, the values aimed at and the beauty needed by humankind. However, if the desire for value and beauty were to have no foundation in a knowledge of objective laws, it would lead to irrationalism or anti-rationalism, thereby resulting in mysticism. On the other hand, if the knowledge of objective laws does not include in itself the desire for values and beauty, it will lose its cognitive function, and become mere natural experience similar to that of animals.

Finally, that the laws of the external world are not influenced by human acts does not mean that human acts are subjectively spontaneous. On the contrary, they too are objective and subordinate to the objective laws of the external world. One is not "God"; one cannot separate oneself from the world or toy with it from outside.

In reality, the most important laws of the objective order are those which harmonize truth, good and beauty, and which unite the three in human practice. They are the most general laws and await philosophical study.



**Part III**  
**The Philosophy of Social Being**





## 8.

# **Human Nature and the Relationship between Individuals and Society**

*Shi Defu*

Since humankind appeared on earth, it has tried continuously to obtain knowledge of all surrounding things. Furthermore, it has continuously speculated over what human beings are: for thousands of years philosophers and other thinkers have been probing the essence and nature of the human being and putting forward their own different ideas.

## **Human Nature**

One of the oldest definitions of humankind is "a kind of two legged-animal without feathers." But Xun Zi asserted, "What makes mankind to be such is not only that they have two legs without feathers, but also that they have the ability to discern."

The problem of human nature is the deepest of the issues regarding human beings which have long been under discussion. In ancient Chinese philosophy, disputations between doctrines on the goodness and evil of human nature led to others between doctrines of "principle and desire". In modern western philosophies the dominant position defined reason as the essence of human being, meaning that it is reason which makes the human being to be human. But in modern philosophies definitions of reason differ greatly. For example, though classical philosophy defined reason as the human essence, Hegel considered it to be self-consciousness, while Feuerbach included will and feeling along with reason. In contrast to modern rationalists, contemporary western philosophers have been being looking also to irrational elements. Thus Schopenhaur and Nietzsche focused upon will, Bergson upon intuition, the existentialists upon feeling, and Freud upon human subconsciousness and sexual desire, etc.

All the philosophical theories about human nature and essence constitute a precious spiritual endowment which is instructive for us. Based on different foundations they deepen our self-consciousness and ability to recognize ourselves. But their shortcomings also are evident: some are too abstract, others too onesided, the methods and starting points of others present obstacles to the achievement of scientific knowledge or the recognition of human nature. This chapter will focus upon this problem.

## **The Objective Character of Human Nature**

As humankind is an objective existent, in order to grasp human nature we should first recognize and analyze it as it is, just as we treat natural beings. Natural science has shown that humankind was not created by gods. Such ideas as "God created mankind" or "Death and life lie within fate, wealth and nobility lie with Heaven" have been shown to lack solid foundation, although they are believed by some. Humankind exists and develops according to the laws of the natural world of living things. But humankind is not simply an existent in the natural world; it is moreover a subjectively social existent, a unity of individual and species, of individual and society. Individuals are as cells which constitute society so that humankind as an organic whole constituted by individuals who on their own initiative actively and continuously exchange materials, energy and information with the outside world. This kind of special life process is the premise and

foundation of individual and social existence and development. This two-way passive-active process between humankind and the external world forms laws for human development; it produces and manifests the qualities and essence of humankind.

Therefore, in order to learn about the general nature of human beings (i.e., of humankind generally), we should study thoroughly the process of human history. In order to recognize the manifestations of human nature in different times, societies, classes and even individuals, we should study concretely the practices of classes and individuals in different times, societies and communities. Methods which grasp only the general essence of human beings at most can explain only the distinction between humankind and other animals, but cannot reveal the difference between classes and individuals in different times and societies. But if we study only the special character of classes and individuals in different times and societies without grasping what is common to humankind, we will not be able to grasp the essence by which human beings are distinguished from other animals. Methods which try to get an eternal and abstract human nature in a manner separated from human practice and historical development are not worth the effort.

Not only does the human being have a complicated physiological organization, but the multi-leveled and changing practice and relationship between himself and the external world, and among individuals, classes and society, has manifested that the human is the most complicated changing material system known. Therefore, we can achieve the truth about human nature and essence only when we regard it as a material living system and study it from a comprehensive and developmental viewpoint. This means that in order to bring to light the real essence of the human being not only should we analyze the concrete and manifest form of each level and aspect of human nature in the system of human qualities, but also we should study comprehensively and synthetically the position of different human attributes and qualities in the system of human nature and in the relationships among the qualities and attributes. This disqualifies the method of some philosophers who grasp only a certain human attribute or special quality and exaggerate it one-sidedly as the essence of the human being without paying attention to other aspects.

## **The Social Character of Human Nature**

As an object of the study of philosophy and the social sciences the human being has natural attributes and social and spiritual qualities because the human being is a natural, social and conscious existent. But comparatively speaking, we must recognize that the human is first of all a social existent; thus the social is the essential quality of the human being. His natural qualities of physiological organization and function, such as appetite, sexual desire, and the tendency of self-protection, are the natural material foundation on which the human being as a physiological organism exists and multiplies. But these natural qualities are transformed in continuous social practice and life; they differ from the instincts of animals and are dominated or controlled by the human's social essence. Were human nature to be reduced to merely physiological instincts, we could place it only in the category of animality. The spiritual qualities of human being, such as the ability to think, consciousness, will, feeling and the capacity to make aesthetic judgments are complicated conscious actions. Doubtless they constitute important aspects of human nature and play an important part in social life. But when we study further the source and development of these conscious actions we will find that essentially they are products of a social practice and develop along with the development of practice.

The social qualities of the human being are many-sided, such as the capacity to do productive work and other social practices, dependence upon other individuals and groups for one's existence,

communication and cooperation with other individuals and classes, etc. But for the following reasons productive work is the most essential and dominates the others:

(A) External things and humankind itself both are objects of knowledge, but in this they differ greatly. There is a special epistemological difficulty regarding knowledge of one. A person's eyes can observe external things, but cannot see themselves. External things can be presented to us, but our faces are special objects which cannot be observed directly. In order to reveal the secrets of human nature and essence, we must find means by which to observe ourselves, just as we must use a mirror in order to look at ourselves. Objectified action, namely, social practice, which is constituted of productive work and its products, can be used as this means. In productive work one's inner essential strengths (physical and intelligential) are revealed and at last are reified in their products so that we can recognize ourselves in the objectified world we create.

(B) One cannot do productive work in isolation, but only in the social relationships developed in productive work. Thus, in work people not only change the forms of natural materials and create products which meet people's material and cultural needs, but in the material process of production also have created social, political, ideal, racial, family and ethical relationships which are based on economic relationships. It is in these working and social relationships that human nature is revealed.

(C) To assert that productive work is the most essential dimension of human being which distinguishes humankind from animals does not deny that humankind has other qualities which distinguish it from animals, such as rational thought, self-consciousness, the desire for freedom, language, etc. It asserts only that productive work is more essential than these qualities, for they can be explained only starting from productive work.

Therefore, society is not a collectivity of isolated individuals, but a living organism united in social practice constituted of productive work. The sum total of the connections and relationships formed in the social practice of myriads of individuals constitutes society. An individual cannot be absolutely separated from society because he or she is social, and society is a society of individuals.

Because human nature and essence are determined by this social dimension, it is not helpful to separate the individual from social practice, relationships and development, and then to construct a completely inner human nature and essence on the basis of an isolated "man-himself". This would reduce the human being to an alienated human nature and essence and see the future of society as the realization or return to this alienated human nature. But neither is it correct to deny the existence of individual differences produced in different interior and exterior conditions because human nature and essence must be understood upon the basis of social practice and relationships.



## The Role of Interpersonal Relationships

Woo Kun-Yu

### Human Relationships

The concept *anthropos* conceived as an abstract term does not bespeak any human relationship, whereas the notions of "a human being" or "an individual" bespeak various dimensions of interpersonal relationship. A concrete human being always is twofold, namely, an individual and community with others. The former forms oneself as an independent person, the latter creates society in which every one who is independent by nature is dependent on others. This independent-dependent person constitutes a *homo ethicus* beyond mere *homo naturalis*.

Like any living creature, human nature in its concrete form consists of male and female, man and woman. In ancient Greece, philosophers like Plato emphasized that neither man nor woman alone possess the whole of human nature, each is only a part of the ideal human being.<sup>1</sup> According to Plato, love (*eros*) between man and woman is a natural tendency in which the parts of the original *anthropos* seek one another<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the act of *eros* is a reunion of the human being which in its original status (namely, in the world of ideas) was one. It was divided into two parts only because of the incarnation of the human soul into the sensible world, like one condemned to a prison or entombed after death.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the primordial sense of interpersonal relationships as interpersonal love between a man and a woman.

In the Middle Ages, when Christianity became dominant in the West, people understood that according to the Old Testament woman was a part of man.<sup>4</sup> Hence, marriage was elevated to a sacrament in which the couple received the blessing from God through the Church.

Where the philosophy of Plato saw "*eros*" as the way back to primordial human nature, Jesus Christ gave his disciples "charity" as the greatest commandment.<sup>5</sup> "To love one another" was to be the sign of Christians<sup>6</sup> and interpersonal relationships would be the essential way to perfection for all believers.

In China, although there was neither a Platonic theory about man and woman nor any religious sacrament for marriage, nevertheless the origin of man and woman was discussed thoroughly in the *Book of Change*: "Chi'en-Tao accomplished man, whereas Kun-Tao accomplished woman."<sup>7</sup>

The ancient Chinese sages sought the archetype of both man and woman in the primordial substance of Tao; it is only Tao's different attributes that make the difference in human nature. Tao is the fullness of life; the reunion of man and woman participates in the same living force, which is "the generative act-process without end."<sup>8</sup>

But a man and a woman alone do not constitute a family in the full sense -- this lies in their having "numerous heirs". As in Hebraic culture, the Chinese saw begetting numerous children as a blessing from heaven. The ordinary transition from the individual to society is mediated through the family. Here natural and consanguineous relations play an essential role, but the primary significance of family lies in interpersonal love.

In Chinese traditional culture, the family system has been accepted and respected throughout most of history. The natural binary force, Yin and Yang, signifies not only a generative dynamism, but also the prototype and example for the human couple: husband and wife. Begetting numerous children symbolizes a virtuous, happy life and is a divine blessing. In ancient China society cannot be understood apart from the notion of family with its consanguineous relations.

Once when Mencius was asked about humanity and the difference between a human and a brute he said:

Between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate function; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity.<sup>9</sup>

For Mencius interpersonal relationships reveal the essence of humanity; thus he defined humanity, not from the substantial standpoint, but from that of interpersonal human relationships.

The virtues of interpersonal human relationship, namely, affection, righteousness, attention to their separate functions, proper order, and fidelity, are often proclaimed by the today's neo-Confucians:

Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge are not infused into us from without. We are certainly furnished with them.<sup>10</sup>

The remote condition for creating these virtues obviously is interpersonal relationships, without which they cannot be realized.

Though the moral subject is without doubt the cause of any virtuous act, without human relationships as their remote condition there can be no virtuous thoughts, and consequently no virtuous acts. Mencius' theory of interpersonal relationship seems closer to the Platonic and Christian traditions than to Kant's *Critiques*.

### **Alienation as a Distortion of Interpersonal Relations**

After the division of Christendom through the Reformation, there followed a spiritual and religious collapse leading to a rapid secularization marked by individualism and egoism. The natural sciences swallowed up all the myths, while individualism undermined all authority, both religious and political. When the final goal of human life was placed in doubt, the value system appeared questionable. In rejecting ecclesial community Martin Luther's "*sola fide*"<sup>11</sup> supported an individualistic personal autonomy.

Though the constitution of society is founded on families, tribes, folks and nations, etc., its most fundamental elements are individuals and their families, of which society is constituted. But as society stands much higher even than family, one must leave home and country because of social, agricultural, commercial and technological changes. In a commercial society consanguineous feeling diminishes leading to anguish and insecurity.

Even without the effects of modernization there would still be alienation from a sense of family, neighborhood and country.<sup>12</sup> But on entering modern society the individual faces a change from interpersonal contacts to mass-group activities. This has a number of modalities.

First, the technological succeeds the agricultural, so that modernization seems almost equivalent to technologization with its implications for development and progress. Thus, the advent of science and technology not only created commercial cities, but brought about an alienation of the sense of family and of the rural sense of belonging, which had perdured since distant ancestors. Living in a crowd deprives one of his or her sense of self-identity.

The resulting confusion of values, doubt regarding tradition, and general helplessness in life recall not only Nietzsche's "*um-wertung*",<sup>13</sup> but the many behavioristic theories. These maintain

that there is no psychological difference between a human being and a brute, but that all is determined by environment, and hence is deeply influenced by science and technology<sup>14</sup>. This denial of human freedom is the cancer in modern spiritual life.

(Indeed, the alienation of interpersonal relationships may be worse in China than in the Western world. The latter developed technological and commercial society in a gradual manner: one can trace its origin to the Olympic games. In contrast, as China had stressed agriculture and despised commerce,<sup>15</sup> modernization came so suddenly that people were not psychologically or technologically prepared to make appropriate adjustments.)

In the Renaissance and the Enlightenment many thinkers had addressed problems of the cosmos and of human beings, but overlooked the most important philosophical problem. They paid great attention to sense experience and to the empirical, from which they built up as their *Weltanschauungen*: the three stages of knowledge of Auguste Comte<sup>16</sup> and the theory of evolution of Herbert Spencer.<sup>17</sup> Auguste Comte's positivism denied traditional philosophy and religion, and maintained the importance of natural science. Scientism not only reacted passively against traditional spiritual values, but employed logical processes to separate "ought" from "is" (Sollen and Sein), thereby tearing asunder the whole fabric of traditional culture. Karl Popper's Open Society<sup>18</sup> is a typical example: Parmenides' insight that "Thinking and being are the same"<sup>19</sup> is neglected and Mencius' theory is considered false.<sup>20</sup>

Second, in the political order thinkers like Nicolo Macchiavelli<sup>21</sup> and Thomas Hobbes<sup>22</sup> stressed external power and neglected the interpersonal love which binds people together. Thus, though the distortion and decline of interpersonal relationships is caused mainly by technological development, it reflects also changes in socio-political constitutions such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's social contract theory.<sup>23</sup> In such self-alienating modernization, democratization cannot find a higher point in which to harmonize or attenuate the contrast between interior anguish and exterior changes.

Thirdly, individualistic thinkers could not accept that the primary goal of marriage was the generation of children. Hence, the concept of family became narrower: filial piety and parental love lost their function or were narrowed in scope.

Inner alienation creates a conflict between the individual in him-self and his relationship to others. In concrete social life it must be asked how a modern human being can possess simultaneously a two-fold nature, i.e., independent individuality, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, dependence on others? This question, which long disturbed human history reached its modern apogee in the twin developments of extreme individualism and of extreme collectivism; their cold war could confrontation marked the end of the twentieth century and probably the end of modernity as an adequate paradigm for future progress.

## **Solidarity**

Recently, solidarity has been proposed as a promising com-promise. This would not leave human nature in its original, naive status. The relation between the individual and others should not be left to natural impulses, not should an artificial mixture of the two be attempted. Rather, solidarity would raise persons above the stage of nature, beyond merely naive impulses and enable them by intelligence and freedom to select what is a duty (or "ought") in accord with the moral law and its obligations. From the viewpoint of solidarity this higher stage is the place not of the *homo naturalis*, but of the *homo ethicus*. Here the phenomenological epoch would be very useful in bracketing naturalistic intuition in favor of the moral categories. This does not mean that

the *homo ethicus* dares to act against the natural law, but that he stands above nature and builds a moral world that goes beyond the merely natural and secular.

This special, higher status fits well with the Chinese ethical culture which often rises about the law of objective nature. In Chinese daily life, especially in conversation, logical criteria often do not function; subjectivity plays a much greater role than objectivity in Chinese linguistic usage. Thus the Westerner would be surprised in speaking with a Chinese not to receive a positive answer to the question: "Are you not a Chinese?". This illustrates that Chinese take the person to whom they speak as the *Gegenstand*, rather than the objective *Tatsache*: hence, "Yes" follows only a positive sentence, while "No" follows negative sentences. This shows the interpersonal relationship to be much more important than any objective truth or logical rules.

In western philosophy objective truth is the main concern of epistemology. Before the birth of Husserlian phenomenology any subjective concern was considered ideological, or even empty or non-sensical. In China, however, because of its moral orientation, subjective sincerity weights always more heavily than objective truth. It has been said that "Sincerity is the way of heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of man."<sup>24</sup>

In daily conversation it would be often asked, "What is your noble name?" instead of the simple question "What is your name?" If your name actually is noble or great due to your ancestors you still have to answer in the following form: "My humble name is Chen." Without doubt the family Chen is a very great and famous family in China; that is an objective fact. The moral virtue of "sincerity", however, forces you to humble yourself. In the same sense if asked, "From which great city do you come?" the answer should be "I come from the small city of Shanghai," though this is contra-objective. When your age is asked, you should answer, "I live 40 years in vain."

The interpersonal relationship is therefore neither scientific nor objective, but belongs to "Li" (*Ritus*), which is the norm and rule for any interpersonal relationship. Here "Li" means also sincerity as the way of heaven and of humans. "Li" stands over all science, logic and epistemology; it is metaphysical and exists originally in the world of ethics. One who lives with "Li" is called Chun-tzu as an individual, and Shen-jen as a member of society. He is *homo ethicus*, in contrast to *homo naturalis*; obviously he is a *homo supernaturalis*.

It has been said, "When accomplishments and solid qualities are blended equally, we have Chun-tzu (the man of virtue)."<sup>25</sup> Here the accomplishments belong to the cultural sphere, whereas the qualities belong to self-cultivation in a moral sense. Both are the qualities of "Li".

"Li" remains in a spiritual milieu in which sincerity takes the place of truth and makes life an art. The act of conversation like "My humble name is Chen" or "I come from the small city Shanghai" decorates vulgar expression with cultural quality; it is a thing of beauty. Moreover, all the virtues which come from the interpersonal relationship, such as benevolence, righteousness, piety, love, fidelity, etc., are good in a moral sense. Here sincerity, beauty and good meet together (*verum, bonum, pulchrum convertuntur*).

## **Virtues**

The various traditional virtues which come from "Li" are not controlled according to modern logical norms. In all sectors of philosophy the logical distinction between "is" (*Sein*) and "ought" (*Sollen*) has come to mean that "is" is real whereas "ought" is ideal; the former has a sound foundation in existence, but not the latter. Hence, if the moral problem is dealt with according to the epistemological rules of true and false, right and wrong, moral values would be reduced and ultimately lose their bases. Mencius' theory about virtues, which comes from the various



interpersonal relationships, is grounded, however, not only on "ought" but also on the fact that all human beings by nature possess the archetype of such virtues. This archetype is a fact with both "is" and "ought" in its innermost core.

Benevolence, righteousness, propriety and knowledge all come from this innermost core and are used by Mencius to express humanity:

Anyone who lacks of the feeling of commiseration is not human; and who lacks the feeling of shame and dislike is not human; and who lacks the feeling of modesty and complaisance is not human; one who lacks the feeling of approving and disapproving is not human.<sup>26</sup>

According to Mencius, humanity and virtues which come from the interpersonal relationship are one and cannot be divided.

Given this two-fold human nature, Mencius and all ancient Confucians did not deal so much with the individual alone, but paid much more time and effort to the discussion of interpersonal relationships. The communal or social dimension of human nature is the main problem for their philosophizing.

In comparison with *homo naturalis*, *homo ethicus* can be called the "ought". But *homo qua homo* is prior to such division into a two-fold human nature. The logical division of "is" and "ought" is posterior to human nature which *per se* consists of both the individual and one's relation with others. To lack either would render the human being imperfect.

## Conclusion

The understanding of ships by Plato or Christianity does not come fundamentally under the logical division of "ought" from "is". But in philosophical history interpersonal relationship has been much less challenged than has the individual, which has been attacked vehemently by both materialism and atheism. They denied not only the existence of God, but also the existence of the human soul. They agree only on the material, and do not accept any supermaterial substance; hence they consider human individuality and independence to be illusory. Consequently, all spiritual values are diminished and perish, leaving humanity equal to brutality. When human nature is no longer human, then human relations are no longer personal and all the virtues of interpersonal relations are nonsensical. Thus the moral, religious and artistic values must all be cancelled.

The materialistic orientation of the Western world attacks human relationship not directly, but more deeply on the metaphysical ground of personal individuality. In response it is necessary to awaken the arch problem of the spiritual. In the very beginning when all matter was still in chaos, the spiritual force was already immanent within the cosmos.

This may be mythos, but mythos is the friend of philosophy, as Aristotle once said. No matter how much modern people believe in science, the fact of freedom remains undeniable and freedom in human consciousness gives witness to the existence of a soul. Moreover, in the epistemological experience of abstraction one should feel a spiritual dimension in one's intimate life.

Man is human because of his intelligence. Its development progresses step by step beyond the body matter and into the spiritual sphere. In interpersonal relations, which are oriented mainly towards spiritual intersubjectivity, the spiritual life of human existence created the history of humankind. This includes not only the natural sciences through which all the necessities of man's daily life such as food, clothes, home, and transportation advance day by day, but morals, arts and

religion which also flourish. All social constructions are under the control of morality for in them human nature is more than a process of scientific technology: artistic and religious feelings lift human nature from the natural to supernatural life.

Thus, through solidarity and its social and political aspects the human being awakens within him or herself self-conscious to interpersonal relationships. In this it is not only that the individual exist for society, or society for the individual. Rather through interaction from both sides one is not only an individual, but also as a member of the society.

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## Notes

1. Plato, *Timaeus*, 69c.
2. *Ibid.*, 91a.
3. Plato, *Symposium*, 179b.
4. *Genesis* II:21-23, Adam's exclamation: "bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh" symbolized the unity of man and woman.
5. *John*, XIII:34.
6. *Ibid.*, 35.
7. *I-king* (The Book of Change), Appendix.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Mencius, Bk III, Pt. I, ch. IV.
10. *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, Pt. I, ch. VI.
11. Martin Luther used *sola fide* to say that one was saved by faith alone, that is, gratuitously by God and not by one's love or good works.
12. Cf. Kun-yu Woo, "The Modernization of Confucianism--A Discussion on the Cultural Change from Consanguineous-feeling to District Concern" in *Symposium on Confucianism and Modernization*, edited by Joseph P.L. Jiang, (Taipei: Freedom Council, 1987), pp. 111-120.
13. Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, III.
14. Behaviorism quite flooded the psychological and sociological sphere. B.F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is a typical example.
15. Lu-shi Chun-chiu, "The Superiority of Agriculture" and Hou Chia-chu, "The Development of Economical Value", papers presented at the "International Conference on Values in Chinese Societies: Retrospect and Prospect", The Center for Chinese Studies, The National Bibliothek, May 23-26, 1991, Taipei.
16. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) in his three stage theory of the development of human knowledge maintained that theology and philosophy are now surpassed by the natural sciences.
17. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) in his ten volume *System of Synthetic Philosophy* (1862-96) maintained that everything possesses a tendency to develop and progress through a process of evolution.
18. Karl Popper (1902- ), *Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1962).
19. Parmenides, cf. Diels/Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Band I, 12 (Zurich: Weidman, 1966), 28 B 3.
20. Huang Chin-ming, *An Enquiry on the "To Be" and "Ought To Be"* (Taipei: Oh-Hu 1985), pp. 5-6.

21. Nicolo Macchiavelli (1469-1527) maintained that the state is power.
22. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) saw human beings as wolves to other humans (homo homini lupus).
23. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his *Social Contract* maintains that the society is for the individual.
24. *The Golden Mean*, ch. 20.
25. *The Confucian Analects*, Bk. VI, ch. XVI.
26. Mencius, Bk. II, Pt. I, ch. VI.



## On the Theory of the "Ethical Code and Nature" in Wei Jin Metaphysics

*Lou Yulie*

Inevitably every one lives in a web of social, economic, political and human relations and must be restricted by his or her profession, social status, law and morality. We are, therefore, social beings. On the other hand, everyone has his or her own character, independent spiritual world, and free will. Hence, we are also individual beings. Everyone has these two aspects which constitute contradictory relations in reality. Societies demand that individuals be subordinated to the integral web of social relations, whereas individuals want to act according to their independent character and wills. Sometimes society and individuals in certain societies are unified, but in others they may strongly contradict each other. Such contradiction between society and individuals has been one of the most important problems with which Chinese and foreign philosophers and thinkers have been mainly concerned throughout history.

One of the characteristics of Chinese philosophy is that it has paid special attention to society, human life, and ethics, and that it has developed many theses on the relations between societies and individuals.

### **Subordination of the Individual to Society**

According to the classic Confucian idea, social beings were prior to individual beings, and it was an unalterable principle that individuals should be subordinated to societies. This however, had many forms.

*Confucians* emphasized the duty or obligation of individuals to societies. They considered that everyone who had a definite position in a society certainly had a title suitable to his or her identity, and therefore should implement this duty or obligation to society on the basis of his or her own identity or title. If people did not carry out their appropriate duty or obligation according to their identity, they would destroy the normal social order, and bring about a confusion of society.

On this ground, Confucians demonstrated that everyone had the possibility of cultivating his or her own morality and becoming a moral example, thus that everyone had a conscious obligation to morality. Hence, they advocated that all should harmonize the relations between individual and societies on the basis of the conscious principle of morality (Confucians seldom talked about voluntary principle of morality). From a certain point of view, Confucianism also attached importance to individuals, but in the sense that everyone raise their own moral consciousness, and submit themselves to society. It is obvious that Confucian theory is reasonable in sustaining social integrity, but Confucianism went further to have individuals submit totally to social relations while neglecting the function of their individual free will.

*Legalists* in the pre-Qin Dynasty also emphasized subordination of the individuals to society, but their theory and practice differed greatly from that of the Confucians. Where the Confucians advocated curbing self by moral consciousness in order to submit to society, the Legalists did not believe that men had such moral consciousness. Thinking that men had no moral sense at all, they argued that human nature was so extremely selfish that only severe laws could make people submit

to integration into society. Thus, the Legalists went farther in rejecting individuality than the Confucians, and their theory was the main basis of the feudal monarchies.

*Daoists* in pre-Qin Dynasty, especially Zhuang Zi, developed ideas contrary to both the Confucians and the Legalists. As they thought that the individual was prior to the social, they condemned the varied limits societies put upon individual persons and emphasized the importance of acting according to the natural instincts of the individual. When people are too concerned with their position and title, right and wrong, gains and losses, they lose their personal freedom. Hence law systems and moral norms constructed by societies in order to maintain varied kinds of human relations not only restrict individual persons, but are the main sources of social unrest.

Daoism thought that Heaven and Earth should allow myriad things to grow according to their nature and not disturb or limit their growth and development; this is called the Dao of "acting naturally". Human societies should not only consider nature as their example, but also follow the Dao of acting naturally in not limiting and disturbing individuals' actions, but allowing them to develop on the basis of their natural instincts. Lao Zi thought that if a society followed the Dao of acting naturally, people would regain their simple and honest disposition and lead peaceful lives; in this way societies would become stable.

However, since as a matter of fact it was impossible for individuals entirely to break away from the yoke of societies, they could not fully gain their personal freedom. Zhuang Zi held that he was able to solve this problem by adjustment of methods of recognition, that is to say, people were able to free themselves from dependence on society and the trammels it put upon them; in this way individuals could gain full freedom in their personal spiritual lives. Obviously the Daoist theory is reasonable in emphasizing personal free will, but it went to the other extreme by setting individuals totally against society and hoping to free them completely from social relations.

The theory advocated by Confucians, which stressed that every-one's social duty or obligation was determined by his status and title, has been called the "ethical code". The Daoist theory, which maintained that people's action should conform to their personal nature, has been called "nature". The problem is whether there is any possibility of harmonizing these two kinds of theories and transforming the relation between individuals and societies from one of tension or antithesis to one of harmony. The metaphysicians during the Wei Jin Dynasty inquired into this possibility.

### **Wei Jin Metaphysics on the Relation between Nature and the Ethical Code**

The Confucian theory of the "ethical code" played an important part in social life during the Han Dynasties, especially the East Han Dynasty when it was the main standard for appraising competency and selecting qualified personnel. Later it resulted in abundant abuses at the end of Han Dynasty when the "ethical code" became a useful tool not only of the rulers to oppress people, but also for cunning persons to gain fame by deceiving the public. This destroyed the personal character of human beings and corroded social morality. In order to correct the social evils, Wei Jin Metaphysics praised highly the theory of "Nature" and affirmed the essential and rational character of the natural instincts of individuals. The metaphysicians thought that the "ethical code" was constructed on the basis of the natural instincts of human beings that is, that the "ethical code" originated or resulted from "Nature". "Nature" was the original substance; the "Ethical Code" was its manifested function. They sharply criticized the theory that rigidly adhered to the form of the "Ethical Code" but threw away the original substance to retain only the manifested function. The main failure here was the separation of the "Ethical Code" from the essence or basic spirit of human

beings. If their natural instincts were truly understood, if the basic spirit of "Ethical Code" was truly grasped, the social norms of "Ethical Code" would be not in conflict but in tune with people's natural instincts.

*Wang Bi* (A.D.226-249), one of the main pioneers of Wei Jin Metaphysics, was a talented thinker who died quite young. He advocated that "nothing was the origin" and the "sage could experience nothing", meaning that people should follow the natural instincts of humans and things. He thought that pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy were natural human instincts, but that the sages could not have such feelings. For example, even though Confucius already had a fairly good idea of Yan Hui's moral character and talent, when Yan Hui came to him and wanted to learn from him he could not help but feel de-lighted, and was filled with deep sorrow when Yan Hui died at a young age. It can be seen from this example that it is impossible for people to get rid of natural human instincts. He pointed out that people's moral actions were natural expressions of their nature: for example, natural love for parents was a kind of expression of filial piety. Social norms of morality (and rules) expressed varieties of natural feelings in human nature, while giving full expression to men's natural instincts. Thus, what sages taught was also able to rouse people's natural instincts.

Hence, Wang Bi argued that natural human instincts were the original substance, while the "Ethical Code" was its manifested function. But as people had almost always given up the original sub-stance and looked for the manifested function in social reality, they could not cling to "Nature", but were anxious vainly to pursue external reputations by following moral norms. As a result, a hypocritical mood pre-vailed throughout the country, which completely destroyed the moral order. As these phenomena ran counter to the real intention of morality, in order to eliminate them Wang Bi wanted to establish new social rules on the basis of folk customs. He suggested reviving innocent human nature to resist the hypocritical mood. In brief, Wang Bi thought that the "Ethical Code" should be controlled by "Nature", and that one should return to "Nature" on the basis of his theory of the "Ethical Code" originating from "Nature". In this way, he wanted to reconcile the differences between social ethical norms and the individuals' feelings and free will.

*Ji Kang* (A.D.210-263) and *Ruan Ji* (A.D.223-262), represented another school of Wei Jin Metaphysics which further emphasized that "Nature" was the original substance. They held that people should let natural instincts take their own course and be rid of the trammels from the "Ethical Code". If people had no intention of self-glorification, they would thoroughly break away from the yoke of an "Ethical Code" and their natural instincts would develop fully.

Therefore, members of this school acted unconventionally and unrestrainedly, paying much attention to the expression of the true feelings of "Nature", and showing contempt for restrictions from the "Ethical Code". For example, it was said that Ruan Ji was very filial to his parents. While he was playing chess with his friend his mother passed away. The friend asked him to stop playing, but he insisted on seeing who was the stronger. When his friend Pei Kai came to express condolences on the death of his mother, he was sitting on the ground with hair in disarray and legs stretched out straight. His eyes were drunken and bleary, and fixed on his friend. Their thoughts and actions exerted great influence on the society, and soon became so prevailing a social custom that many celebrities tried to imitate Ji Kang's and Ruan Ji's self-will and dissoluteness.

This went so far that it endangered ritual and law, which were rudimentary in maintaining social order. The spreading of this social mood was obviously inconsistent with the real intention of Wang Bi. It went to another extreme, and caused many people much anxiety. A famous

metaphysician, Yue Guang, criticized the people who tried to please the public with claptrap and sought fame. He said that since there was no lack of place in "Ethical Code" to express the true feelings of "Nature", they did not have to be unruly and artificial. This meant that it was unreasonable to completely scorn the "Ethical Code" and that feelings that strayed from the norm of "Ethical Code" were bound to be unruly and fantastic. Here Yue Guang restated Wang Bi's theory advocating that "Nature" was the original substance, and the "Ethical Code" its manifestation; both were necessary.

*Guo Xiang* (about A.D.252-312), a famous thinker of Wei Jin Metaphysics, pushed the theory of the metaphysics to a new level by enriching and improving Wang Bi's thought about the problem of the relations between Ethical Code and Nature. We have been told that on the relations between original substance and manifest function Wang Bi emphasized that the original substance commanded the manifest functions, that is to say that "Nature" commanded the Ethical Code, which then should return to "Nature".

There was more or less a vestige of separating the original substance and the manifested function, nature and Ethical Code in Wang Bi's thought. From this there could arise a tendency to get rid of the Ethical Code in order to allow Nature to express itself freely. Taking note of this problem Guo Xiang, who emphasized the identity of the original substance and the manifest function, held that the "Ethical Code" existed in men's natural instincts and that the natural expression of men's instincts was sure to be in keeping with the "Ethical Code".

Guo Xiang said that moral norms, such as "humanity and righteousness", were complete human nature; we should allow them to unfold and reveal themselves in life. He also held that it was un-necessary to think that "humanity and righteousness" were not human nature at all. To illustrate that "humanity and righteousness" existed in human instincts he noted that cattle did not refuse having holes to pierce through their noses, nor did horses refuse to wear harnesses. By these examples he suggested that the norms of the Ethical Code, which seemingly resorted to external forces to establish themselves, actually existed in men's natural instincts. Therefore, to submit to the norms of Ethical Code, such as "humanity and righteousness", certainly conformed to the natural instincts of human beings.

He further noted that humans and things had different natures from birth, each with his or her own quality that neither could be got rid of nor changed, just as natively clever people and fools could not be changed. He argued that every human being or thing should be satisfied with its own nature; demands which go beyond their nature not only throw a society into conflict, but also do harm to themselves. If people or things, no matter how great the differences existing between them, were satisfied with the stipulations of their nature, what they achieved would be the same without any differences.

Relations among men or things were no more than their acting according to their nature; there were no other kinds of relations than this. It was like a human body with a head at the top and feet below, the five internal organs within, and fur without: all the parts of the body tried their best to do their duty to construct the whole body. Beyond this one, there were special relations among them. Hence, Guo Xiang declared that men's social strata were determined by their nature. If people were satisfied with their nature, the order of the Ethical Code naturally would be stable.

In brief, Guo Xiang drew the conclusion that the "Ethical Code" was natural from the thought that "Ethical Code" should be in accord with "nature". Guo Xiang's theory has been called the theory of the "Ethical Code and Nature". It integrated the external norms of social morality with



internal human nature in such wise that the "Ethical Code" was a natural and rational form, and the "Nature" was satisfied to some extent.

Wei Jin Metaphysics held that the Ethical Code originated from human nature and thereby provided a foundation for freely observing the norms of social morality. This was a supplement to classical Confucianism which had laid particular stress on moral consciousness, but neglected the theory of moral consciousness. Later the Song-Ming Confucians explained the "Ethical Code" as the Heavenly Principle and considered it to originate from human nature by the theory that "human nature was the Heavenly Principle". Obviously, the Song-Ming Confucians were influenced by Wei Jin Metaphysics.

Tension between the individual and society will always exist, but its content and form will change as time goes on. So it is necessary for us continuously to seek new theories to harmonize this tension. The theory of "Ethical Code and Nature", as harmonizing relations between individuals and society, already has become a thing of the past, but it remains a useful reference in seeking new theories to harmonize the tension between individuals and society.

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(Translated by Hu Jun)



## **Value Reconstruction in Chinese Philosophy: The Impact of European Thought**

*Shu-Hsien Liu*

China is one of the world's oldest civilizations and the Chinese used to be proud of their achievements. In spite of its dynastic cycles, for more than 2000 years since the Han dynasty (B.C. 206-220 A.D.). China's basic value structure remained unchanged. The importation of Buddhism from India had profound influences, but never shook the Chinese foundations.

### **The Contemporary Problematic**

Since the nineteenth century traditional values appear to have totally collapsed. Western science and technology, business enterprises and political systems have had great impact on China. In effect, China was forced to adopt many Western values in its effort to modernize herself. The result, however, is hardly encouraging. Main-land China having turned communist faces a tremendous credibility gap after the sudden change of course for the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union. Taiwan on the contrary, having turned capitalist and enjoyed phenomenal economical success, seems tortured by self-seeking. Everywhere there seems to be either a value vacuum or value confusion. Thus, the problem of value reconstruction has become the most urgent issue for Chinese philosophers today. It is not a purely theoretical issue, but also a practical, existential issue.

The mood today is clearly different from that of the May Fourth New Culture Movement in 1919 when Western science and democracy were held up as the model to follow. Ironically, part of the reason is due to the self-doubt of the West as the values of the Enlightenment are being challenged as being exclusively white, male, and Europe-centered. While the Chinese look for guidance from the West, the West is turning away from its own tradition: many intellectuals opt for a radical pluralism which calls for a recognition of other traditions, referring especially to the minority cultures.

While in itself the intention is undoubtedly noble, this has not solved our problems, but added to our worries. The prevalent European theories of value appear to have a strong relativistic flavor which baffles those who for guidance look for certain universally acceptable value norms.

The world is fast turning into a global village in which the first, second, and third worlds are closely related to, and vigorously interacted with, one another. Today centrifugal and centripetal forces work against each other to form a surrealist picture which it is difficult for anyone to understand. These conflicts are undoubtedly expressions of basic conflicts of values. Can we simply relish a radical pluralism and relativism, and declare "the end of philosophy"?<sup>1</sup> Perhaps "an abdication of philosophy" would be better description of our situation today. Contemporary Neo-Confucian philosophers have re-fused to resign themselves to such a fate; hence, their effort to reconstruct a philosophy of value.

As has been said earlier, such an undertaking does not find much help from contemporary European philosophies. For example, some analytic philosophers defend an emotive theory of value. Granted that there is a distinction between "Is" and "Ought", to see values as nothing but the expression of emotive responses is to under-mine the very foundation of a philosophy of value. It provides no justification for condemning even what the Nazis had done except by appealing to

the principle that might is right, as it was by the greater might of the Allies that Hitler was utterly defeated.

Likewise meta-ethical studies are of no help, as they largely avoid the substantive issues of value and concentrate upon the nature of ethical language. They seem unable to provide a good answer for the question: "Why should I be moral?"

Continental European philosophies fare little better as they also tend to retreat before a contemplation of values. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger provides merely a phenomenological description of human existence, but such terms as "authentic" and "inauthentic" should not be understood as value preferences. Gadamer's analysis of "prejudice" has been accused of historical relativism. If so it would leave value reflection in some ways in limbo.

Unfortunately, lack of reflection on values or a tacit assumption of relativism has serious consequences. Plato's attempt to lay a foundation for values was a failure, but the challenge he raised to relativism remains valid and should not be ignored. I do recognize that there are good reasons for contemporary thinkers not to trust the idea of eternal, universal values, and their rebellion against authority has had some liberating effects. But the push toward radical pluralism and relativism, going to the other extreme, ceases to be useful and constructive. There must be regulative principles which can help us to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad, and to make rational and responsible decisions rather than irrational and irresponsible ones.

There seems to be need to return to Kant, and recent trends show that Western thinkers are paying more attention to value inquiries. For example, John Rawls's *theory of justice* has had great impact, and Habermas and Apel are trying to bring about a transformation of philosophy by urging examination in depth of communicative reason. Interestingly enough, both trends take Kant as the point for departure. Perhaps in value philosophy, as well as in epistemology, we must not bypass Kant, but go beyond him in order to explore the future for value inquiry.

### **Mou Tsung-San and the Call for a Moral Metaphysics**

Undoubtedly, Kant was a European product; his way of thinking was thoroughly Western, methodical and rigorous in sharp contrast to the Chinese practical and ambiguous way of thinking. But surprisingly Kant has also exerted profound influence on contemporary Neo-Confucian philosophers. Mou Tsung-san, perhaps the most original of them today, developed his philosophy by modeling it after, and going beyond, Kant's philosophy. This can be seen clearly through the titles of his books: *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy*, *Phenomenon and the Thing-in-Itself*, *On Summum Bonum*, etc.<sup>2</sup> Approaching the problem here from the Chinese perspective, I shall introduce Mou's thought and then consider the possibility of *rapprochement* between contemporary Chinese and Western thought.

*A Chinese Moral Metaphysics of Hsin (Nature) and Hsing (Mind-Heart): The Unity between Heaven as Immanent Transcendence and Humanity as Transcendent Immanence*

Mou thinks that Confucius provided the best expression of morality, but that as he lacked analytic skills he was not able to spell out that *jen* (humanity) as a moral principle is universal and *a priori*. Among Western thinkers, Kant was the one who could truly appreciate the meaning of moral consciousness. His analysis was indispensable for all, but because it took an analytic approach, it was not able to provide the most profound expression of morality, as found in Confucius. The problem with Kant lies in his being able to establish only the so-called

"metaphysics of morals." Due to the particular pietistic form of his Christian background he can entertain only the possibility of a moral theology, but fails to envisage a "moral metaphysics" as is fully developed in Sung-Ming's mainstream Neo-Confucianism.<sup>3</sup>

Mou sees Kant's great contribution as lying in his distinction between moral autonomy and heteronomy. But as pure reason cannot answer the question of the origin of free will, he took it only as a postulate. The Chinese, on the other hand, never made a sharp distinction between pure and practical reason: all three major Chinese traditions, Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist, assert that humans have intellectual intuition. Mencius made it clear that moral action springs spontaneously from the mind-heart which cannot bear to see the suffering of others; it is not motivated by hypothetical imperatives under the iron rule of causal chains. Mou further developed the view of his teacher, Hsiung Shih-li, that in truly moral behavior a human being is a free agent who follows laws of his/her own mind-heart, which are a presence, not just a postulate.

Mou thinks that the worst misunderstanding of Mencius' view is to understand his mind-heart as the empirical mind-heart studied by psychology. In fact it should be understood as *pen-hsin*, the original mind-heart endowed from Heaven, so that it is essential for each human being to develop fully this mind-heart within his or herself. Thus Mencius said:

He who exerts his mind to the utmost knows his nature. He who knows his nature knows Heaven. To pre-serve one's mind and to nourish one's nature is the way to serve heaven. Not to allow any double-mind-edness regardless of longevity or brevity of life, but to cultivate one's person and wait for destiny (*ming*, fate, Heaven's decree or mandated) to take its own course is the way to fulfill one's destiny.<sup>4</sup>

The implications of this paragraph are extremely rich. Precisely because it is only when one has been able fully to develop his/her original mind-heart that one is able to realize one's nature, that Mencius can make the claim that human nature is good. Otherwise the claim would be groundless, as the empirical mind-heart is neither good nor evil but capable of both good and evil doing. Only when the original mind-heart is followed are the moral actions proceeding from it good without qualifications. The discovery of one's mind-heart leads to its origin, one's *pen-hsing* or original nature, which is the source of our moral actions.

In other words, Mencius never claimed that humans do not do evil things, but only that when humans do good things as free moral agents the foundation lies in his/her endowment of *pen-hsin* and *pen-hsing*. Mencius sees in this the essential difference between humans and other animals. Only through vigorous self-discipline can our original mind-heart and nature function effectively so as to lift us above the animal level and enable us to behave properly on the human level.

As Mou sees it, Kant's free will floats in the air because he says nothing about self-discipline in order to make free the will which is actually at work in our lives, nor does he have a theory of mind and nature, i.e., a moral metaphysics, to back up his metaphysics of morals. As Kant's understanding of the mind does not extend beyond the empirical mind, and his understanding of nature pertains to physical nature, his free will lacks solid grounding. Hence, he has to rely on his faith in a transcendent God--a subject which cannot be handled satisfactorily by pure reason.

For the Confucian tradition, however, moral laws are grounded on *hsing* (nature), and *hsin* (mind-heart) is understood as the actualizing principle. Only thus can we give a truly satisfactory answer to the question, "Why should I be Moral?" In effect the question of *hsin* and *hsing* cannot be avoided, because we would never morally condemn a tiger when it kills

a person, whereas we would condemn evil human actions because human beings are presumed to be moral agents with free will. We cannot but conclude that it is something pertaining to our *hsin* and *hsing* endowed from Heaven.

Again, precisely because we have such endowment, we have access to Heaven, the ultimate source of creativity working incessantly in the universe. There is no need for us to depart from human ways in order to know Heaven. On the contrary, the only way for us to serve Heaven is to develop to the full our endowment therefrom. Thus, there is a unity between Heaven as immanent transcendence, and humanity as transcendent immanence.

Nevertheless, humans are still finite existents who must accept their *ming* (fate, decree or mandate) in this world. Though in some sense still inscrutable, heaven is not unknowable for humans. As Wang Yang-ming insisted, the *liang-chih* (good knowledge) in us is not different from that of Heaven. A moral metaphysics does not mean imposing the human will on Heaven. On the contrary, the human being is the only animal that can transcend its own will in order to appreciate the creativity of Heaven, which far surpasses human creativity and works incessantly in the universe.

### *Mou and Kant*

From the above discussion we can see clearly that Mou has attempted to incorporate some Kantian insights in order to develop a creative interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophical insights. Some may say that Mou's paradigm is in fact quite different from Kant's. Intellectual intuition for Mou actually means a personal participation in the Way, which enables humans to be co-creators with Heaven in shaping reality in the making. The meaning of the term is no longer the same as in Kant's philosophy, who insisted that only God can have intellectual intuition while humans have only sensible in-tuition.

There is no denying that Kant's thought has a built-in structural instability in the duality of phenomenon and thing-in-itself. One may maintain the delicate balance between the phenomenal and metaphysical thrusts, or one thrust may be further developed and emphasized at the expense of the other. Mou's attempt clearly favors the metaphysical thrust. This development of a moral metaphysics is against the current tide of contemporary Western philosophy. But his attempt to reconstruct metaphysics should not be seen as an attempt to revive Platonism in the twentieth century. Plato's ideas are eternal and objective, he has to face tremendous problems in bridging the gap between transcendent ideas, on the one hand, and concrete things, on the other. In contrast, the Chinese see transcendence and immanence, Heaven and humanity, as a pair of interdependent concepts.

The primary concern for Chinese thinkers is not a theoretical philosophy of being, but a practical philosophy of existence for realizing values in this life through self-discipline. Hence, the Chinese have no use for Plato's abstract universals, their way of thinking follows the pattern of *li-i-fen-shu*: principle is one while its manifestations are many, like the same moon shining over different streams. The universals are concrete universals compatible with a highly situational ethics. While *li-i* takes us back to the metaphysical origin of values, with creative reinterpretation *fen-shu* would help us build a bridge to the modern world.

Mou believes that we must uphold the so-called *tao-tung*, i.e., the philosophical tradition, and commit ourselves ultimately to *jen* (humanity) as well as to *sheng* (creativity), the principle transcending space and time. In the meantime the actualization of humanity in this world must take a roundabout way. Hence *hsueh-tung*, i.e., the tradition of objective learning including science,

and *cheng-tung*, i.e., the democratic tradition, must also be established. In other words, tradition must be broadened so as to include the achievements from the modern West. But there is no reason why these must be pursued at the expense of tradition.

### ***Li-I-Fen-Shu* as a Common Project for East and West: Humanity, Creativity and Participation**

In fact no living tradition has ever remained at a standstill. If it fails to move along with time and its message fails to receive ever new reinterpretations it will soon die. Recently, I have attempted to give the Neo-Confucian dictum: *li-i-fen-shu* still another interpretation, remaining true to its spirit while looking for more suitable expressions for our own times. From this perspective, the transcendent regulative idea of *jen* is no different for Confucius, Mencius, Chu Hsi or us; yet each generation, or better still each individual, is looking for ever new manifestations of *jen*. Time and again these will break the confines of the traditional scope, especially as modern life has adopted a much quicker tempo than in the past. In fact, there is nothing in the world which is without potential moral implications. Especially such new inventions as nuclear bombs, contraceptives, test-tube babies demand that we work out new positions according to the principle of humanity.

The commitment to *li-i* does not entail a dogmatism, as some critics argue that the commitment to Confucian values would pose a limit on the future development of human civilization. They fail to note that no civilization can exist without exercising a certain form of restraint. For instance, an ultimate commitment to humanity and creativity means that we are not allowed to do things against humanity and creativity. In fact what injures humanity and creativity are exactly those factors which if left unrestrained would destroy human civilization.

Furthermore, the ultimate commitment to humanity and creativity does not even require us to agree upon what are to be considered proper manifestations of humanity and creativity. The only thing we need to agree upon is that all be committed to try our best to manifest humanity and creativity, to earnestly put our ideas into action, and to keep open communication between ourselves.

To push the matter one step further, I do not even see why only the Chinese need to be urged to make such an ultimate commitment. Something grown out of the Chinese soil does not need to remain only Chinese. If the principle is truly transcendent, then it would have to transcend the Chinese culture, so that Chinese civilization becomes only one possible manifestation of the principle.

Not only have the Chinese no monopoly of the principle, in fact, mainstream contemporary Chinese thought has actually disowned its own tradition. The failure to realize humanity in this world is a failure not only of the Chinese, but of the world. Today does not differ from ancient time: human beings still cannot bear to see the suffering of others. What we must commit ourselves to is to find contemporary ways to reduce this suffering.

But in fact the difference between various religious traditions does not seem to be that great. Hans Kung proposed adopting *humanum* as a universal criterion for all traditions. Many contemporary Christian theologians now opt for symbols of creativity and participation, rather than sticking to the traditional symbols of creator and domination. They are working hard to find contemporary manifestations for their ultimate concerns.

Thus, our commitment to humanity and creativity is not only a commitment to adopt a rational procedure to solve practical problems, but a commitment to something substantive which helps us

to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad, rational and responsible actions from irrational and irresponsible actions. But because the guidance it provides us is never complete, we cannot tell what actually is helpful toward the course of humanity and creativity until concrete situations are carefully and thoroughly examined. Thus we are not allowed to pass judgments in an *a priori* fashion. In other words, only our commitment is *a priori*, while all our concrete judgments are *a posteriori* and must be subject to empirical enquiry without any exception. In this we propose to overcome the difficulties faced by the so-called Kantian formalism.

Wang Yang-ming said:

*Liang-chih* [innate knowledge of the good] does not come from hearing and seeing, and yet all seeing and hearing are functions of *liang-chih*. Therefore *liang-chih* is not impeded by seeing and hearing. Nor is it separated from seeing and hearing.<sup>5</sup>

Seeing and hearing indicate empirical inquiry, including scientific investigations. Though it is impossible to establish a foundation for morality via empirical scientific studies, in order to manifest *liang-chih* or humanity in the world empirical inquiry is highly relevant, indeed indispensable. As an illustration, only if we have knowledge of nutrition would we be able to better follow the guideline of treating our health well. Such knowledge cannot but progress along with time.

Thus *liang-chih* in itself is no different in the past and in the present, but the functioning of *liang-chih* is different in different times and spaces.

If my interpretation of Wang Yang-ming is correct, then what he said amounted to just another way of spelling out some of the rich implications of *li-i-fen-shu*. A reinterpretation of the dictum would in-deed help us find modern expressions for the Confucian message of humanity and creativity.

## Conclusion

I must confess that I am indeed fighting a war on two fronts. In the attempt to avoid the two extremes of absolutism and relativism, I am willing to take a critical stance against both traditional and contemporary philosophies. In fact, tradition as it was did have a tendency to put too much emphasis on *li-i*. It had a tendency to take certain manifestations which were good for only a limited time and space as something eternal and sacred. When these were made absolute, they become fossilized shells bearing only the name of humanity, though in fact often they were against humanity.

This explains why we have to modernize by putting more emphasis on *fen-shu*. But when this tendency is pushed to the extreme of adopting an untenable radical pluralism and relativism and shying away from the search for universal moral principles, a revitalization of the spirit of tradition once again becomes necessary.

Once the ultimate commitment to humanity and creativity is established, I see no insurmountable obstacles to finding a *rapprochement* with contemporary attempts to reconstruct value inquiries such as those by John Rawls, Habermas and Apel, etc. Only when the ultimate commitment to humanity and creativity is combined with a down-to-earth pragmatism will we be able to find a direction for the future.

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## Notes

1. See Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy ed., *After Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1987).

2. See Mou Tsung-san, *Chih te chih-chiao yu chung-kuo che-hsueh* (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy) (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1971); *Hsien-hsiang yu wu-tze-sheng* (Phenomenon and the Thing-in-itself; Taipei: Student Book Co., 1975); *Yuan-shan-lun On Summum Bonum* (Taipei: Student Book Co., 1985). I shall not provide extensive footnotes for my discussion of Mou's thoughts; for a general introduction of his philosophy, see Shu-hsien Liu, "Postwar Neo-Confucian Philosophy: Its Development and Issues" in Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Gerhard E. Spiegler, ed., *Religious Issues and Inter-religious Dialogues* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), pp. 288-293.

3. Mou Tsung-san was of the opinion that the great Chu Hsi (1130-1200) was "the side branch [taking] the position of orthodoxy" and did not belong in the mainstream. For a discussion of the problem see Shu-hsien Liu, "The Problem of Orthodoxy in Chu Hsi's Philosophy" in Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 437-460.

4. Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 78.

5. Wang Yang-ming, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings*, trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 150.



**Part IV**  
**Social Harmony and Transcendence**



## The Human Being and Society: Identity and Concern for the Eco-Ethical Sphere

Tomonobu Imamichi

### The Priority of Person and Society vis a vis the Problem of Identity

Human beings belong to society, but society consists of human beings. Regarding the problem of identity this raises an interesting question, namely, which is prior; human being or society? The question may be restated in the following form, "Which is more important for us, personal or social identity?" In response I would like to think about the linguistic form of self-presentation for instance, at the beginning of a meeting, using the most ordinary expressions of self-identity in accord with the conventional linguistic formulae of a certain cultural tradition.

In an Occidental culture circle, this can be simply: "I am John Doe, Professor at the Washington University in the United States of America." If the time is extremely limited, one may say, simply, "I am John Doe, Professor," so that everyone can know, his full name and his profession. This is indeed very convenient and effective and hence seems to be the formula of self-presentation used throughout the world.

But in an Oriental cultural circle the normal traditional formula of self-presentation is quite the opposite. For instance in Japanese Mr. Doe must say in the following way " *Watakushi wa America Gas-shukoku no Washington Daigaku no Kyôju Doe John desu.*" It is quite the same content as the previous English example of self-presentation. But I would like first to translate that Japanese sentence entirely word to word into English and then point out the essential meaning of the linguistic difference between the two.

(1) A word-for-word verbatim translation would read: I of America United States, at Washington University, Professor, Doe John am. Everyone perceives the quite opposite order of the same words between the two language formulas. If the time of self-presentation for a person is extremely limited, in the case of Oriental tradition, according to Oriental custom Mr. Doe may say " *Watakushi wa America no Washington Daigaku no Doe desu,*" that is to say in English, "I am Doe, at Washington University in America". But here everyone must perceive that his personal name is omitted. Sometimes in the Orient one omits one's personal name in self-presentation although there is plenty of time to do so, namely, one stops with the family name. And although there may be only a minute for it, still in the Orient one makes an effort to say first the name of the society to which one belongs. What is the essential meaning of this drastic difference?

(2) An interpretation of the opposite linguistic order in isofunctional self-presentation: The fact that the personal name is clearly announced first in the Occident indicates that there personal identity is prior to social identity. As the society to which one belongs may be changed through one's decision or by an accident, the most important factor for individual duration is personal identity. In the Occident, as its etymological origin "socius" suggests, society is an organization of comrades constructed on the basis of a certain common interest. Thus in the Occident the term "society" has no original mythological principle; it is a variable existent, not a fatal datum. There, social identity may be a functional identity through which each member of the society can realize the common aim more easily than without that organization.

In contrast, the fact that in the Orient the name of the society to which one belongs is clearly announced first means that there social identity is prior to personal identity. This tendency goes

further so that the personal name may often be omitted in the usual formula of self-presentation. The Japanese word for society is *shakai*. It is not an original Oriental term, but a translation of the English word society which Yukichi Fukuzawa invented through Chinese characters. *Shakai* in Chinese means cult-assembly. The reason he chose this word is not clear, because the translator himself did not write the reason. But every authentic group in the Orient normally is made by a higher power, such as Heaven, the gods, the emperor or a hero. Its origin is mythological and religious; it is almost a fatal datum for the person who belongs to it. It is then no mere variable condition whose components can change according to present needs.

Hence, *Shakai* as a religious cult-assembly is therefore an appropriate translation for society in the Oriental world, because almost all authentic groups in the Orient are mythological in origin. In contrast, this translation is never appropriate for society in the Occident, because it has no nuance of a construction by comrades.

From the point of view of a comparative study of philosophy the above reflexion is interesting with regard to the relation of the individual to the group in general. In the Orient where social identity is far stronger and more important than personal identity, there is always the danger of a totalitarianism whether national or domestic. Each presupposes a pathetic and passionate consciousness of group identity. In this context the highest society as the fated group is the national state as fatherland, thus, the totality does not mean here universal humanity but only national domesticity.

The greatest identity is national identity supported by mythological fatalism as antiquity in the epic stage of the historical world process. This is the reason why very often in the Orient nationalism is seen as compatible with socialism or communism, and also why Japanese economic imperialism and protectionism are carried out without control from the side of Japan as a group. The problem "Man and Society" must be thought through with a consciousness of the definition of society. What then is society; is it still a *societas* which consists of *socii* who are the subjects with individual liberty?

In sum, etymologically society in the Occident is the manmade variable group of comrades (*socius* -- *societas*). On the contrary, in the Orient *shakai* means a religious assembly for a local deity and hence may be authoritative. Therefore, whereas in the Occident individual identity is prior to collective identity, in the Orient collective identity is prior to individual identity. The principle of the stronger self-identity in the Occident is God as Creator of the individual; in the Orient the Deity is the mythological centre of local unity.

In both the Occident and the Orient the consciousness of members is generally speaking almost the same. As consciousness is an inner temporality, all the members are isochronique and in such a society the aretological principle is subjectivity and intersubjectivity. In the Occident the subjectivity is of the individual person as an ontological point, and intersubjectivity is a contractual relation as mutual aid. In the Orient the subjectivity is being subject to the higher as a moral attitude, and intersubjectivity is the moral basis as reciprocal concern.

## **The Question of the Definition**

If then we must think afresh about the definition of society because of philosophical reflexion on the present human situation it is important to reflect also upon the definition of the human being, in order to enrich the range of the problem. This is the question of the word "man". Even without introducing feminism, a theme such as "Woman and Society" would introduce the sexual dimension of social conditions. In the anti-war movement it normally is helpful to have many

feminine voices, and many difficulties concerning family or marriage could also be thought from new angles than in the past. But here I would like to think about the term "man" as a representative word for human beings, namely, as an ontological term.

Society today is no longer the comradely organization of *socii* living "*facie ad faciem*" to each other, but now is enlarged to great scale. "The Human Being and Society" must be restated as "The Human Being and Institution." The transmutation of society as a group of *socii* to the institution as an organization of members can be observed even in the case of our philosophical societies in the course of these 50 years. Almost all the societies had articles of incorporation in terms of *Gesellschaft*, but were societies of philosophers as *socii* in the atmosphere of *Gemeinschaft*. Nowadays they are all institutions as *Gesellschaft*. So every society is now a society as institution.

This means that the human being as *individuum* is *a priori* incorporated in an institutional society of which the representative example is the state with authoritative power to control every individual. Institutional society gives to its subordinate individuals special guarantees in compensation for its authoritative control which seems always to be an obstacle to the freedom of individuals. As an institutional society the modern state no longer has a mythological origin or any spiritual authority, but it has legal power of predestination.

Like religious predestination, the legal power of a state imposes upon its subordinate individuals its acceptance as the principle of their social activity. As soon as we are born, almost *a priori* we at once are incorporated in such an institutional totality. It is by fate that we are born in a particular state. Except for some people who exercise power or passionate patriots who were educated in the nationalistic ideology, most people wish to liberate themselves from such legal restrictions as military conscription, heavy taxation, or the political intervention of state power in all domains of culture, education or religion.

Thus "Man and Society", which in the present situation is "Individual and Institution", very often is reformulated into "Revolutionary and *Ancien Régime*". Although we know that we have guarantees from the institutional society or state, we cannot be satisfied, for example, with national policies which seduce to war in order to place a moratorium upon ethics. This is the real shame of humanity which leads individuals to be "revolutionary," desire a borderless society and stateless world.

In sum, when society which was group in the original mode develops it must transform itself into society as institution. Such a society has been sought in modern times; in its typical form as state it has been a fatal *a priori* datum for human beings. As soon as one is born without one's approval, one must be incorporated as a member of the institution that is the state and without one's approval.

In the Occident, through its long universalistic tradition, the society as institution can be organized as a legal system, so there is a possibility of democratic discussion for some adjustments. Nevertheless before the fatal power of the state as institutional society the proponents of a borderless society appear as "idealistic" revolutionaries.

In the Orient, through its domestic tradition, the state as institutional society can more easily be combined with nationalism. As this is convenient for local prosperity and for local policy the domestic concerns serve to justify this nationalist pressure. But most intelligent people feel a suffocating agony under this pressure and seek a border-less society.

Such a society as institutional system has a *Gesellschaft* character which presupposes the equality of humans and their rights, with no priority or posteriority. Hence, temporality as consciousness is synchronique; without historicity this synchronique structure becomes the sign of a universality which transcends the borders. In such a society the legal authority of the state is

regarded as higher than moral authority and orders a moratorium on morality. If borders are visible limits on human conduct, one wishes a borderless society.

### **The New Ideal and Its Implications**

As is well-known, the borderless society of one world was once clearly declared by Christ when he said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness", but since Patristic times this has been interpreted as a spiritual world. Thus, the truly borderless society through a collapse of institutional society and state which is sought on an international scale by "intellectual revolutionaries" is indeed a new ideal in our modern time. The international Court of Justice, the League of Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were the beginnings of a modern movement for a borderless society. But these trial so-called international projects presupposed the existence of nationality as the essence of the state as an institutional society. Hence, the real borderless society has been realized, not through the conscious spiritual movement for an ideal world, but unconsciously and rapidly through the marvelous effects of technology.

Technological universalism has change and is changing all the material conditions of the old elements of society as institution. For instance, revolutionary technology, even in transportation through the popularization of air travel, reduces the meaning of borders between states almost to naught. The diffusion of information through the electronic media universalizes and standardizes people's common out-look regarding secular life in its material dimension. The effective and hence broadly used language in the technological sphere is composed of arithmetic numbers or alphabetic letters. Thus technological necessity renders the world universal and borderless and thus the new ideal in modern times is half-realized.

At least at first this seems to be so. But under the shadow of technological identity there now arises the problem of nostalgic difference which prepares for the revival of an intensive spiritual nationalism. Such a cultural nationalism is a compensatory form for the superficial technological universalism. It is like a faint voice of the spirit of a tree in woods which now are being destroyed by technology for its civilization. Cultural nostalgia is a form of expression of the human spirit which is not satisfied by the informational extension of the spirit or by the material convenience gained through technological progress.

The new type of nationalism of cultural nostalgia must not be passed over as harmless. It calls for support because human beings must desire not only adventurous progress, but *nostos* or return. This is the beginning of a retreat into oneself or of the return to one's origins. Hence the desire for return as nostalgia is very important for the human being. In the present situation of technology without spirituality, cultural nostalgia now extends its support. Sometimes this cultural nostalgia is utilized by political nationalism, which wishes to find a cultural apology in its national mythology. Hence, we must have cultural nostalgia in the context of a technology which lacks true culture, but we must not return to nationalism. What should we do?

In sum, the archetype of the borderless society was once declared in human history by Jesus Christ's "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness." Since Patristic time this has been interpreted as a spiritual world. It was left to the marvelous affectivity of technology to realize an authentically borderless society as the technological dimension of life. This dimension which really is internal, borderless and universal has absorbed the world into its technological identity.

In the shadow of this material identity there now emerges a special nostalgia for one's cultural distinctiveness. *Nostos* as return is necessary for human beings because self-consciousness as



reflexive knowledge is possible only through *nostos* to the inner-world. Cultural nostalgia is one of the steps toward the self-identity which is the point of departure for the itinerarium to one's ontological origin of oneself. No period in history has so lacked a nostalgic cultural dimension, as does our technological dimension without culture. As a result cultural nationalism is often combined with political nationalism.

Hence we must create not only the material borderless dimension that is the technological world, but also a spiritual borderless world. In addition we must give to the nostalgic desire of culture new spiritual support.

## **The Desire for an Eco-Ethical Sphere and the Need for an Eco-Ethica**

*Eco-Ethica* is a new philosophical term. *Eco* comes from a Greek word *oikos* which has two meanings, namely, a house in the narrow sense of the word, and then a life sphere or cosmos in which humankind lives. Here we use "*eco*" in its widest sense so that *Eco-Ethica* means the ethics for human beings in the cosmic sphere. Our times are no longer national, international or simply global, but really intersideral or cosmic.

We can no longer be satisfied with our old system of ethics which was valid at a time in which human beings lived only in nature. Through the telephone, society in its technological dimension has changed the concept of a neighboring person from the numerically limited, visible and spatially near person whom we know, to the numerically unlimited, invisible and spatially unconditioned person whom we do not know. This means the end of ethics *facie ad faciem* in nature, and the beginning of a new *eco-ethic* for the technological dimension. But as a philosophical discipline, *eco-ethica* has its own spiritual sphere and must propose for humanity a new possibility for spiritual nostalgia which is an actual movement for the inner return to self-identity.

## **Summary**

This paper has the title "Man and Society", of which the subtitle is "Identity and the Desire for the *Eco-ethical* Sphere".

It is divided into four parts, namely: 1. The question of priority with regard to the problem of identity. This considers society as group of *socii* (comrades) in the comparative perspective between Occident and Orient. 2. The question of the definition. This treats society as institution. The representative form of such institutional society is the state as a legal organization. It is a fatal datum *a priori* to the individual. 3. A new ideal and its result. This considers society's technological standardization with regard to material conditions. 4. The need for an eco-ethical sphere. This considers the need for an entirely new effort for human morality in the technological dimension, that is to say, an *eco-ethica*.

Each part has four moments of reflection, namely, a) the comparative perspective, b) the problem of identity, c) the nature of temporality as existential consciousness, and d) an aretological tendency.

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## The Dynamics of Tradition

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### Chinese Tradition under Siege

The Chinese experience with the West in the last 150 years has been a series of humiliations and defeats which raised profound doubt in the Chinese mind about the value of its own tradition. Whereas the Chinese had always thought of themselves as the center of the world, the most civilized nation on earth, Western guships, stationed outside the ports of China, threatened the very survival of China as a nation.

The problem of tradition and modernization is much more serious and disturbing for original civilizations, such as the Chinese, Indian and Islamic, than for civilizations better adapted to borrowing from other traditions. Also countries which became colonies had an alien system of thought simply superimposed upon their own. With no tutelage like India, and little borrowing experience like Japan, China's path in the modern period has been particularly tortuous; her convulsions have been deep and wideranging.

The slogan of the early reformers or "self-strengtheners",<sup>1</sup> from Lin Tse-hsu (1785-1850) to Chang Chih-tung (1837-1909): "Chinese learning as the basis (*t'i*, substance), Western learning for practical use (*ying*, function)," was designed as a formula for clinging to China's self-esteem as spiritually superior to the West while at the same time providing a way to revitalization. But the *t'i yung* rational-ization, as J.R. Levenson points out, is a fallacy:

Chinese learning, which was to be the *t'i* in the new syncretic culture, was the learning of a society which had always used it for *ying*. Western learning, when sought as *ying*, did not sup-plement Chinese learning -- as the neat formula would have it do -- but ousted it. For, in reality, Chinese learning had come to be prized as sub-stance because of its function, and, when its function was usurped, the learning withered. The more Western learning came to be accepted as the practical instrument of life and power, the more Confucianism ceased to be *t'i* ("essence"), the naturally believed in value of a civilization without a rival, and became instead a historical inheritance, preserved, if at all, as a romantic token of no surrender to a foreign rival which has changed the essence of Chinese life.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of tradition and modernization has been a heavy psychological burden to the Chinese. Modernization seems to require that China downplay or even abandon her time-honored tradition, while clinging to her tradition would mean spurning the process of modernization: in a land of filial piety this amounted to a momentous decision.

Confronted with the possibility of imminent dismemberment China's reaction to the threat of the West resembles what J.P. Sartre describes as the emotional response of a person who, threatened by an on-coming wild animal, faints. Now to faint is a most ineffective measure, yet it seems to be the only recourse open to a desperately impotent consciousness which, in order to obliterate the enemy, obliterates itself.<sup>3</sup>

Marxism, through the revision of Lenin, was an attractive revolutionary ideology promising the liberation of the oppressed proletariat nations against the imperialistic West. Having been imprinted with the totalistic Confucian system, China groped for another one to replace it. Bacon,

Descartes, and even Newton, thought that they had settled the matter once, and for all by replacing the Aristotelian system with the Copernican. Similarly, the Chinese looked upon Marxism, an all encompassing ideology, as the solution for all the ills China suffered, both from her own past and at the hands of the imperialistic West. In Marx's own words, Communism is "the solution of the riddle of history."<sup>4</sup>

By adopting Marxism and closing her doors against the Capitalistic West, China drifted into the false security of a dream state, punctuated by many nightmares, and climaxed by the Cultural Revolution which aimed at obliterating all cultural memories, Chinese or Western. The anti-Confucian movement reached its frenzied peak in those years. Those nightmares were pathological symptoms of a tormented soul, acts of resentment and violence which turned against the self when the external channels were blocked. The pity was that while China in her dream was writhing in destructive self-torture, in the real world imperialism and colonialism had been fading. Even before the conclusion of the Second World War the unequal treaties began to be dismantled and the West was abandoning its pre-war plans to partition China.

### **The Dynamics of Western Tradition**

Among Chinese intellectuals with a passionate desire for modernizing China, few had probed the spiritual depth of the Western tradition that contributed to the development of the modern world. This may be why the spirit of Western science and democracy has not so far been successfully transplanted to the Chinese soil. As Western science and institutions are the product of the Westerner's religious and spiritual quest, Western science and democracy cannot be borrowed without at the same time understanding the mental and spiritual outlook, the methods and values, under which the West operates. I do not intend to present here a detailed history of the development of modern Western science and democracy, but to illustrate the dynamics of the Western tradition I shall discuss how these two ideas have undergone changes in the West.

#### *Modern Western Science and the Torture of Nature*

Historians of science generally concur that the development of modern Western science received much input from criticism by religion. Butterfield shows that it was the condemnation of a large number of Aristotelian theses, such as the view that God could not create a void, or an infinite universe, or a plurality of worlds that led eventually to the downfall of the Aristotelian universe.<sup>5</sup> From Aristotle onwards, science has been the Westerner's yoga, while to the Christian believer scientific interest in the world was motivated by religious need.

According to Thomas Aquinas we can have no direct knowledge of God in our present life, yet, through the study of the natural world we may acquire an indirect knowledge of God and have a glimpse of God's mind, since God made the world according to his mind. Also, to the Christian, the divine transcends the world which was made by God and is not God. Humans, created in the image of God and given the right to dominate all creatures, can explore nature with impunity.

In the introduction to my book on the *Tao Te Ching* I noted:

Modern Western science is the achievement of a mentality fostered by Western religion. . . . The Christian God is not a nature deity; as the cause of nature His power is in nature, but He Himself transcends the natural world. Everywhere Christianity triumphs, the Christian God, banishing the nature gods from their niches, effects a desacralization of the universe. This desacralization has

been generally recognized as necessary before science can conquer<sup>6</sup>. In archaic religions, the natural world was the seat of sacred and mysterious forces and not open to human experimentation. Later, the crosses of Jesus on mountain tops cleared away the demons and nature deities in pagan lands and opened these lands to scientific exploration.<sup>7</sup>

Created in the image of God, by their spirituality humans also transcend the physical world - they are in the world, but not of it. The war between the spirit and the flesh in religion, interpreted at this stage as the war between the soul and the body, is carried into the scientific arena as humans triumph over nature. Modern Western science is premised on a fundamental antagonism between humans and nature -- hence modern science is the disciplining or torture of nature. "The secrets of nature," Bacon said, "betray themselves more readily when tormented by art than when left to their own course"<sup>8</sup>.

The fact that China did not develop modern Western science, which has been a much debated topic in recent years,<sup>9</sup> lies in a basic difference between the traditional Chinese and Western way of regarding the natural world.

The Chinese consider themselves organic parts of the natural world, which is the theophany of the hidden Tao. Chinese spirituality, founded on the harmony and complementarity of heaven, earth and humans, cannot produce science as the torture of nature. If science means the human overcoming of nature, it is an unholy act, not to be contemplated by a spiritual person.

This is made clear by an old gardener who, upon the suggestion of Tzu-kung, a disciple of Confucius, that he use a labor-saving machine, responds:

I've heard my teacher say, where there are machines, there are bound to be machine worries; where there are machine worries, there are bound to be machine hearts. With a machine heart in your breast, you had spoiled what was pure and simple; and without the pure and simple, the life of the spirit knows no rest. Where the life of the spirit knows no rest, the Way (Tao) will cease to buoy you up. It is not that I do not know about your machine -- I would be ashamed to use it!<sup>10</sup>

To Hegel, this human solicitude toward the natural realm shows that in Chinese civilization nature terrorizes humankind. This dismisses Chinese civilization as belonging to the first stage where only one man, the emperor despot, is free<sup>11</sup>. His famous dialectic of master and slave<sup>12</sup> shows that in the actual social context human subservience to nature means the enslaving of some humans to others. The development of modern science as the disciplining of nature is thus at the same time the story of human liberation from the bondage of nature. In this light the industrial revolution has been hailed as the second greatest blessing in human history: machines, now replacing humans, provide the material condition that allows the former slaves to become free.

The immediate result of the industrial revolution transforming Western society from a feudal into a capitalistic society was not, however, the actual liberation of the workers. Not only did the workers become more alienated under capitalism, but the age of machines also created new inequalities between nations. Nations with powerful new machines soon became overlords of those without them, which then became colonies. The West's colonization of Asia and Africa, and Japan's invasion of Korea and China, are episodes in this stage of the development of world history.

Amaury de Riencourt speaks of the West from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century, its transition from its medieval feudal period to its modern period, as the adolescent stage

of the West. The meeting of China and the West in the nineteenth century was the confrontation of a young aggressive civilization with an old, static, but proud civilization which had passed its adolescence 2000 years before<sup>13</sup>. Nothing could stop the expansion of the West, intoxicated with its successes in science, technology and military prowess, and surfeited with a sense of the white man's burden.

A redeeming feature of Western civilization is that it is dynamic and self-corrective. A mixture of four different sources: Greek, Roman, Judaic and Christian, there is no one monolithic Western spirituality; thus the dialectic of tradition and modernization has been on-going. The war between science and religion has been fought from the very inception of Christianity in its confrontation with Greek learning. It reached a climax in the thirteenth century, with the translation of Aristotle's scientific works from Greek and Arabic into Latin.

Since then, at every juncture of the breakthrough of science, from the Copernican revolution to the Darwinian theory, to today's genetic research, the Western spiritual tradition has felt itself shaken to its roots, only to discover later that it still stands, perhaps a little wiser for the challenge. Christianity today is still a religion in the making--Whitehead speaks of Christianity as a religion in search of a metaphysics.<sup>14</sup>

Hegel, who spawned both Marxism and Dewey's pragmatism, remarked in the nineteenth century at the height of Western imperialism that after 19 centuries of Christianity Christians were still buying and selling slaves. This consciousness of the contradiction within Christianity unleashed the liberation movements that followed. The Christian conscience, aided by the challenge of world Communism and its declining imperialistic powers, helped in the liberation of the former colonies.

On the other hand, the philosophy of conflict and struggle between humans and the natural world, which brought the modern world, has taken its toll. The inventory of ills since the industrial revolution pours in: the creeping crises of resource and energy depletion, carbon dioxide build-up due to continued combustion of fossil fuels and the depletion of tropical forests, stratospheric ozone, the environmental over-exploitation of the biosphere, loss of soil fertility due to erosion, loss of genetic diversity, toxic chemicals, acid rain, etc.<sup>15</sup>. There are also social ills for modernization: crime, erosion of family life, low student performance, homelessness, the AIDS epidemic, etc.

Today, while other traditions are trying to catch up with the West in the modernization process, the West is entering a more sober stage when thoughtful thinkers warn that if humans are going to have a future on earth, they must slow down development and radically alter their relationship with the natural world. E.F. Schumacher says:

The arising of this error, so egregious and so firmly rooted, is closely connected with the philosophical, not to say religious, changes during the last three or four centuries in man's attitude to nature, but since the whole world is now in a process of Westernization, the more generalized statement appears to be justified. Modern man does not experience himself as a part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it. He even talks of a battle with nature, forgetting that, if he won the battle, he would find himself on the losing side.<sup>16</sup>

If in the classical and medieval periods Western thought was diametrically opposed to Chinese thought, if even 100 years ago China and the West had completely different outlooks on the relationship between humans and the natural world, contemporary Western spirituality, developed from within the Western tradition, has reached a vision of the world very close to that of the ancient Chinese. In its affirmation, of world and nature Chinese traditional thought, especially its philosophical Taoist thought, serves as an inspiration to today's peace and ecological movements.

## *The Birth of the Modern Idea of Democracy in the West*

In their demand for science and democracy, Chinese students regarded the two as inseparable ideas, as indeed they are in the modern world. This close connection between science and democracy, however, did not exist in the ancient world. Neither was democracy the preferred form of government in the past. Socrates was sentenced to death during a period when Athens was under democracy. Plato considered aristocracy to be the best form<sup>17</sup>, and democracy to be a degenerate form<sup>18</sup> of government. Aristotle<sup>19</sup>, and later Thomas Aquinas,<sup>20</sup> considered monarchy, the rule of one outstandingly good person, backed by just laws, to be a most desirable form of government. Aristotelian science, reflecting the Greek society of his time, was hierarchical, from the lowly physical beings on earth to the spiritual hierarchy of heavenly bodies above the moon, to the one God as Cosmic Mind or Unmoved Mover.

Intellectual conviction in favor of democracy first came to the West in the Renaissance period of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) -- a mathematician, mystic and Cardinal -- while speculating on the possibility of human knowledge of God. Scholastic theology was founded on Aristotle's logic. Based on the principle of non-contradiction and the excluded middle, this is a logic of comparison among finite beings. Cusa discovered that the Maximum, when applied to God, is not a quantitative superlative related to a finite comparative, but a purely qualitative concept, the complete antithesis to every possible comparison. Since Aristotle's logic cannot be the proper vehicle for knowledge of the infinite God, rational theology based on Aristotle's logic loses its epistemological foundation. In the place of rational theology and Aristotelian logic, Cusa used mystical theology and the logic of the coincidence of opposites. God is both the Absolute-Greatest and Absolute-Smallest, everywhere and nowhere, at the center as well as at the circumference, the infinitely above as well as most intimately within. All creatures as finite beings are equally distant and equally near to the infinite God so that the idea of hierarchy collapses to make room for democracy.<sup>21</sup>

Against Cusa's democratic vision, Aristotle's conviction that "the rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be"<sup>22</sup> and the Confucian belief in the emperor as alone the "son of heaven" lose their cogency. Every creature is as much a child of heaven as anyone else, commanding equal dignity and respect. Each person has direct access to God by his conscience and his mind, receiving understanding and revelation directly from God.

The Western idea of democracy as a belief in the decency and dignity of the people is not foreign to Chinese thought. Mencius equates the mandate of Heaven with the mandate of the people, actually investing the people with the power of Heaven<sup>23</sup>. That each by the sincerity of his/her heart and mind is capable of understanding directly the deepest truth is also a basic Confucian teaching. In both the *I-ching*<sup>24</sup> and the *Doctrine of the Mean*<sup>25</sup>, ordinary uneducated men and women are said to follow Tao unconsciously, while the sages, searching the divine all their lives, may not penetrate its secret. Still Confucianism, with its rigid hierarchy from a bygone era, never translated this intellectual conviction into constitutional rights of citizens.

Cusa's democratic vision, as spelled out by Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason* becomes the foundation of moral autonomy and the rights of all humans:

That in the order of ends, man (and with him every rational being) is an end in himself, that is, that he can never be used merely as a means by any (not even by God) without being at the same time an end also himself, that therefore humanity in our person must be holy to ourselves, this follows now of itself because he is the subject of the moral law, in other words, of that which is holy in

itself, and on account of which and in agreement with which alone can anything be termed holy. For this moral law is founded on the autonomy of his will, as a free will which by its universal laws must necessarily be able to agree with that to which it is to submit itself.<sup>26</sup>

Today the idea of democracy is being extended logically to the animal kingdom, at least the higher animals. Just as humans, out of ignorance and prejudice, once looked upon other humans as belonging to different species, to be conquered and exploited, today we are extending the rights of life and liberty to animals who are conscious and capable of feeling pain and suffering. The world-wide conservation efforts attest to a new sense of kinship towards all creatures, great or small. Here the ideals of science and democracy unite to bring the hope of a more humane and viable future for all.

### **The Future Outlook**

The Western tradition had gone through many revolutions, one of which forced China out of her shell and produced deep convulsions in her psyche which reverberate even now. The intrinsic value of Chinese tradition had never been challenged so severely until the onslaught of Western civilization at the end of the nineteenth century.

At this moment in history, with rapid telecommunication so that we all live in a global village (Marshall McLuhan), there is no basic conflict between tradition and modernization. We celebrate the difference between cultures, as we celebrate the uniqueness of each individual, and there need be no provincialism or cultural barriers. Different cultures do not threaten us, nor need we stand in self-complacency or self-debasement; rather, the way to defend ourselves is to be informed. Just as China's inventions in the past quickened the pace of development in the West (Needham), she now can be on the receiving end of the West's accomplishments.

Perhaps the fundamental difference between the older and the modern traditions is that the former do not tolerate change. Therefore they view the problem of tradition and modernization as a choice between either order with repression, or freedom with chaos. This need not be the case. In a free and dynamic society a certain amount of disorder is to be tolerated -- indeed it is the mark of a resilient society that it can accept difference and criticism. There will always be problems -- when the old ones are solved, new ones will arise. We must learn not only to accept change, but to anticipate it; thus in the West today the study of the future has become a specialized field.<sup>27</sup>

In today's rapidly changing society, the old must become used to learning from the young who are the vanguard of progress. Margaret Mead says: "The primary evidence that our present situation is unique, without any parallel in the past, is that the generation gap is world-wide"<sup>28</sup>. "For the first time human beings throughout the world, in their information about one another and their responses to one another, have become a community that is united by shared knowledge and danger." "Whoever they are and wherever their particular point of entry may be, all men are equally immigrants into the new era -- some come as refugees and some as castaways." Mead suggests that human society has shifted from a "postfigurative" culture in which the young learn from the old to a "configurative" one in which both adults and children learn from their peers. She believes that the next stage will be the development of a "prefigurative" culture in which the old learn from the young. In a prefigurative culture the future dominates the present, just as in a postfigurative culture the past (tradition) dominated the present.

On the other hand, one of the virtues of Chinese tradition is the veneration for the old, for even in the modern world the young still need to take counsel from the old. If one who does not know



the past is condemned to repeat its mistakes, without the lessons of the past all revolutions would be condemned to futility. Tradition is our root, which supplies the lifeline for the present. But our role is not to receive passively what has been transmitted, but to exercise intelligent choice in the use of the past<sup>29</sup>. Tradition is not to be regarded as a dead weight, but as living nurture -- in Whitehead's words, "ingredient for future be-coming." There is no such thing as a finished tradition, unless it be already dead; a living tradition is always in the making, capable of changing and absorbing the new without losing its central character. This is the meaning of dialectics as the critical life of thought and culture from Plato to Marx. It is also the importance of educational institutions, scholarship and learning in preserving and making available the past for creative appropriation by the present.

China must not again close her doors against the outside world. She can redeem years lost by avoiding the mistakes of the more advanced countries in modernizing without regard to human and eco-logical impact. Henceforth her tradition must not be a shackle impeding present creative advance, but a legacy from which to launch out into the future. By responding to the challenges of modernization successfully China can show the world how traditions, unlike individual human beings, can rejuvenate themselves and maintain their lives indefinitely.

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## Notes

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8. T. Butterfield, p. 112.

9. See A.C. Graham, "China, Europe, and the Origins of Modern Science: Needham's The Grand Titration," in *Chinese Science, Explorations of an Ancient Tradition*, edited by Shigeru Nakayama and Nathan Sivin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), PP. 45-70.

10. *Chuang Tzu*, 12:11, Watson, p. 134.

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12. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie, (Second edition; New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 228-240.
13. Amaury de Riencourt, *The Soul of China*, Revised Edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 251.
14. Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1926).
15. See Harvey Brooks, *Technology-Related Catastrophes: Myth and Reality*, pp. 109-136.
16. E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful, Economics as if People Mattered* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 13.
17. *Republic*, Bk. 5, 449a.
18. *Ibid.*, Bk. 8, 555b-562a.
19. *Politics*, 1284a3, 1288a15.
20. *De regimine principum*. See John B. Morrall, *Political Thought in Medieval Times* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), pp. 77-78.
21. See Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. 7-45.
22. *Metaphysics* Bk. xii, ch. 10.
23. *Mencius* 5A:5.
24. *Hsi Tz'u*, Pt.1, ch. 5.
25. Ch. 12.
26. *Critique of Practical Reason*, Book 2. ch. 2, sec. 5.
27. See Edward Cornish, *The Study of the Future*, (Washington, D.C. 1977).
28. *Culture and Commitment*.
29. Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Use and Abuse of History*.

## Harmony and Transcendence

*George F. McLean*

The last half century might be said to have been marked especially by the march of mankind toward freedom. From the famous "Long March" of Chinese lore in the thirties, to the "march on Washington" by Martin Luther King in the sixties, to the world-wide social reforms in the eighties, the aspiration of freedom has electrified hearts, evoked great sacrifices and defined human progress in our age. This suggests that we might helpfully reflect upon society and the relation of the person thereto by focusing upon the different notions of freedom and attempting to see the implication of each for life in society. In this context, new appreciation may prove possible of the special contribution that Confucianism can make to our times.

The paper will proceed by first considering three basic and successive notions of freedom which have emerged in the tradition of Western philosophy: (1) choice as a minimal sense of freedom found in classical British philosophies of the liberal tradition and common in our day; (2) Kant's formal sense of freedom; (3) Kant's development of an integrating aesthetic view. It will then consider how the third of these can be enhanced by the Confucian philosophical traditions, and hence the essential contribution which Confucianism can make to the effort of China to integrate science and democracy in this century.

### Levels of Freedom

#### *Level I. Empirical Freedom: To Choose What One Wants*

At the beginning of the modern stirrings for democracy John Locke perceived a crucial need. If decisions were to be made not by the king, but by the people, the basis for these decisions had to be equally available to all. To achieve this Locke proposed that we suppose the mind to be a white paper void of characters and ideas, and then follow the way in which it comes to be furnished. To keep this public he insisted that it be done exclusively via sense experience, that is, either by sensation or by reflection upon the mind's work on the materials derived from the senses.<sup>1</sup> From this, David Hume concluded that all objects of knowledge which are not formal tautologies, must be matters of fact. Such "matters of fact" are neither the existence or actuality of a thing nor its essence, but simply the determination of one from a pair of sensible contraries, e.g. white rather than black, sweet rather than sour.<sup>2</sup>

The restrictions implicit in this appear starkly in Rudolf Carnap's "Vienna Manifesto" which shrinks the scope of meaningful knowledge and significant discourse to describing "some state of affairs" in terms of empirical "sets of facts." This excludes speech about wholes, God, the unconscious or *entelechies*; the grounds of meaning as well as all that transcends the immediate content of sense experience are excluded.

In such terms it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfillment. The only concern is which objects among the sets of contraries I will choose by brute, changeable and even arbitrary will power, and whether circumstances will allow me to carry out that choice. Such choices, of course, may not only differ from, but even contradict the immediate and long range objectives of other persons. This will require compromises and social contracts in the sense of Hobbes; John Rawles will even work out

a formal set of such compromises.<sup>3</sup> Throughout it all, however, the basic concern remains the ability to do as one pleases.

This includes two factors. The first is execution by which my will is translated into action. Thus, John Locke sees freedom as "being able to act or not act, according as we shall choose or will"<sup>4</sup>; Bertrand Russell sees it as "the absence of external obstacles to the realization of our desires."<sup>5</sup> The second factor is individual self-realization understood simply as the accomplishment of one's good as one sees it. This reflects one's personal idiosyncracies and temperament, which in turn reflect each person's individual character.

In these terms, Mortimer Adler points out in his study of freedom at the Institute for Philosophical Research one's goal can be only what appeals to one, with no necessary relation to real goods or to duties which one ought to perform.<sup>6</sup> "Liberty consists in doing what one desires,"<sup>7</sup> and the freedom of a society is measured by the latitude it provides for the cultivation of individual patterns of life.<sup>8</sup> If there is any ethical theory in this it can be only utilitarian, hopefully with enough breadth to recognize other people and their good as well as one's own. In practice, over time this comes to constitute a black-hole of self-centered consumption of physical goods in which both nature and person are consumed; this is the essence of consumerism.

This first level of freedom is reflected in the contemporary sense of "choice" in North America. As a theory, this is underwritten by a pervasive series of legal precedents following Justice Holmes' notion of privacy, which now has come to be recognized as a constitutional right. In the American legal system the meaning of freedom has been reduced to this. It should be noted that this derived from Locke's political decision (itself an exercise of freedom) to focus upon empirical meaning, and to eliminate from public discourse any other type of knowledge or concern. Its progressively rigorous implementation, which we have but sampled in the references to Hume and Carnap, constitute an ideology in the sense of a selected and restrictive vision which controls minds and reduces freedom to willfulness. In this perspective liberalism is grossly misnamed, and itself calls for a process of liberation and enrichment.

## *Level II. Formal Freedom: To Choose as One Ought*

Kant provides the basis for another, much richer, notion of freedom which Mortimer Adler has called "acquired freedom of self-perfection." It acknowledges the ability of the human being to transcend the empirical order and to envisage moral laws and ideals. This direction has been taken by such philosophers as Plotinus, Spinoza and Bradley who understood all in terms of ideal patterns of reason and of nature. For Kant freedom consists not in acting merely as one pleases, but in willing as one ought, whether or not this can be enacted.<sup>9</sup> Moral standards are absolute and objective, not relative to individual or group preferences.<sup>10</sup> How they can remain nevertheless autonomous emerges in the evolution of Kant's three critiques.

In his first *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant developed a theory of knowledge for the universal and necessary laws of the physical sciences. Reductionist philosophies such as positivism are happy to leave the matter there, for the necessity of the sciences gives control over one's life, while their universality extends this control to others. If Kant's categories could lend rational order to the random empirical world of facts, then positivism could achieve Descartes' goal of walking with confidence in the world.

For Kant, however, this simply will not do. Clarity which comes at the price of necessity may be acceptable and even desirable for works of nature, but it is an appalling way to envisage human life. Hence, in his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant proceeds to identify that which

is distinctive of the moral order. His analysis pushes forcefully beyond utilitarian goals, inner instincts and rational (scientific) relationships -- precisely beyond the necessitated order which can be constructed in terms of his first *Critique*. None of these recognizes that which is distinctive of the human person, namely, freedom. For Kant, in order for an act to be moral it must be based upon the will of the person as autonomous, not heteronomous or subject to others or to necessary external laws.

This becomes the basic touchstone of his philosophy; everything he writes thence forward will be adapted thereto, and what had been written before will be recontextualized in this new light. The remainder of his *Foundations* and his second *Critique of Practical Reason* will be composed in terms of freedom. Later his third *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* will be written in order to provide a context that enables the previous two critiques to be read in a way that protects human freedom.

In the *Foundations* he recasts the whole notion of law or moral rule in terms of freedom. If all must be ruled or under law, and yet in order to be free the moral act must be autonomous, then my maxim must be something which as a moral agent I -- and no other -- give to myself.

This, in turn, has surprising implications, for if the moral order must be universal, then my maxim which I dictate to myself must be fit to be also a universal law for all persons.<sup>11</sup> On this basis freedom emerges in a clearer light. It is not the self-centered whimsy of the circumstantial freedom of self-realization described above; but neither is it a despotic exercise of the power of the will; finally, it is not the clever self-serving eye of Plato's rogue.<sup>12</sup> Rather, as the highest reality in all creation, freedom is power that is wise and caring, open to all and bent upon the realization of "the glorious ideal of a universal realm of ends-in-themselves." It is, in sum, free men living together in righteous harmony.<sup>13</sup>

### *Level III. Existential Freedom: Aesthetic Harmony*

Despite its central importance, I will not remain longer on practical reason because it is rather in the third *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* that Kant provides the needed context for such harmony.<sup>14</sup> In so doing he approaches the aesthetic sensibility of Confucius in articulating the cosmic significance of freedom. Kant is intent not merely upon uncovering the fact of freedom, but upon protecting and promoting it. He faces squarely the modern person's most urgent questions.

How can this newly uncovered freedom survive when confronted with the necessity and universality of the realm of science --and its implications for technology -- as understood in the *Critique of Pure Reason*? Will the scientific interpretation of external nature force freedom back into the inner realm of each person's heart where it would be reduced at best to good intentions or good feelings towards others?

- When we attempt to act in this world or to reach out to others must all our categories be universal and hence insensitive to that which marks others as unique and personal; must they be necessary, and hence leave no room for creative freedom? If so then public life can be only impersonal, necessitated, repetitive and stagnant.

- Must the human spirit be reduced to the sterile content of empirical facts or to the necessitated modes of scientific laws? If so then philosophers cannot escape what for wisdom is a suicidal choice between either being traffic directors in the jungle of unfettered competition or sharing tragic complicity in setting a predetermined order for the human spirit.

- Freedom would indeed have been killed and would pulse no more as the heart of humankind.

Before this threat Kant's answer was a resounding: No! Taking as his basis the reality of freedom -- so passionately and often tragically affirmed in our lifetime by Ghandi and Martin Luther King -- Kant proceeded to develop his third *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* as a context within which freedom and scientific necessity could coexist, indeed in which necessity would be the support and instrument of freedom.

For this Kant found it necessary to distinguish two issues as reflected in the two parts of his third *Critique*. In the "Critique of Teleological Judgment"<sup>15</sup> he acknowledges that nature and all reality must be teleological, for if there is to be room for human freedom in a cosmos in which one can make use of necessary laws, if science is to contribute to the exercise of human freedom, then nature too must be directed toward a goal and manifest throughout a teleology with which free human purpose can be integrated.

In these terms nature, even in its necessary and universal laws, is no longer alien to freedom, but expresses divine freedom and is conciliable with human freedom. The structure of his first *Critique* will not allow Kant to affirm this teleological character as a metaphysical reality, but he recognizes that we must proceed "as if" all reality is teleological precisely because of the undeniable reality of human freedom in an ordered universe.

If, however, teleology in principle provides the needed space, there remains a second issue of how freedom is exercised, namely, what mediates it to the necessary and universal laws of science? This is the task of his "Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment"<sup>16</sup> where the imagination plays the key integrating role in enabling a free person to relate to a necessary order of nature and to given structures in society in ways that are neither necessitated nor necessitating.

There is something similar here to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In both, the work of the imagination in assembling phenomena is not simply to register, but to produce the objective order. As in the first critique the approach is not from a set of *a priori* principles which are clear all by themselves and are used in order to bind the multiple phenomena into a unity. On the contrary, under the rule of unity the imagination orders and reorders the multiple phenomena until they are ready to be informed by a unifying principle whose appropriateness emerges from the reordering carried out by the productive imagination.

In the first *Critique*, however, the productive work was done in relation to the abstract and universal categories of the intellect and carried out under a law which dictated that phenomena must form a unity. Hence, although it was a human product, the objective order was universal and necessary and the related sciences were valid both for all things and for all people.<sup>17</sup>

In the "Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment," in contrast, the imagination in working toward an integrating unity is not confined by the necessitating structures of categories and concepts, but ranges freely over the full sweep of reality in all its dimensions to see whether relatedness and purposiveness can emerge. Hence, in standing before a work of nature or of art it might focus upon light or form, sound or word, economic or interpersonal relations -- or, indeed, upon any combination of these in a natural environment or a society, whether encountered concretely or expressed in symbols.

Throughout all of this the ordering and reordering by the imagination can bring about numberless unities. Unrestricted by any *a priori* categories, it can integrate necessary dialectical patterns within its own free and therefore creative production, and scientific universals within its unique concrete harmonies.

This properly creative work of the human person in this world extends the realm of human freedom to the whole of reality. For this harmony is appreciated not merely intellectually in terms of its relation to a concept or schema (the first *Critique*), nor morally in relation to the force of a

just will (the second *Critique*), but aesthetically by the pleasure or displeasure of the free response it generates. What manifests whether a proper and authentic ordering has or has not been achieved is not a concept,<sup>18</sup> but the pleasure or displeasure, the elation at the beautiful and sublime or the disgust at the ugly and revolting, which flows from our contemplation or reflection.

One could miss the integrating character of this pleasure or displeasure and its related judgment of taste.<sup>19</sup> This would be so if one looked at it ideologically as simply a repetition of past tastes in order to promote stability, or reductively as merely an interior and purely private matter at a level of consciousness available only to an elite class or related only to an esoteric band of reality. That would ignore the structure which Kant laid out at length in his first "Introduction" to his third critique.<sup>20</sup> He noted there that he conceived this third critique not as merely juxtaposed to the first two critiques of pure and practical reason, but as integrating both in a richer whole.

This opens a rich prospect for freedom in society. It need no longer be simply the capacity of the individual to gather goods about oneself, nor at the second level of freedom to set universal laws. Beyond this it is the capacity creatively to integrate both of these in a process of shaping one's personal and social life in a unique and beautiful manner. In society this, indeed, becomes the reality of culture. Let us look more closely at this with special attention to the contribution that Confucius can make to the challenge noted above by Professor Imamichi of the exercise of social life through technology.

## **Confucian Culture and Freedom in a Technological Society**

### *Culture and Freedom*

Developing the level of aesthetic sensitivity enables one to take into account ever greater dimensions of reality and creativity and to imagine responses which are more rich in purpose, more adapted to present circumstances and more creative for the future. This is manifest in a good leader such as a Churchill or Roosevelt -- and super-eminently in a Confucius, Buddha or Christ. Their power to mobilize a people lies especially in their rare ability to assess the overall situation, to express it in a manner which rings true to the great variety of persons, and thereby to evoke appropriate and varied responses from each according to his or her capabilities. The danger is that the example of such genius will be reduced to a formula, become an ideology and exclude innovation. In reality, as personable, free and creative -- and when understood as the work of the aesthetic judgment -- their example is inclusive in content and application as well as in the new responses it continually evokes from others. When aesthetic experiences are passed on as part of a tradition, gradually they constitute a culture.

Some thinkers such as William James and Jürgen Habermas,<sup>21</sup> fearing that attending to these free creations of a cultural tradition might distract from the concrete needs of the people, have urged a turn rather to the social sciences for social analysis and critique and as a means for identifying pragmatic responses. But these point back to the necessary laws of the first *Critique*. In many countries engaging in reforms, these have come to be seen as stifling creativity and paralyzing the populace.

Kant's third critique points in another direction. It integrates scientifically universal and necessary social relations, but it is not limited to them. It does not focus upon them, nor does it focus directly upon beauty or ugliness of concrete relations, or even directly upon the beauty or ugliness as things in themselves. Its focus is rather upon our contemplation of the integrating images of these which we imaginatively create as manifesting the many facets of beauty and

ugliness -- actual and potential. We evaluate these in terms of the free and integrating response of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion which they generate most deeply within our whole person.

### *Confucius and Freedom in a Technological Society*

Confucius probably would feel very comfortable with this if structured in terms of an appreciation or feeling of harmony. In this way, he could see freedom itself at the height of its sensibility, not merely as an instrument of a moral life, but as serving through the imagination as a lens or means for presenting the richness of reality in varied and intensified ways. Freedom, thus understood, is both spectroscopy and kaleidoscope of being. As spectroscopy it unfolds the full range of the possibilities of human freedom, so that all can be examined, evaluated and admired. As kaleidoscope, it continually works out the endless combinations and patterns of reality so that the beauty of each can be examined, reflected upon and chosen when desired. Freely, purposively and creatively, imagination weaves through reality focusing now upon certain dimensions, now reversing its flow, now making new connections and interrelations. In the process reality manifests not only scientific forms and their potential interrelations, but its power to evoke our free response of love and admiration or of hate and disgust.

In this manner freedom becomes at once the creative source, the manifestation, the evaluation and the arbiter of all that imaginatively we can propose. It is *goal*, namely to realize life as rational and free in this world; it is *creative source*, for with the imagination it unfolds the endless possibilities for human expression; it is *manifestation*, because it presents these to our consciousness in ways appropriate to our capabilities for knowledge of limited realities and relates these to the circumstances of our life; it is *criterion*, because its response manifests a possible mode of action to be variously desirable or not in terms of a total personal response of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion; and it is *arbiter*, because it provides the basis upon which our freedom chooses to affirm or reject, realize or avoid this way of self-realization. In this way, freedom emerges as the dynamic center of our human existence.

There is much in the above which evokes the Confucian sense of the role of the gentleman in unfolding the implications of daily life. But it evokes also new significance of the thought of Confucius for the exercise of freedom in society in our day.

What has been said only prepares the terrain by formulating the question; it suggests looking to the aesthetic sense of harmony and a way of applying this to the work of freedom in society. The actual experience of harmony, however, is the work of an entire people which develops its own specific sensibility thereto. Through the ages this forms a tradition and a culture which can form sensibilities that enable us to evaluate properly the challenges encountered in social life in our day and find appropriate and creative responses thereto.

### **Transcendence of Values and the Lord of Heaven**

Here I would recall a suggestion from Hegel that philosophy integrate, but not conclude with the aesthetic. As seen above, the aesthetic transforms the meaning of being, lifts it beyond the material, and opens it to the creativity of the human spirit; yet Hegel sees a danger in remaining solely on that level. For artistic creation grasps being through the imagination and expresses its meaning and value in physical media. While this renders the Absolute visible and makes manifest the spiritual meaning of the world, left to itself the aesthetic might conclude in a pantheism; but if



nature were to become God then humans would become slaves of their own creations. In the end being would come to be defined by humans, who would thereby be forever entombed within the confines of their own limited powers to create.

In order to be truly free we must acknowledge an adequate ground for the limitlessness of the radical creativity experienced in our human capabilities. For this, Hegel pointed to the need, beyond art and the aesthetic, for religion--indeed for revealed religion -- to state the content of authentic transcendence; and beyond this he saw the need for philosophy to purify the content of religion from the limitations of its symbolic forms.<sup>22</sup>

### *Metaphysics*

It would be a mistake, however, to look to religion as a sense of the divine over and above or in contrast to culture. From earliest totemic times human thought always had a sacred center. Myths in Greece, as elsewhere, had a superabundance of gods in a loose genetic unity. Parmenides' cosmic way led from this to the godless justice who led the way to the Absolute, and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was a process of reasoning to divine life. The issue then is not how the notion of the divine entered human thought, but how to articulate its role in and impact upon philosophy as a work of reason broadly taken. In pursuit of our general theme then we will examine the effect of Christianity upon the sense of being in the Greek philosophical tradition and its implications for the development of modern social forms.<sup>23</sup>

Greek philosophy had presupposed matter always to have existed and as a result focused upon the forms by which matter was determined to be of one type rather than another. Aristotle considered things in the process of change from one form to another, analyzed in his *Physics*, to be the most manifest of realities. This approach to philosophy through physical beings corresponds especially to our human nature as mind and body. However, it is in need of considerable broadening to be able to take account not only of transcendent beings, particularly the divine, but also of the foundational significance of mankind as grounded in the transcendent.

It was here that the Christian context had an especially liberating effect upon philosophy. By applying to the Greek notion of matter the Judeo-Christian heritage regarding the complete dominion of God over all things, the Christian Church Fathers opened human consciousness to the fact that matter too depended for its reality upon God. Thus, before Plotinus, who was the first philosopher to do so, the Fathers already had noted that matter, rather than simply being considered eternal, also stood in need of an explanation of its origin.<sup>24</sup>

But to push the question of reality beyond that of form, nature or kind to existence was to deepen radically its sense. What must be explained is no longer merely the particular form or type of beings, but the reality of matter as well; the question then becomes not only how things are of this or that kind, but how they exist rather than not exist. This constituted an evolution in human awareness beyond issues of change or of forms.<sup>25</sup> Instead, to be real came to mean to be or to exist and whatever is related thereto: quite literally, "To be or not to be" had become the question. By this same stroke our self-awareness and will were deepened dramatically to the conscious acceptance and affirmation of our own existence, and by implication in the practical order to acting in freedom or responsibly.

Cornelio Fabro suggests that this deepened metaphysical sense of being not only opened the possibility for a more profound sense of freedom, but was itself catalyzed by the new sense of freedom proclaimed in the Christian message. That focused not upon Plato's sun at the mouth of the cave from which external enlightenment might be derived, but upon the Son of God, the eternal

Word or Logos, through and according to whom all things had received as gift their created existence. As the first to rise to new life in victory over sin, his victory could be accepted by each person only in a radical act of freedom opening oneself to and affirming the transcending power of the Creator and Redeemer in one's life. The sacramental symbol of this is not one of mere transformation or improvement, or even of dissolution and re-formation, but of resurrection from the waters of death to radically new life. This directs the mind beyond the ideological poles of species and individual interests, and beyond issues of place, time or any of the scientific categories. It centers instead upon the unique reality that I am as a participation in the creative and redemptive power of God, a self for whom living is freely to dispose of the very power of the resurrection in union with all of God's creation.<sup>26</sup>

It took a long time for the implications of this new appreciation of what it meant to be to germinate and find its proper philosophic articulation. Over a period of many centuries the term 'form' was used both as kind or type of being and to express the new sense of being as existence. As the distinction between the two gradually clarified, however, proper terminology arose in which the act of existence by which a being simply is was expressed by existence (*esse*), while that by which a being is of this or that kind came to be expressed by 'es-sence'.<sup>27</sup>

### *Philosophy and Revelation*

Let us reflect on the dynamics at play in this impact of Christianity upon philosophy. Was this a theology based upon revelation, rather than a philosophy available by the light of natural reason? Certainly, that which depends formally upon the mysteries of the Trinity and the plan of Redemption in Christ can be known only by revelation and is therefore a matter of theology. But today we are more conscious of the significance of the cultural and social context within which thought takes place. Like economics and even mathematics, philosophy is created by persons and peoples living in place and time and reflects their physical and social circumstances; above all it reflects their deepest personal experiences and free commitments.

The sense of meaning experienced through the ages and articulated in the myths had provided Plato with content for his ideas. By his dialogical method he sorted out this meaning, rather than creating it. Similarly in philosophizing, the Christian thinkers returned to Platonic and Aristotelian themes with a new heart and mind, sensitized by their new redemptive and Trinitarian experience. The result was an in-version of the Aristotelian perspective, even by those who would be most Aristotelian in the technical implementation of their philosophy. Because for Aristotle the point of initiation of knowledge was the senses, his philosophy arose through his physics, and was built upon its requirements and implications, in which light human beings were seen especially as the care-taker of nature.

In contrast, the Trinitarian Christian sense of what it meant to be corresponded rather to the *noesis noeseos* or Life Divine to which Aristotle concluded at the very end of his *Metaphysics*. Indeed, Aristotle did not hesitate to call his metaphysics a theology both because it alone treated God among its object and because it was the type of knowledge of all things which befitted God above all others.<sup>28</sup> As can be seen from Aristotle, both the changing or physical and the unchanging or transcendent are within the horizon of philosophy as a work of reason. But where Greek culture, focused upon nature, took the former as its prime analogate for being in terms of which it interpreted all else, Christian culture, focused upon the divine, took the latter as its analogate for its philosophy as a work of reason concerned with under-standing all things through

their ultimate causes. This remains philosophy for it is carried out by the light of human reason; it is not theology which proceeds by the light of the faith.

Carried out in this light philosophy would see being as primarily and in principle not multiple, limited and changing, but One, unlimited and eternal; not material and potential, but spirit and fullness of Life; not obscure and obdurate, but light and Truth; not inert and subject to external movers, but creative freedom and Love. If this was the foundational Christian sense of reality, then the work of reason carried out by philosophy in such a cultural context would focus less upon physical changing nature as did the Greeks, but upon the divine. Such a philosophy would be vastly enriched, and its sense of person and community would be correspondingly enlivened. Nor were these notions entirely strange to earlier philosophy: Parmenides created metaphysics as a science in terms of Being as one;<sup>29</sup> Aristotle's metaphysics not only culminated in divine life, but understood being entirely as a *pros hen* analogy or relation thereto.<sup>30</sup> Later Hegel would see theology as a symbolic form for philosophical truths.

But religion is moreover a human virtue, a mode of human action which in its imaginative forms conceives, unfolds, lives and celebrates the sense of life and meaning. Kant's thought as described above provides a place for this at the very center of human freedom and hence of human life. Confucius and Christ laid down concrete patterns in which this has been lived and experienced by peoples through the centuries.

This suggests further that to gauge the impact of Christianity upon philosophy we should reflect upon the stimulation which the Christian life of the Trinity brought to philosophical reflection upon being as one, true and good. In the Graeco-Christian philosophical tradition the inner properties of being as such are unity, truth and goodness. For Hindu philosophy the characteristics of the Absolute are existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ananda*). For the Christian these are not simply characteristics of the divine, but the personal interrelations of Father, Son (Word) and Holy Spirit. To gain insight then into the impact of the Christian sense of the Transcendent upon the metaphysics of freedom we can look at this succession of Father-Existence(*sat*)-Unity, Son/Word-consciousness(*cit*)-truth, and Holy Spirit-bliss (*ananda*)-good. In each case the last term (e.g., truth) is the more abstract Greek term while the first two terms (e.g. Word and Consciousness) are the life of the Absolute as experienced and articulated in the Christian and Hindu religions respectively.<sup>31</sup>

Our goal here will not be to define these as properties of being, but to sample some of the ways in which religious vision has deepened the sense of these properties and hence of being itself. Because this vision has been at the center of a people's self-understanding as they have faced the problems of living together in society it relates as well to the sense they have of the person in society and of the modes of living together in freedom. Let us look then at the properties of being in the Graeco-Christian tradition, the ways in which they have been enriched by philosophizing in a Trinitarian cultural context, and the implications of this for the meaning of freedom.

### *The Transcendental Properties of Unity, Truth and the Good*

*Unity*, was recognized by Parmenides as a first characteristic of being from the very beginnings of metaphysics. In his poem he reasoned that in order to stand against the nonbeing or negation implied in the very notions of beginning, limitation or multiplicity, being as such had to be one, eternal and unchanging. Practically all religions recognize these characteristics as belonging to the divine. With Parmenides, they recognize that what is problematic is not how God

can be, for as being does exist in the final analysis must be self sufficient, for by definition there is nothing else upon which it could depend.

The real question is how is it possible for finite or multiple beings to exist?<sup>32</sup>

Since, however, finite beings do in fact exist their reality must be a participation in the self-sufficient infinite, eternal and unchanging One which they reflect in every facet of their being. As participating in an absolute nature they are not mere functions of other realities, but subsist in their own right: the creator makes them to be, to stand in --if not by -- themselves, to have a proper identity which is unique and irreducible. This is the foundation of Boethius' classical definition of the person as a *subject* or supposit of a rational nature. Reflecting the divine such beings are unique and unable to be assumed by some larger entity -- even by the divine. Like God whom they reflect, they exist in their own right.

Yves Simon summarizes some implications of this for human freedom. He points out that it is based not in the indeterminism of freedom as mere choice, which would face the will with the impossibility of deriving something from nothing. Rather, human freedom is the result of a supradeterminism,<sup>33</sup> that is, because the human intellect and will are open to the infinite and original Unity, Truth and Good they can respond to any participated, limited good whatsoever without being necessitated thereby. In this lies the essence of freedom: liberated from any determining powers, whether internal or external the will is autonomous; at the same time it is positively oriented toward the good and realization of the good in circumstances and in limitless ways. This is the positive attraction of beauty and harmony as a vital source for the human creativity of which Confucius spoke and Kant wrote in his *Critique of the Aesthetic Judgement*.

Further, because all limited beings are made to be by the same unique Transcendent Being their foundational existence-in-them-selves does not alienate them one from another, but relates them at the very center of their being: to be is to exist in myself as a creature of God and hence to be foundationally related to Him and to all manifestations of His being. This, in turn, founds the harmony of nature. It is the reason also why living in harmony with nature and other persons is the sign of living fully. Within this harmony it implies, as Jefferson wrote in the "Declaration of Independence," that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, li-berty and the pursuit of happiness; it is the task of governments to protect and promote them.

*Truth* unfolds the unity of being. Unfortunately, too often unity has been seen in terms that are static, reductionist and even commercial. Property, for example, has been looked upon as the right to withhold possessions and to turn inward along the lines of the all-consuming orientation of freedom as choice described above, where being was looked upon as a possession to be acquired and conserved or at best bartered for something of equal quantity or quality.

In contrast, in the image of the Son who as Word expresses all that the Father is and through whom all is created, being is seen as open, expressive and creative. Just as a musician or poet unfolds the many meanings in a single theme, so being as truth unfolds its meaning and communicates itself to others. Here the human intellect plays an essential role by conceiving new possibilities, planning new structures, and working out new paths for humankind in its pilgrimage. Justice too is implied as true judgments about being in the public forum. Such judgments must honor and express the sacredness of beings in their self-identities and promote their mutuality. This is the role of leadership in family, business and society.

*Goodness and Beauty.* Goodness is the third property of being and corresponds in the Trinity to the Holy Spirit as the love of Father and Son. In being it expresses the conjunction and fulfillment of unity and truth in celebration of the perfection of a being or, where imperfect, the search for that perfection or fulfillment. Holiness consists in holding devotedly to its perfection or goodness.

Further, as Being Itself is absolute and eternally self-sufficient, and hence has no need for other beings, it creates not out of need, but out of love freely given. This transforms the understanding of human life, which now can be seen not as freedom to choose, to gather and accumulate, nor statically to maintain, repeat or conserve. Rather it is closer to Confucius's original sense of harmony as a dynamic inter-relation of multiple and changing units; this the role of peacemaker, or 'Prince of Peace.'

Still more dynamically the Spirit suggests for being a sense of transforming, innovating and creating. As radically His gift, our life cannot be repaid; we can "pay back" the gift only by passing it on or sharing it with others in love. Even dying -- whether in life through suffering in the image of the cross or physically at the end of one's days -- we rise to new life. In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul expressed well the combination of irreducible confidence and indomitable hope implied by the sense of life lived in the context of a Transcendent Absolute:

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed (*II Cor.* 4:7-10).

As image of this transcendent divine principle (and hence of the dynamic Trinitarian interrelations of persons), the sense of the person in this world is transformed. One is part of nature, but rather than being subject thereto as a mere producer or consumer, the person is a creative and transforming center, responsible for the protection and promotion of nature. Similarly, he is by nature social and a part of society; but rather than being subject thereto as an

As the movements of freedom in this half century reflect the emergence of new understanding of the person and his fuller role in social life, human dignity, equality, and participation in the socio-political process have become central concerns. The search for adequate foundations for democracy and its heightened sense of the dignity of the person naturally generates new interest in religion.

In the image of the divine in both Western and Hindu metaphysics the three characteristics of freedom stand out. First, self-affirmation is no longer simply a choice of one or another type of object or action as a means to an end, but a radical self-affirmation of existence within Existence Itself. Second, self-consciousness is no longer simply self-directed after the manner of Aristotle's absolute "knowing on knowing", rather the Absolute Consciousness knows all that it creates as a reflection of its own being, truth and goodness, while the more limited instances of self-awareness transcend themselves in relation to others. Finally, this new human freedom is an affirmation of existence as sharing in Love Itself, the creative and ultimately attractive divine life -- or in Indian terms, "Bliss" (*ananda*).

Here the aesthetic dimensions come to the fore in relation to beauty (or harmony in Confucius) as that which is appreciated when seen. This unites the previous three characteristics of reality: unity, truth and goodness in an intuition from the deepest center of our being in response to the creative power of Being working in and through us in cooperation with others to realize together a society whose dignity reflects the awe of every person before the divine life found in every person and coursing through nature.

From within a Christian cultural context this new sense of being and freedom expresses far more than a transition from one life style to another, and is rather a death to the slavery of selfishness and a rebirth to a new life of service and celebration with others. It is a gift or divine grace, but no less a radically free option for life on our part.

This new life of freedom means, of course, combating evil in whatever form: hatred, injustice and prejudice -- all are privations of the good that should be. The focus of freedom, however, is not upon negations, but upon giving birth to the goodness of being and bringing this to a level of human life marked by beauty and love.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has looked at three notions or levels of freedom which in their difference can compliment and unfold one another in humankind's modern effort to achieve maturity and play an increasingly responsible role in directing social life in our times.

We saw how, in the context of the Enlightenment and in order to make possible universal participation in social life, Locke limited the range of meaning to what was empirically available. This assured freedom, but limited it to choices between contrary qualities. The effort was well intentioned, but he seems to have tried too hard and compromised too much in a single minded pursuit of parliamentary government. As a result, the very notion of freedom has not been able to sustain itself, but over time has turned gradually into a consumerist black hole.

The aesthetic sense of Kant and, I believe, Confucius can dramatically enrich the pursuit of freedom. The aesthetic integrates body and spirit, opens all to high ideals and locates in one's free response to the beauty and harmony of the whole the norm of creative human engagement in society and indeed in reality as a whole. Kant's work may suggest ways of rearticulating Confucius' potential for contributing to the modern aspirations for freedom, while the Confucian culture can flesh out with centuries of lived experience the abstract model which Kant could only sketch during the decade in which he wrote his three Critiques. Together they promise greatly to enrich the Enlightenment effort at constructing freedom by raising its goals and locating the exercise of human freedom within the aesthetic response itself to beauty and harmony.

This is progress indeed, but in his own philosophy Hegel both pointed out in theory, and illustrated in practice the potential this opens for a serious undermining of the sense of freedom. For if the required context for freedom is based upon proceeding hypothetically 'as if' all is teleological then its very reality is compromised. If its exercise is restricted to the confines of human imagination then freedom becomes not only self-determining but self-constituting. Again we have tried too hard and become trapped within what we can make or do.

This then is the real issue, indeed it is the issue of the foundation and extent of human social reality and of reality itself. If, as the deepest striving of the human spirit, freedom is real, then the transcendent principle it requires must not be a merely hypothetical 'as if', but really existent; if freedom presents us with a limitless range of possibilities, then its principle must be the Infinite and Eternal, the one actual composite Source and Goal of all possibility. Thus, the transcendent is the key to real liberation: it frees the human spirit from limitation to the restricted field of society's halting and even partial creative activity; it grounds social reality in the Absolute; it certifies one's right to be respected, and evokes the creative powers of the human heart alone and with others in society.

From the Protestant Christian tradition that sin has corrupted human nature, Hegel would say that truth content regarding the transcendent first must be revealed and then can be perfected by

philosophy. The Catholic tradition, which sees the effect of sin not as corrupting but as weakening human nature, would consider this insight regarding the transcendent source to be within the proper capabilities of philosophical reason. In either case, however, it is not a matter of abstract theory but of discovering that the foundations of freedom are lived and experienced fully in a living God who created us out of love. a Christian culture bears further ‘good news’, namely that our freedom cannot be defeated by evil, but is resurgent and in the end will triumph; this is the full truth about humankind seen in relation to the transcendent Lord of Heaven.<sup>34</sup>

To the Enlightenment sense of freedom as choice, awareness of the transcendent Creator adds that life is not only a matter of *having*, that is, of selecting between which physical realities one will consume, but of *being*, with its characteristics of self-identity, communication, justice and sharing. Beyond this there is an awareness that even suffering can be redemptive and lead to resurrection and a new birth in freedom.

To the aesthetic awareness of Kant (and Confucius) as de-scribed above, awareness of the transcendent as the context of human life adds a sense of human meaning, dignity and rights beyond anything that humans themselves can construct. This, in turn, evokes a dynamic and creative response from humankind to the gifts of which its very reality is constituted. Historically as well as philosophically this not only reflects the search of humankind for freedom, but is its source and inspiration.

Conversely, it can be said that the Enlightenment and the Kantian and Confucian aesthetic sense are important for an unfolding of a religious philosophy of social life. The Enlightenment has given egalitarian form to the modern sense of freedom and hence to the search for universal participation in social decision making. The aesthetic sense can do much to temper the aggressive excesses of a self-centered sense of personal identity by a broad sense of harmony both with human beings and with nature. This is needed in our ever more complex and crowded world. Both are essential to the progress of religion in our times, while themselves being protected from ideological reduction in turn by its sense of the Transcendent.

Together, Eastern Confucianism and Western Christian philosophy have important roles in bringing to life a social harmony in which freedom is protected in justice and exercised as creative love.

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## Notes

1. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Dover, 1959), Book, Chap. I, Vol. I, 121-124.
2. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).
3. *The Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).
4. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, A.C. Fraser, ed. (New York: Dover, 1959), II, ch. 21, sec 27; vol. I, p. 329.
5. *Skeptical Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 169.
6. Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 187.
7. J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 5, p. 15.
8. Adler, p. 193.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
11. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. R.W. Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), Part II, pp. 38-58 [421-441].
12. Plato, *Republic*, 519.
13. *Foundations*, III, p. 82 [463].
14. Cf. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1982), Part I, pp. 1-2, pp.39-73; and W. Crawford, espec. Ch. 4.
15. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1968), pp. 205-339.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-200.
17. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A112, 121, 192-193. Donald W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974), pp. 83-84, 87-90.
18. See Kant's development and solution to the autonomy of taste, *Critique of Judgment*, nn. 57-58, pp. 182-192, where Kant treats the need for a concept; Crawford, pp. 63-66.
19. See the paper of Wilhelm S. Wurzer "On the Art of Moral Imagination" in G. McLean, ed., *Moral Imagination and Character Development* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991) for an elaboration of the essential notions of the beautiful, the sublime and taste in Kant's aesthetic theory.
20. Immanuel Kant, *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. Haden (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).
21. William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Washington Square, 1963), Ch. I, pp. 3-40. For notes on the critical hermeneutics of J. Habermas see G. McLean, "Cultural Heritage, Social Critique and Future Construction" in *Culture, Human Rights and Peace in Central America*, R. Molina, T. Readdy and G. McLean, eds. (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and The University Press of America, 1988), Ch. I. Critical distance is an essential element and requires analysis by the social sciences of the historical social structures as a basis for liberation from internal determination by, and from dependence upon, unjust interests. The concrete psycho- and socio-pathology deriving from such dependencies and the corresponding steps toward liberation therefrom are the subject of the chapters by J. Loiacono and H. Ferrand de Piazza in *The Social Context and Values: Perspectives of the Americas*, G. McLean and O. Pegoraro, eds. (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and The University Press of America, 1988), Chs. III and IV.
22. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. J.B. Baille (New York: Harper, 1967), VII and VIII; see also James Collins, *God in Modern Philosophy* (Chicago: Regnery, 1959), VII, espec. pp. 232-37.
23. For a description of the evolution of the notion of being itself see Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: PIMS, 1961); and *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Scribner's, 1937).
24. G. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation: The Unity of Man in God* (Madras: The University of Madras, 1978), pp. 53-57. This was elaborated as well in the course of the classical Trinitarian debates. To understand Christ to be God Incarnate it was necessary to understand Him to be Son sharing fully in the divine nature. This required, in turn, that in the life of the Trinity his procession from the Father be understood to be in a unity of nature: The Son, like the Father, must be fully of the one and same divine nature. Through contrast to this procession of a divine person



it became possible to see more clearly the formal effect of God's act in creating limited and differentiated beings. This would not be in the same divine nature for it resulted, not in a coequal divine person, but in a creature radically dependent for its being.

25. Aristotle had taken the compossibility of forms as a sufficient response to the scientific question of 'whether it exist'. See Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics; A Study in the Greek Background of Medieval Thought* (Toronto: P.I.M.S., 1978).

26. C. Fabro called the graded and related manner in which this is realized concretely an intensive notion of being. Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Pub. Univ. de Louvain, 1961).

27. Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica de partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Torino: Società Ed. Internazionale, 1950), pp. 75-122.

28. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 2.

29. Parmenides of Elea, *Fragments*, trans. D. Galop (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1984).

30. See Owens.

31. Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Toward an Ecumenical Christophany* (New York: Orbis, 1981).

32. See Parmenides; see also Shankara, *Commentary on the Vedanta Sutras*, Introduction.

33. Yves R. Simon, *Freedom of Choice*, P. Wolff, ed. (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1969), p. 106.

34. Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (T'ien-chu Shih-i)*, trans. J. Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985).