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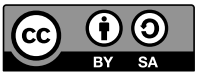

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON LI ZEHOU: ETHICS AND THE BEAUTY OF HUMAN BECOMING

Editor's Foreword

Special Issue Dedicated to Li Zehou on His 90th Birthday – Ethics and Beauty of Human Becoming

The present issue of the journal Asian Studies is dedicated to Li Zehou, one of the greatest contemporary Chinese philosophers. It was compiled as a part of the celebration of his 90th birthday, which will take place on June 13 2020.

This special issue is mainly the result of a special panel on Li Zehou's ethics, which was held on October 16th 2018 in the scope of the 3rd Biennial Conference of the World Consortium for Research in Confucian Cultures (世界儒學文化研究聯合會). The conference, which took place at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (香港理工大) in celebration of the 10th year anniversary of the Faculty of the Humanities, was deemed a great success by all the attendees. The panel on Li Zehou's ethics was also well-received, for it included several highly relevant presentations and led to several highly lively discussions on this interesting and important topic.

Throughout his academic life, Li Zehou was a theoretician with an extremely wide scope of interests, which he could consistently follow due to his wide scope of knowledge in various parts of philosophical theory. These include ontology, epistemology, social and political philosophy, ethics, psychology, comparative thought, Chinese ideational history, theories of modernization, etc. In the late 1970s, he showed a resilient attentiveness in epistemology, the theory of perception and aesthetics. Later on, during the 1980s, aesthetics and philosophy of Chinese art gradually shifted into the centre of his theoretical undertakings. He played a very notable role in the aesthetic debates and "fevers" which prevailed in the Chinese intellectual dialogues of the time. Li has constructed his aesthetics based on his anthropo-historical ontology, which gradually became the central theoretical and methodological approach of all his analyses and interpretations. In the light of the inherent structure of his philosophical development, it is completely logical that the questions of ethics as one of the most important specifically human capacities and a precondition for human social life gradually, but consistently, shifted into the focus of his philosophical studies.

This special issue of Asian Studies aims to critically introduce and explain Li Zehou's ethical thought, to highlight its inventive elements and to posit it into current developments of ethical theories on the global level. However, in order to

better understand the explanations and interpretations of these questions, readers also need to become familiar with some other, related segments of Li's philosophical thought. Therefore, the present issue is not limited to his ethical thought in the narrowest sense of the term, but also includes some introductory elements that deal with Li Zehou's aesthetic thought, his anthropological theory and his general philosophy.

The present issue is structured into three scopes of content. The first one is entitled *Inspirations from East and West: from Confucius to Kant and Back*; it analyses basic discourses that stem from the Chinese and from the European (or Western) traditions of thought and have profoundly influenced Li Zehou's philosophical theories on many different levels. The scope shows that Li's system of philosophical ethics is based upon—but not limited to—synthetic models consisting of various theoretical approaches. These approaches can be divided into two central categories. The first (and perhaps the most essential) is rooted in traditional Chinese ethical discourses and is firmly grounded on the foundation of Confucian paradigmatic framework. The second approach pertains to Western theories of philosophical ethics; in this scope, Li mainly elaborates on the philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Heidegger, and others. At times he compares or relates certain elements of his thought to the ideas and concepts derived from Critical Theory and existentialism, as well as from the theories of Bentham, Mill, Dewey, Rawls, Hayek, Sandel, and numerous other scholars who significantly contributed to the development of Western ethics. Many of their ideas have served Li as inspirations and important starting points for creating and developing his own philosophy, as well as tools for establishing contrastive backgrounds for comparative analyses of their ethical thought on the one hand, and his own philosophy of ethics on the other.

The second scope deals with *Classical and Modern Theories: Reinforcements and Innovations*, i.e. with classical and modern sources from which Li likewise drew inspirations. This scope is based upon the specific ways in which Li is reworking contemporary theory by amalgamating it with crucial classical traditional elements. In his outline, traditional Chinese, particularly Confucian ethics, was always representing a kind of basic footing, which in his view had to be modernized and adapted to the requirements of the present era. In this process of modernizing classical Chinese thought, particular Western approaches are being modified, amalgamated, and combined with traditional Chinese as well as with Li's own innovative conceptualizations to form a new scheme of a universally valid modern aesthetical ethics suited to the contemporary globalized societies. The scope aims to show how and why the framework of Li's philosophy was profoundly influenced by both—traditional Chinese as well as modern Western—ethical and aesthetic ideas. It also points to some new ways in which these ideas can be critically

examined, analysed, and interpreted in order to provide a reasonable synthetic groundwork for new insights in these fields of philosophical investigations.

The third scope is dedicated to one of the crucial aspects of Li Zehou's ethics, namely to his elaborations upon the problem of the relation between harmony and justice. It is entitled *On the Edge between Politics and Ethics: The Precarious Relationship between Harmony and Justice*. Based on Li's specific philosophical system, this scope treats various central issues he has developed over recent decades and places them in relation to Western liberalism and to different aspects of harmony and justice, respectively. In this way, it aims to create a truly comparative dimension by reflecting on both Chinese and Western discourses that have served Li Zehou as groundworks for his emergent theory of morality, in which he founded social harmony on general, but modifiable principles of justice. It is therefore not at all coincidental that this third scope is the longest one: in contrast to the first two scopes, each of which is composed of two papers, this scope contains three lengthy articles that essentially round up the entire volume and contribute to its inner coherence.

The first scope opens with Ady van den Stock's article entitled "Imprints of the Thing in Itself: Li Zehou's *Critique of Critical Philosophy* and the Historicization of the Transcendental". In this first article of the special issue, van den Stock highlights the multifarious aspects of Kant's concept of the "thing in itself" for Li Zehou's anthropological philosophy, mainly by analysing the corresponding parts of Li's book *Critique of Critical Philosophy* (*Pipan zhexue zhi pipan* 批判哲学之批判). This article is followed by Jana S. Rošker's paper, which treats one of the crucial concepts of Li's ethics, namely his notion of pragmatic reason. The paper, which bears the title "Li Zehou's Ethics and the Structure of Confucian Pragmatic Reason", critically introduces and explains the pragmatic nature of this specific kind of rationality, which is tightly linked to and intertwined with human emotions. It also posits the Confucian pragmatic reason into the framework of Li Zehou's ethics and political axiology.

The second scope, which, as already mentioned, is dealing with Li's amalgamations of traditional and modern contents in the fields of his aesthetical permeated ethics, opens with Jia Jinhua's paper entitled "Li Zehou's Reconception of the Classical Confucian Concepts of Autonomy and Individuality: With a Focus on Reading the Analects Today". This interesting article aims to elucidate the diverse methods and approaches by which Li Zehou aims to create a unique synthesis of Western and classical Chinese concepts related to ideas of the autonomous subject. It also shows how, through his Confucian project, Li hopes to efficiently apply and develop humanity for a new reconstruction of the cultural order in the present globalized world. The second article in this scope of contents is dedicated to Li's interpretation of modern aesthetics, which is based upon his specific attitude to

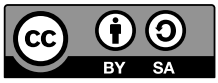
and relation with modern Western art. Through a comparative perspective, i.e. through a contrastive analysis of Li Zehou's and Xu Fuguan's interpretations, the author Téa Sernelj points to the innovative nature of the former's ideas. In this article under the title "Different Approaches to Modern Art and Society: Li Zehou *versus* Xu Fuguan", she clearly shows that the dissimilarity between these two approaches is of utmost importance and has wide reaching implications, for their particular aesthetic attitudes also clearly manifest themselves in their respective systems of ethical thought. This article also illuminates the fact that even though Xu Fuguan had profound knowledge of Chinese traditional aesthetics and art, he failed to understand modernity, whereas Li Zehou has a much deeper, more complex understanding of the process.

The third scope of contents comprises three articles, which are—each in its own way—dealing with problems related to Li Zehou's specific view on the relation between harmony and justice. The scope opens with Wang Keping's paper "Behind Harmony and Justice". In this article, Wang shows that Li Zehou's proposition of "harmony being higher than justice" implies a hierarchical consideration rather than a value assessment, and that it can be employed to further develop Li's specific view on "the Chinese application" and "the Western substance". The second article in this scope was written by Paul D'Ambrosio and is entitled "Li Zehou's 'Harmony is Higher than Justice': Context and a Collaborative Future". It places Li's proposal within the context of the contemporary debate on harmony and justice in Western and Chinese traditions and outlines some of the other major views on the relationship between harmony and justice, but also providing in this context a critique from Li's perspective. Finally, the author strives to expand on Li's theory by delineating an alternative path for our thinking about harmony and justice. The scope (and also this special issue) ends with Robert Anthony Carleo's III paper entitled "Confucian Post-Liberalism". It offers an insightful comparison of Li Zehou's and John Gray's ethical thought; although the former proceeds from Confucian-Kantian perspectives, while the latter is decidedly un-Kantian, they both equally negate foundational claims regarding the universality of liberal principles and values. On the other hand, they both—even though each in his own, different way—affirm the universal value of those principles that supports social structures, which enhance human flourishing. Through this comparison, the author points to an interesting view that can have wide-reaching consequences for a creative and dynamic understanding of Li Zehou's ethical thought. He namely shows how in this comparison it can become obvious that John Gray—in spite of the fact that he is a Western philosopher—not only aligns with the Confucian elements of Li's ethics, but may even be enriched by them.

I am immensely happy that the editorial board of Asian Studies has succeeded to collect a number of excellent papers written by scholars who belong to the most

competent experts on Li Zehou's philosophy in the Western world. Therefore, I have good reasons to hope that this special issue will highlight the uniquely dynamic agenda which underlies all segments of Li's aesthetically permeated ethics. As a small stone in the recently created new mosaic of diverse introductions of Li Zehou's thought to the Western audience, it shall hopefully also contribute to a better understanding of his philosophy and its important role in the current intercultural world.

Jana S. ROŠKER, Editor-in-Chief



SPECIAL ISSUE ON LI ZEHOU: ETHICS AND THE BEAUTY OF HUMAN BECOMING

Inspirations from East and West: From Confucius to Kant and Back

Imprints of the Thing in Itself: Li Zehou's *Critique of Critical Philosophy* and the Historicization of the Transcendental

Ady VAN DEN STOCK *

Abstract

Kant's concept of the "thing in itself" constitutes a formidable challenge to the project of "(anthropological-)historical ontology" with which the name of Li Zehou has become synonymous. Li's radical reinterpretation of Kant's critical philosophy, which locates the conditions of the possibility of knowledge and experience within historical and social evolution and thus seeks to allow for a form of human self-determination, brings us face to face with the close relation between the epistemological/ontological and normative dimensions of the notion of the thing in itself. My paper attempts to tease out some of the conceptual presuppositions and repercussions of Li's approach to the thing in itself in the *Critique of Critical Philosophy* (*Pipan zhexue zhi pipan* 批判哲学之批判), while locating his reading in the broader context of Kant's transcendentalism.

Keywords: Li Zehou, modern Chinese philosophy, historical ontology, Immanuel Kant, thing in itself

Dojemanje stvari po sebi: Li Zehoujeva *Kritika kritične filozofije* in historizacija transcendentalnega

Izvleček

Kantov koncept »stvari po sebi« predstavlja izjemen izziv za projekt »(antropološko-) zgodovinske ontologije«, ki jo v veliki meri enačimo z imenom Li Zehouja. Lijeva radikalna reinterpretacija Kantove kritične filozofije, ki lokalizira pogoje možnosti spoznanja in izkustva znotraj zgodovinske in družbene evolucije in na ta način omogoča posebno obliko človeškega samodoločanja, nas sooča s tesno povezavo med epistemološko/ontološkimi in normativnimi razsežnostmi pojma stvari po sebi. Cilj pričujočega članka je kritično prevpraševanje nekaterih konceptualnih učinkov in predpostavk Lijevega razumevanja stvari po sebi, kakršno je izpostavljeno v njegovi knjigi *Kritika kritične filozofije* (*Pipan zhexue zhi pipan* 批判哲学之批判), ter umestitev njegovih idej v širši kontekst Kantovega transcendentalizma.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, moderna kitajska filozofija, zgodovinska ontologija, Immanuel Kant, stvar po sebi

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Prologue: Li Zehou's Historical Ontology

The philosophy of Li Zehou 李泽厚 (b. 1930), one of the most influential and creative living Chinese thinkers, is arguably unique in modern Chinese thought for the willingness (and indeed eagerness) it has shown to open up philosophical thought to the contingency of historical change as well as to other domains of cognitive, practical, and social activity, most notably the aesthetic dimension of human existence.[1] In a sense, Li's paradigmatic proposal to formulate a "historical ontology" (*lishi bentilun* 历史本体论), or "anthropological-historical ontology" (*renleixue lishi bentilun* 人类学历史本体论), already presupposes that the "what is …?" questions with which philosophical thought typically (though of course not exclusively) concerns itself have to be transformed into questions of the following type: "how did … come into being?" or "what were the conditions for … to become?"[2] Such a properly transcendental approach to ontological inquiry, which asserts the necessity of investigating the conditions within which knowledge of what "is" becomes possible before allowing anything resembling ontological judgements to take place,[3] is thus, ideally at least, historical through and through. The conditions of the possibility of knowledge are, according to Li's radical reinterpretation of Kant's critical philosophy, themselves also a product of human activity throughout history, and thus equally conditioned and contingent, instead of remaining safely isolated from natural and social evolution. This

1 Indeed, for Li, "aesthetics is first philosophy" (美学是第一哲学) (Li 2016, 568).

2 Already in one of his earliest published texts, an article entitled "On Aesthetic Feeing, Beauty, and Art" (*Lun meigan, mei, yu yishu* 论美感、美与艺术) from 1956, which contains his notion of "sedimentation" (see below, still called "accumulation" (*jilei* 积累) here; see Li 1956, 48, 71) in embryonic form, Li emphasized the mediated nature of all forms of knowledge and experience in the context of his critique of Zhu Guangqian's 朱光潜 (1897–1986) "idealist" aesthetics. While Li concedes that aesthetic feeling (*meigan* 美感) does indeed first of all "present itself to us in the form of an intuition" (在这样一种直觉的形式中呈砚出), he goes on to point out: "*That which allows us to acquire knowledge concerning a particular object through intuition is the fact that we have unconsciously come to form an understanding of this particular object and of how it relates to the totality of life* through the influence of everyday existence and the formative influence of culture." (我們所以能够从直觉中对个别事物有知識, 是因为我们在日常生活和文化教养的影响和熏陶下, 不自觉地形成了对这个个别事物的了解, 对这个事物在整个生活中的关系和联系的了解。) (Li 1956, 45–46, emphasis in the original) Accordingly, even something as seemingly unmediated and spontaneous as the experience of beauty is thoroughly historical in nature, since beauty is not simply a property of nature, but rather is essentially social in character. Or as Li himself put it: "*Natural beauty is quite simply a particular form of existence of beauty within social life (actual beauty), that is to say, an 'alienated' form of existence*." (自然美就只是社会生活的美(现实美)的一种特殊的存在形式, 是一种" 异化" 的存在形式。) (Li 1956, 60, emphasis in original) For more background and a detailed analysis of this youthful text, see Rošker 2019, 9–10, 186–96, 300–1 (notes 4 and 6).

3 In Kant's original definition in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "I call all knowledge transcendental which deals *not so much with objects as with our manner of knowing objects* insofar as this manner is to be possible *a priori*." (Kant 2007, 52 (B25), my italics)

is also one of the main motivations behind Li's plea for replacing what he takes to be the dominant conception of "subjectivity" (*zhuguanxing* 主观性) as purely epistemological in orientation with that of "subjectality" (*zhutixing* 主体性) (see Li 1999). From the perspective of "subjectality", "the human subject [appears] as sensual and embodied (*ti* 体), and already embedded, prior to all perception, in a historical and social context that shapes the categories with which it organizes its perceptions of reality" (Chong 1999, 140). Hence, what Li calls "subjectality" compromises the totality of human existence in its objective "techno-social" (工艺社会) and subjective "cultural-psychological" (see below) as well as individual aspects (see Li 2000, 27; Li 2018/[1979], 70/94).[4] The "subject" of "subjectality" is not merely able to "think" or to "know", but can also act, work, invent, produce, congregate, cooperate, desire, feel, remember, and so on. Moreover, these activities do not occur within a contextless blank space, but are in themselves already marked and shaped by historical, social, and cultural developments. As such, it is hard to miss the significance of the fact that Li insists on calling himself a "historicist" (Li 2018, 229).

At the same time, for Li, this basic methodological outlook, which can be briefly described as involving a thorough historicization of the transcendental, is exemplified by what he takes to be a uniquely Chinese conception of "being" as fundamentally a matter of "becoming" (see for example Li 2010, 52; Li 2016, 437). Additionally, Li approaches the Confucian perspective on (human) existence as occupying a privileged position within the Chinese tradition.[5] He believes that the "one-world view" (一个世界观) of this "Confucian-dominated" (Li 2010, 219) cultural tradition effectively precluded the bifurcation between unconditioned and conditioned or *a priori* and *a posteriori*, which Li sees as intrinsically linked with the very concept of the transcendental:

> [f]or the Chinese, "transcendental" or *a priori* cannot be the last word. The Chinese mind would ask, why is something "transcendental", or where does the *a priori* come from? Because of this "one-world view", it would also be difficult to accept the idea of something "absolutely independent of all experience."[6] […] On the contrary, filled with a sense of history, the Chinese mind always searches for some historical interpretation. Thus,

4 References to the *Critique of Critical Philosophy* will include the Chinese edition (Li [1979]) as well as the recent English translation by Jeanne Haizhen Allen and Christopher Ahn from 2018.

5 See for example Li 1994, 45; Li 2018, 221. Crucially, as Jana Rošker points out, "Li pushes the origins of Chinese culture further back than the majority of Chinese scholars by suggesting that Confucianism originated from the rationalized shamanism with the Duke of Zhou as its initiator" (Rošker 2019, 109).

6 See Kant 2007, 38 (B3).

> the "transcendental" and the *a priori* must also have their roots in this world, in the movement of history. (Li 1999, 180)

Similarly, Li's dismissive attitude toward any form of "ontology" (*bentilun* 本体论) which involves a division of reality into categorically distinct spheres bears witness to this dual strategy of historicization and culturalization as well. More precisely, his displacement of the category of the noumenal (*benti* 本体) into the immanence of "one world", as something performatively embodied (*ti* 体) within the concreteness of human existence and material practice in society, is often presented as a distinctly Chinese insight and accomplishment, albeit one with a more universal validity:

> We have no philosophical questions of being or different realms of phenomenon and noumenon, for our is not a dualistic world view. We translate *noumenon* as *benti* [本体], a word coined from *ben* (root, origin) and *ti* (stem, body) […] So instead of a study of being, *bentilun* [本体论] is a study of the *ben* (root, origin) and *ti* (stem, body) of things. Clearly, this approach views the origin of things from a more biological and historical perspective than from that of metaphysics. I suggest that the root and body of human practice is *benti* and, further, that human emotions (subjects) and tools (objects) are *benti*. I like to call [this] *bentilun*, the study of *benti*, or historical ontology […] In addition, within the Chinese one-world view, the existence of everything is connected with the existence of human beings; hence, *being* cannot be separated from the existence of human beings. The Chinese people emphasize that the thinking subject cannot be separated from the acting subject, that consciousness cannot be separated from human material (bodily) existence. (Li 2006, 40)[7]

7 As he writes in the postscript to *The Chinese Aesthetic Tradition* (*Huaxia meixue* 华夏美学): "What is the noumenon [*benti* 本体]? It is ultimate reality, the origin of everything. According to the Confucian-based Chinese tradition, the noumenon is not nature, for a universe without humanity is meaningless. Nor is the noumenon a deity, for to ask humans to prostrate themselves before a god would not fit with the notions of 'partnering in the transformation and nurturing of all things' or 'establishing the heart of heaven and earth.' It must follow, then, that the noumenon is humankind itself." (Li 2010, 223) The following passage from the work of another prominent Chinese thinker, Zhao Tingyang 赵汀阳 (b. 1961), has a very similar ring to it, even if it goes much further in confusing the distinction between epistemological and normative issues: "The problem of a being as a thing 'in itself' is strange for Chinese philosophy, since nothing can be a thing as such unless it is defined in terms of its relations with other things. This means that relations, rather than things, need to be meaningfully examined. From the viewpoint of relationships, it is unreasonable to say 'a thing is as it is', for a thing is never as it is by itself; it is made as such and such in certain relations in which it is involved. Rather than being a real presence, a 'thing' is merely a linguistic invention to facilitate representation. Relations are thus the ontological condition for a thing to be present as such; so much so that *existence* presupposes *co-existence*, and co-existence determines existence." (Zhao 2009, 15)

Hence, within Li Zehou's own line of reasoning, the category of (Chinese) "culture" would seem to count as something located in an indeterminate grey zone between the historical and transcendental: while having been shaped within the context of the contingent "movement" of historical evolution, the process which Li describes as the "sedimentation" (*jidian* 积淀)[8] of experiences, emotions, and knowledge has led to the appearance of a distinctive and relatively stable Chinese "cultural-psychological formation" (*wenhua-xinli jiegou* 文化—心理结构) which displays a strong degree of independence from history and change.[9] Ironically then, Li claims that it was precisely the fundamental "pragmatic rationality" (*shiyong lixing* 实用理性) of this "cultural-psychological formation" which made the Chinese as a people positively predisposed toward historical materialism and Marxism (see Li 1985, 315–16). To be sure, this aspect of Li's "historical ontology" raises a considerable number of theoretical questions which cannot be directly or exhaustively addressed here.[10] Doing so would require us to offer an adequate reconstruction and presentation of Li's combined interest in Marx's historical materialism and Confucianism, an unlikely conceptual partnership which is further complicated by a decade-long engagement with Kant reaching back to his landmark study *A Critique of Critical Philosophy* (*Pipan zhexue zhi pipan* 批判哲学之批判) from 1979. Instead of laying out such a big picture in the following pages, I will limit myself to presenting a small case study of what is perhaps the single most unlikely and unwieldy object of the sort of radical materialist historicization proposed by Li Zehou, namely the Kantian concept of the "thing in itself" (*das Ding an sich*, usually translated into Chinese as *wu zishen* 物自身 or *wu ziti* 物自

8 In one of Li's terse definitions: "By *sedimentation* (*jidian*), I mean that human nature, which is a cultural psychological construction of uniquely human capabilities, was formed from the historical processes of using tools, social interaction, and the rituals of shamanism. What is human has been sedimented into individuals, the rational into the sensuous, and the social into the natural." (Li 2006, 88)

9 Describing the role played by Confucianism in the genesis of the Chinese "cultural-psychological formation", Li writes: "Kinship, psychology, humanism, and personal character finally formed the organic totality of this mode of thinking characterized by pragmatic reason. This thinking is able to form an organic totality because within the mutual containment and interactive functioning of these factors it achieves equilibrium, self-regulation, and self-development. It moreover possesses a certain closedness, regularly repelling external disruption or harm." (Li 2018, 135) This passage is a quote from an earlier and crucial text from 1980, "A Reevaluation of Confucius" (*Kongzi zai pingjia* 孔子再评价), later republished as the first chapter of *On the History of Ancient Chinese Thought* (*Zhongguo gudai sixiang shi lun* 中国古代思想史论) from 1985.

10 For a few additional comments, see Van den Stock (forthcoming). In Liu Kang's view, "the historical materialist distinction of base/superstructure seems to be dissolved or undermined by Li Zehou's own predominantly culturalist resolutions" (Liu 1992, 129). Similarly, Jing Wang pertinently remarks: "Li Zehou's vacillating rhetoric about cultural sedimentation—that it is a completed circle at one moment and a kinetic motion at the next—indicates that he cannot decide whether superstructure is a mere epiphenomenon of economy or a semiautonomous force that interacts with and sometimes even overpowers economic constraints." (Wang 1996, 99–100)

体).[11] In the process, I will attempt to place Li's reinterpretation of this contested and highly complex notion, and of Kant's critical philosophy in general, within the broader context of modern intellectual history and tease out some of the conceptual presuppositions and repercussions of Li's reading of the thing in itself.

Interlude: Sense and Reference of the Thing in Itself

Before going on, we should perhaps pause here to ask what it might mean to say, as Li Zehou does, that "the 'transcendental' and the *a priori* must also have their roots in this world, in the movement of history." After all, how can something like the "thing in itself", a notion that explicitly designates the limits of human knowledge as such, and thus refers to an absolute boundary immune to the contingency of historical (as well as cultural) variability, be not only affected by, but even, in some sense, grounded in historical change? It may be objected that this naïve question involves a confusion between the thing in itself as a concept on the one hand, and what the latter actually designates on the other, that it to say, between "sense" and "reference", respectively. There can be, within this line of reasoning, historically and culturally variable interpretations of the "thing in itself", but the latter, the thing in itself *in itself*, so to speak, remains completely impervious to any form of contingency and variability. However, Li Zehou's claim to upset (if not altogether annul) the boundaries between the transcendental and the historical by means of the concept of "sedimentation" presents itself as much more ambitious and does not stop at the rather straightforward observation that the limits of knowledge can be (and have been) conceived of in different ways throughout history and across different cultures.[12] Rather, he seems to mean quite literally that

11 For a detailed study of the reception and translation of this concept in modern China, see Kurtz 2011. As Kurtz succinctly notes: "Although never intended as a theoretically productive notion and repeatedly denigrated by Kant himself as a 'fiction' (*Unding*) and a mere 'object of thought' (*Verstandeswesen*) with no 'positive meaning' or 'use' (KrV B274; B305–15), Chinese philosophers have insisted on treating 'things in themselves' as a necessary and intelligible concept, and devoted numerous studies to the ways in which noumena may be known despite Kant's repeated, and perhaps even 'dogmatic' claims to the contrary." For more general overviews of the Chinese reception of Kant, see Müller 2006; Lee 2016; Xu 2016.

12 An interesting example pertinent to the context of the present article can be found in "On the Heavens" (*Zhutian jiang* 諸天講), a text by Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858–1927) (draft completed in 1886, revised in 1926 and only published in 1930; see Lee 2016, 2), which touches upon the Kant's nebular hypothesis concerning the formation of the solar system as well as his epistemological skepticism concerning the existence of God. See Kang 1930, 92–94. As Bo Xu points out, in his discussion, Kang "quietly transferred this Kantian stress on the limits of human cognition to the limits of Western science […] Kang therefore did not embrace Kant's agnostic stance wholeheartedly, but adopted it merely in the sense that it demarcated a boundary for Western science, within which only material-corporeal things were to be studied" (Xu 2016, 27). Hence,

everything usually thought of as "transcendental" (in formal terms, that which is not reducible to what it serves as a condition of the possibility for, hence not to be confused with "transcendent"[13]), including, as we will see further on, the infamous *Ding an sich*, is historically constituted, without however being completely dissolvable into the immanently given flux of contingent events. In the latter case, we would be left with a phenomenalist rather than a transcendental account, even when we are dealing with a radically different sort of transcendentalism than the Kantian one sort (i.e. one not grounded in "subjectivity", but "subjectality"). Moreover, if we recall that what Kant means by the thing in itself does not refer to something which remains (perhaps forever) unknown because of certain empirical or technical impediments (say the limited frequency range of the human ear or the absence of a powerful enough Hadron Collider), but involves abstracting from *all* features of human sensibility and *all* categories of the understanding (see for instance Kant 2007, 258, B306–7), thus including notions such as "invariable" or "unchangeable", it becomes clear that this distinction between the sense and reference of the thing in itself is perhaps not so easy to draw, at least not in these terms. Indeed, how are we supposed to get a sense and make sense of something which defies all the coordinates we have at our disposal for conceptually determining and representing it, even those which operate *ex negativo* (*in*variable, *un*-changeable)? With what sort of "thing" are we dealing when its only identifiable property seems to be that of being radically unknowable and foreclosed to any possibility of being positively designated? And if things in themselves are merely conceptual abstractions or placeholders, in what sort of relation can they possibly stand to the (in principle) knowable objects of experience which they accompany (and, for Kant, must necessarily be posited as accompanying[14]) as shadowy twins?

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decades before the famous debates concerning the respective limits of scientific and humanist forms of reasoning in Republican China, Chinese thinkers had already started examining the modern epistemic space from the perspective of cultural difference as an observational scheme.

13 On this point, see Li 2018/[1979], 52/70–71; cf. Li 1978, 45. In the mainland Chinese literature, the term "transcendental" is usually rendered as *xianyan* 先验 (literally, "before experience"), whereas *a priori* is translated as *xiantian* 先天 ("before heaven," a complex term already widely used in Neo-Confucian as well as Daoist thought reaching back to the *Yijing* 易經) and "transcendent" as *chaoyan* 超验 ("surpassing experience") or *chaoyue* 超越 (to add to the confusion, this term is often used as the equivalent of "transcendental" in the writings of scholars from Hong Kong and Taiwan). These terms were already used by Lan Gongwu 蓝公武 (1887–1957), author of the first Chinese translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (made on the basis of Norman Kemp Smith's (1872–1958) English translation). As is the case for most of the technical and specialized vocabulary in modern Chinese, the translation efforts of Japanese scholars during the Meiji period played a decisive role in this case as well, particularly the work of Kuwaki Gen'yoku 桑木厳翼 (1874–1946). For a brief historical study of Chinese translations of these terms, see Wen and Chen 2011.

14 As Nicholas Rescher explains: "A thing in itself whose nature is brought within the reach of the categories of understanding is *ipso-facto* unable to do the job of endowing the appearances with

To be sure, the problem and ambiguity we encounter here is already very much present in Kant's own work, as the entire history of post-Kantian German idealism bears out: on the one hand, the thing in itself merely designates "a limiting concept […] intended to keep the claims of sensibility within proper bounds" (Kant 2007, 261, B311–12). As such, it is not so much a transcendent beyond, but rather (at most) a purely hypothetical correlate of our objects of knowledge, stripped of all of the conditions which make such knowledge possible. In this capacity, it functions as the unknowable cause of our representations of things insofar as they are attuned and accessible to us, that is to say, as phenomena. On the other hand however, Kant concedes that while the thing in itself cannot be known, and that human knowledge is only possible precisely because we can only know things as phenomenal appearances, we are still able to think it (see Kant 2007, 23, Bxxvii). As such, the thing in itself is a "thought entity" (*ens rationis*), or, more colloquially, a "thing of thought" (*Gedankending*) (see Kant 2007, 283–84, B346–84). Hence, the very ability Kant ascribes to human beings to think, however approximately, the thing in itself suggests that the latter is located on either side of the boundaries of human cognitive activity. It designates a limit to knowledge that still has one foot, so to speak, in the domain of the knowable, at least insofar as the latter is identified with what is thinkable (which are not identical categories for Kant[15]). As Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) argued in the *Science of Knowledge* (*Wissenschaftslehre*) (first version of 1794) with uncharacteristic clarity:

> This fact, that the finite spirit must necessarily posit something outside itself (a thing in itself), and yet must recognize, from the other side, that the latter exists only *for it* (as a necessary noumenon), is that circle which it is able to extend into infinity, but can never escape (quoted in Rockmore 2010, 18).

Of course, Kant himself clearly distinguishes the circle described in such "thinking" from knowledge in the strict sense, which involves both sensible content and the forms supplied by the *a priori* categories of the understanding. In any case, this implies that the concept of the thing in itself is not some speculative eccentricity which can easily be eliminated from Kant's philosophy, nor from the process of human cognition as such. As Nicholas Rescher put it in a way similar to Fichte,

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the intentionality of indicating something that stands altogether outside the phenomenal order to assure that appearances are appearances *of* something. A cognitively domesticated thing in itself would (*ex hypothesi*) not be able perform the key mission assigned to such things in the Kantian framework, viz. to provide a basis of *externality* for the objects of knowledge." (Rescher 1981, 295–96)

15 "The possibility of a thing can never be proved merely from the fact that its concept is not self-contradictory, but only by being supported by a [sensible] intuition corresponding to it." (Kant 2007, 259, B309)

> it is of the very nature of human reason to construe the things of experience, the phenomena, as representations—that is, to *take* them to be correlative with underlying reality, to be not *just* appearances but appearances *of* things as they are in themselves (*an sich selbst genommen*) […] (Rescher 1981, 297).

Crucially however, Rescher concludes that "[a]s is only fitting in the context of Kant's philosophy, their [things in themselves'] station within the final analysis is not ontological but epistemological (ibid., 298)."[16]

While I have no intention of disputing Rescher's analysis, we could add here that the implications of this last observation can vary considerably depending on the reach one ascribes to the terms "ontology" and "ontological". If we follow Heidegger[17] as well as Li Zehou (along with many other modern Chinese philosophers) in treating the term "ontology" as fundamentally concerning a mode of questioning into the being of human beings in particular, it becomes clear that the purely "epistemological" status of things in themselves has implications reaching far beyond the confines of epistemology.[18] Kant's own claim that the experience of ourselves as moral subjects constitutes some sort of pathway into the "in itself" allowing us to escape the confines of the phenomenal, which some commentators have viewed as a "carry-over of pre-critical language" (Schrader 1949, 38), already indicates as much. As such, for all the overall superficiality and blatant mistakes in Liang Qichao's 梁启超 (1873–1929) (in the Chinese context, pioneering) exposition of Kant's philosophy, his approach to the thing in itself as corresponding to a person's "true self" (*zhenwo* 真我) and as designating the freedom of a "higher form of life" (高等生命者) unaffected by contingency and empirical causality, was not that far off, at least insofar as Liang managed to identify the normative dimension of this notion (see Xu 2016, 29).[19] In more

16 According to Gerold Prauss's 1974 study *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an sich*, "in itself" (*an sich*) predominantly figures in Kant's writings not as an adjectival, but rather as an adverbial expression, that is to say, as a shorthand for "observed in itself" (*an sich betrachtet*) (See Vallicella 1983, 37). This would mean, paradoxically enough, that the "in itself" is simply another mode of observation, an approach which deprives the thing in itself from any ontological weight, since the verb "observing" (*betrachten*) which it modifies adverbially precisely undermines any claim to guarantee the ontological independence of an unobserved "in itself", as the sociologist Niklas Luhmann consistently maintained. See for example the succinct remarks in Luhmann 2013, 99–100.

17 "*Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's being*. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological." (Heidegger 1927, 32)

18 Feng Qi's 冯契 (1915–1995) "epistemology in a broad sense" (*guangyi de renshilun* 广义的认识论) is particularly worth mentioning here.

19 Liang's interpretation of the thing in itself, which he rendered using the Buddhist term *wuru* 物如 (literally, the "suchness of things", or "things in their suchness"), can be found in a text from 1903/1904 entitled "The Theories of Kant, the Greatest Sage of the Modern Era" (*Jinshi diyi dazhe*

general terms, the amount of enthusiasm, passion, and occasional vitriol Kant's thing in itself has managed to provoke for over two centuries since the appearance of the first *Critique* indicates that it is something which exerts a great degree of attraction as well repulsion on us, precisely because any conception of the "in itself" stands in a close relation to how the world exists "for us". In other words, whatever the referential value of the thing in itself may be, its sense clearly has implications for our understanding of human existence and, in this specific sense, has an ontological valence as well. Although this does not immediately bring us any closer to the thing in itself (indeed, how could it?), I will argue in more detail in the next section that this burdening of the thing-itself with considerable "ontological" and normative weight is of crucial importance for understanding Li Zehou's interpretation of this concept as well as its broader status in modern intellectual history.

The Thing in Itself: The Transcendental in the *Critique of Critical Philosophy* (1979)

The entire seventh chapter of Li Zehou's *Critique of Critical Philosophy* from 1979 (Li 2018/[1979], 189–213/239–72) is devoted to an extensive discussion and

Kangde zhi xueshuo 近世第一大哲康德之學説), the earliest systematic presentations of Kant's philosophy in Chinese, originally published in serialized form in the *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢报. In this text, largely based on a selective reading of texts and translations by Nakae Chōmin 中江兆民 (1847–1901) (see Burtscher 2006; Huang 2014), Liang used concepts derived from Yogācāra Buddhism to introduce his Chinese readers to Kant, whom he presented as a veritable "sage" (*shengren* 聖人) (see Cheng 2001; Xu 2016, 28–30). According to Lee Ming-huei 李明輝, Liang's somewhat rudimentary reading of Kant already foreshadows certain aspects of the much more sustained and elaborate interpretation offered by undoubtedly the most famous of all Chinese Kantians, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909–1995) (See Lee 2016, 7). As is well-known, Mou went much further than Liang in pushing the normative dimension of the thing in itself to the foreground. Rather than seeing it as a categorical limit to human knowledge, he attempted to positively redefine it as an "object" of intellectual intuition, a moral faculty which he claims to have been consistently confirmed and embraced in all major Chinese philosophical traditions, most notably Confucianism. This is why Mou argued that the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal is a matter of "value" and not of "fact" (see Mou 1975, 1–20; for a detailed analysis which draws on the strong normative significance of the thing in itself in Kant's own writings, see Lee 2018; also see Van den Stock 2016, 299–347). It does not merely concern the conditions of the possibility of knowledge, but rather of existence as such, more precisely in a state of moral perfection. Since intellectual intuition does not operate under the normal conditions of knowledge, it stands to reason that such intuition should not be read in a narrowly cognitive sense. Borrowing a term from Heidegger, Mou stresses that the thing in itself is not, strictly speaking, an "object" (*Gegenstand*, *duixiang* 对象, i.e. something that stands opposed to something else) at all, but rather an "e-ject" (*Ent-stand*, *zixiang* 自相, "self-appearance") (Mou 1975, 104), something that shines forth from itself in the self-transparency of intuitive insight.

analysis of the concept of the thing in itself (*wu ziti* 物自体).[20] As is the case throughout the whole book, Li starts this chapter on what he calls the veritable "centre of Kant's whole system of philosophy" (整个康德哲学的中心) (Li 2018/[1979], 189/239) with a more descriptive account, in order to gradually insert his own critical comments and develop an alternative interpretation which reflects the basic outlook of his own historical ontology. This outlook is summarized succinctly earlier on in his *Critique* in the context of a discussion of the Kantian categories of the understanding, which Li sees as originating in historically and socially determinate forms of practice:

> what seems "transcendental" to an individual is actually abstracted from the long historical experience of the human community. Although they [the transcendental concepts of the understanding] cannot be directly induced from individual perception, they can be produced by historical social practice within empirical reality, and preserved in our science and culture. The transcendental can accumulate and develop so as to increasingly expand human beings' cognitive power.
>
> 但是对于个体似乎是 "先验" 的东西，却是人类集体从漫长的历史经验中抽取提升出来的。它们虽然不能从个体的感知中直接归纳出来，却能够从感性现实的社会实践的漫长历史活动中产生出来，并保存在人们的科学、文化之中，不断积累发展着，使人的知识能力日益扩大。(Li 2018/[1979], 128/164, translation amended)

At stake for Li in any discussion of the transcendental is accomplishing a shift from the ahistorical, and in this sense "abstract", viewpoint of individual subjectivity to a perspective which confers agency on human beings as a social collective. Viewed in this way, the transcendental (*xianyan* 先验) is that which allows the results of historical development, primarily those stemming from social labour as centred around the manufacture and creation of tools, which Li considers to be the "hard core of historical materialism" (Li 2018, vi), to be recovered within humanity as a totality evolving through time. The conditions of the possibility of knowledge are thus grounded in "empirical reality" (感性的现实) in a materialist fashion, but at the same time, the access human beings have to reality is assumed to be always already mediated by the accumulated results of previous cognitive and practical activity in social history. In other words, the conditions of the possibility of knowledge and experience which are the native territory of

20 The seventh chapter is the last one to fall under the division "epistemology" (*renshilun* 认识论) (covering six chapters in total) in Li's *Critique*, the other two main divisions being "ethics" (*lunlixue* 伦理学) (two chapters) and "aesthetics and teleology" (*meixue yu mudilun* 美学与目的论) (one chapter).

the transcendental are only (heuristically) external (or "transcendent") to human beings insofar as they are analytically isolated from the "bigger self" (*dawo* 大我), as the true agent of history in which their "smaller selves" (*xiaowo* 小我) (see Rošker 2019, 48) are grounded. Or, in a slightly earlier formulation: "The subject of knowledge is not the individual, and its starting point is not to be found in passive forms of observation such as sensation, perception, and imagination which belong to our animal nature. The subject of knowledge is a [human] collective [within a particular] age and social class, its starting point are concrete practical activities in society." (认识的主体不是个人，出发点不是动物性的感觉、知觉、表象等静观。认识的主体是时代社会阶级的集体，出发点是具体的社会实践活动。) (Li 1978, 47; cf. Li 2018/[1979], 201/255)

At this point, it is already worth indicating that for Li, the true contemporary significance of Kant's Copernican turn, according to which, in Li's description, "[i]t is no longer a question of the subject reflecting the object, but rather of the subject constituting and constructing the object, demanding that the object meet the requirements of the subject" (不是主体反映客体，而是主体构造、建立客体；要求客体来符合主体), lies in the fact that modern advances in science and technology, such as quantum physics and genetic engineering, bear witness to what he sees as a unprecedented manifestation of the "dynamic nature of human cognition" (人的认识能动性) (Li 2018/[1979], 34–35/52, translation amended).[21] Such "dynamism" is both a sign of and a transcendental guarantee for the possibility of increasing the "cognitive power" of humanity as a whole. Hence, the identification of the transcendental with a materially grounded form of human practice is from the onset tied up with the normative requirement of autonomy and self-determination, one which necessitates a radical reinterpretation of the notion of the "self" as a transindividual form of "subjectality" (*zhutixing* 主体性). Or, in what is perhaps Li's most condensed definition: "the question of the possibility of cognition can be answered only through an answer to the more basic question of how humanity (social practice) is possible" ("认识如何可能"只能建筑在"人类"(社会实践) 如何可能的基础上来解答) (Li 2018/[1979], 201/255, translation amended; cf. Li 2018, v).

In the seventh chapter of his *Critique*, Li identifies three distinct but closely interrelated aspects of the concept of the thing in itself in Kant's philosophy, namely as indicating 1) the "source of sensibility" (感性的来源); 2) the limits of knowledge

21 Accordingly, for Li, "[t]he synthetic method is more important and fundamental than the analytic method, because the former reflects the fact that practice transforms and manages objects in actual activities and breaks through old relationships to establish new ones, hence constituting a historical process that evolves from the simple to the complex" ("综合"所以比"分析"更为重要更为根本，原因在于：它反映了实践在现实活动中改造对象、消化对象，打破旧关系，建立新关系，造成不断由简单到复杂的历史历程) (Li 2018/[1979], 61/82–83, translation amended).

(知识的界限); and 3) a concept of reason (理性的理念), with this last aspect occupying an intermediary position in between the epistemological and ethical dimensions of Kant's whole philosophical enterprise. For Li, the most basic sense of the thing in itself, and what immediately presents itself as its most ostensibly "materialist" quality, is that of affirming the ontological independence of the external, materially constituted world as the origin of human sensibility. As such, the thing in itself is meant to serve as a conceptual guarantee for the irreducibility of the world to consciousness or thought, for the fact that it exists "objectively", insofar as its existence does not coincide with its phenomenal appearance to the subject, or, in other words, for its basic facticity. In short then, the thing in itself functions as a safeguard against an idealism of the type found in Berkeley, asserting the irreducible facticity of the world in its "thingness", as an "in itself" of which the existence is not contingent upon appearing to the human subject. As is well-known, in Kant's philosophy this basic "materialist" gesture is accomplished by stressing the dependence of knowledge on sensibility. Hence, as Li nicely puts it, "[t]he 'trans' in the theory of the transcendental concepts of the understanding (categories) refers to mere logical possibility, while the actuality of knowledge depends on sensibility" (先验知性概念 (范畴) 之所谓"先"，只是就逻辑的可能性面言，认识的现实性是必须由感性来提供的) (Li 2018/[1979], 191/242). In other words, Kant's transcendentalism does not start out from the transcendent, but rather from the primacy of the empirical.

At the same time however, Li believes that "the most well-known feature" (最著名的特征) (Li [1979], 243) of the thing in itself, namely the fact that it cannot be known and remains categorically foreclosed to human knowledge as conditioned and constrained by sensibility, ends up undermining its status as a gatekeeper of "materialism". He even goes so far as to claim that "[t]he conception of the unknowability of the thing in itself […] has not only served as a weapon that idealism carries into the fight with materialism, but also counts as an internal defect of the old materialism itself" (它不但是唯心主义反对唯物主义的一种武器，同时还是旧唯物主义自身的一种内在缺陷) (Li 2018/[1979], 192/243–44, translation amended). This leads us straight into the second and closely related aspect of the thing in itself identified by Li, namely its function as designating a limit to knowledge. For Li, the assumption that the thing in itself must be (and always will remain) "in itself" and can never become something "for us" ultimately proves to be the undoing of its "thingness", that is to say, its usefulness in pointing toward the materiality of the world as non-reducible to consciousness, precisely because it blinds us to how our knowledge of reality is essentially the product of human practice in society. In an earlier version of this chapter,[22] Li still approvingly

22 A shortened version of this chapter was already published as a separate article in *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲学研究 (*Philosophical Researches*) a year earlier (see Li 1978). In the postface to the thirtieth

invoked Lenin's observation in the *Philosophical Notebooks* according to which "[w]hen Kant assumes that something outside us, a thing-in-itself, corresponds to our ideas, he is a materialist. When he declares this thing-in-itself to be unknowable, transcendental, other-sided, he is an idealist." (Lenin 1908, quoted in Li 1978, 44)

Li Zehou's more detailed line of reasoning hones in on the two layers of meaning of the thing in itself he discerns in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as a limiting concept: on the one hand, it refers to the "transcendental object", that it to say, the wholly indeterminate concept of any object whatsoever (called "transcendental object = X" in the first edition of Kant's *Critique*) which lies at the basis of the unity of the sensible manifold in our representations of things as phenomena (hence to be distinguished from a "transcendent object" or "noumenon" in the strict sense of the term, since it is still something which, structurally and formally speaking, "actually enters into the cognitive process" (实际已进入人的认识过程). On the other hand, the thing in itself also includes a subjective aspect, insofar as it designates the pure "I think", i.e. the transcendental unity of apperception, which Kant believes must necessarily accompany all subjective representations, without however allowing the actual thinking subject (as a part of empirical reality) to have access to or knowledge of itself otherwise than as phenomenally determined (and not as it is in itself) (Li 2018/[1979], 194/247). Hence, the categorical enclosure of knowledge within the realm of the phenomenal applies as much to the objective as to the subjective dimensions of cognition, meaning that we are no more capable of peering into the inner constitution of ourselves than we are able of observing things "out there" as they are in themselves. While the subject is obviously the locus of the transcendental par excellence insofar as it is home to the *a priori* categories of the understanding which make knowledge possible, it is does not occupy a privileged position as a site of self-transparency at all, since any form of reflexive orientation toward the "inner sense" of the self ultimately cannot but encounter the same boundaries which condition the observation of external entities (see for example Kant 2007, 81, B69; 154, B156; 275, B334).

For Li, all of this implies that while "both [the transcendental object and the transcendental unity of apperception] are necessary conditions of human knowledge, they themselves are beyond the reach of experience and possible knowledge" (都是人们进行认识的必要条件，他们本身都超出人们经验的和认识可能) (Li 2018/[1979], 195/248, translation amended). Because of this fundamental unresolved tension between the subjective and objective aspects of the unknowable "in itself" and the failure to provide a common ground between them in the Kantian system, Li claims that "[t]hey always attempt to gobble each other

anniversary edition (the 6th) of his *Critique*, Li notes that his analysis of the thing in itself was one of the sections which was "significantly revised in both interpretation and style," without however deviating from "the anthropological ontology I laid out in the first edition" (Li 2018, 345).

up, so that the one comes to be derived from the other" (总是一个要吞并另一个，由一个推演出另一个) a tendency with considerable and largely delirious consequences in the post-Kantian development of transcendental philosophy, the most commonly taken path being that of completely imploding objectivity (the independence of the material world) into an overinflated and reified form of subjectivity, that is to say a Fichtean "I", Hegelian "Spirit", or Schopenhauerian "Will" (see Li 2018/[1979], 196–98/249–53). Ironically then, in Li's opinion, the "materialist" intentions undergirding Kant's assertion of the existence of things in themselves as distinct from phenomena historically gave rise to the worst possible forms of idealism.

To what he identifies as an irresolvable antinomy between the subjective and objective aspects of the "in itself" as a limit to knowledge in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Li Zehou opposes an assertion of the primordial status of "practice" (*shijian* 实践) which follows the basic presuppositions of his own historical ontology. For Li, human subjectivity *as subjectality* constitutes, not simply another "object" of perception and knowledge, which would bring it face to face with the latter's inescapable limiting conditions and with the "in itself" as the gatekeeper of the primacy of sensibility, but rather a veritable "feedback system" (Li 1999, 180) capable of increasing its own "cognitive power" with the development of society throughout history. The sort of "supra-biological" (超生物的) practice of which human beings are the only possible subjects (i.e. engaging in labour and transforming both themselves and their physical as well as cultural environment through the creation and manipulation of tools) allows them "reveal" (揭示) the thing in itself in its objective aspect (i.e. as the transcendental object = X). Moreover, this practice itself coincides with the subjective aspect of the noumenal, that is to say, with subjectality as the transcendental unity of the subject (Li 2018/[1979], 201/256). While Li's line of reasoning as to how this is supposed to work at a more concrete level of theoretical analysis remains opaque, it is in my view significant that he goes on at this point to quote the following famous but highly problematic passage from Engels's tract *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*:

> the most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice—namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable "thing-in-itself". The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such "things-in-themselves" until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the "thing-in-itself" became a thing for us. (Engels 1886, no pagination)

For a commentator as informed as Li, it is strange to say the least that he does not seem to notice or take the trouble to indicate how Engels's reading of the thing in itself as a mere "philosophical crotchet" conveniently substitutes an empirical distinction for a transcendental one. By any account, the Kantian distinction between phenomena and things in themselves has nothing to do with the difference between, say, my subjective ignorance of the chemical makeup of the transparent, thirst-quenching liquid which I hold before me in a glass on the one hand, and the objective knowledge communicated to me by a person wearing a white lab-coat that this is in fact H_2O, a chemical compound which reacts in such and such manner with other substances. For Kant, these two observations, while certainly not equally "objective" or scientifically valid, are nonetheless both subject to the (spatiotemporal) conditions of sensibility and the mediating influence of the *a priori* concepts of the understanding with which human beings are equipped. The fact that we might, under certain contingent societal conditions, become able to "produce" H_2O has no bearing on the latter's epistemological status at all. In other words, while we certainly know the phenomenon "water" better and more adequately in being able to recognize it as H_2O, this has not brought us an inch closer to its being as an "in itself", and indeed, from a Kantian perspective, such a leap to the "in itself" is not a necessary requirement for the growth of scientific knowledge. In this regard, we might recall that Kant draws a helpful distinction between "limits" (*Schranken*) and "bounds" (*Grenzen*), in order to indicate that science has no "bounds" and can continue to grow and progress indefinitely, as long as it does not overstep the categorical "limits" of sensibility, beyond which the categories of the understanding are of no use whatsoever (see Westphal 1968, 131).

While my intention here is not to belabour the rather obvious point that Li is not an orthodox Kantian (by his own admission, he is not), it is still worth pointing toward this peculiar substitution of the empirical for the transcendental, precisely because Li himself is otherwise very careful to avoid conflating the two. The above-mentioned difference between "transparent thirst-quenching liquid" and "H_2O" does not require the intricate conceptual machinery of Kantian transcendentalism, but can be described very well by using the much more simple opposition between the "subjective" and the "objective", although such a straightforward form of realism leaves much to be desired both from an epistemological and an ontological point of view, and would beg the question as to why Li would take the trouble to concern himself with Kant's critical philosophy in the first place. At this point in his intellectual development, Li is not yet ready to jettison the idea of the thing in itself and the transcendental altogether, but his "materialist" challenge to its putative unknowability threatens to severely compromise its status as an epistemological limiting-concept. As such, this indicates that Li's approach to the thing in itself involves a strong discontent with epistemological restrictions which are read as normatively undermining the autonomy of human "subjectality".

Coda: Facticity and Unknowability

What is perhaps more problematic about the idea of the thing in itself becoming a "thing for us" in the sense envisaged by Engels is the considerable risk of completely overriding the facticity which Li Zehou himself admits the notion of the thing in itself was originally meant to vouchsafe within the architectonic of Kant's system of philosophy. After all, if "subjectality" comes to be seen as a self-determining structure which not only accounts for the formation and application of relatively stable cognitive and experiential structures, but also for the actual *content* of knowledge and experience, as Li seems to suggest at times (see for example Li 2018/[1979], 90/117), it arguably becomes hard to distinguish it from the sort of hyper-inflated conception of subjectivity of the kind Li faults Fichte, Hegel, and Schopenhauer for. Indeed, for figures in modern intellectual history as diverse (and at times diametrically opposed) as Lukács, Heidegger, and Adorno, the thing in itself serves before all else as a philosophical signpost of the problem of facticity, for "the impossibility of reducing contents to their rational elements" (Lukács [1923], 116), for the ontological horizon of human finitude (Heidegger [1929]), for the awareness of how the objective world operates as a "block" and the concomitant refusal to "generate everything that exists from the realm of consciousness" (Adorno 2001, 18).[23] In this regard, Li's efforts to reinterpret the thing in itself in a positive light as signalling toward the materiality or "thingness" of the world and its ontological independence from human subjectivity finds itself in an uneasy relation with his much more concerted and sustained attempt to undercut its status as an unknowable "in itself". Indeed, Li's discussion of the third aspect Kant's concept, namely its status as a regulative "idea of reason" which redirects human beings from epistemology to ethics, or from reason to belief, that is to say, to properly normative considerations, is mostly intended to reiterate his conviction that a resolution to the unknowability of the thing in itself can be provided by social practice as the site of conciliation between subjectivity and objectivity (see Li 2018/[1979], 207–209/364–67). Perhaps it is not by accident then that in Li's more recent work, the thing in itself makes a new appearance as a designation for the unknowable, even if the later is still described in strictly materialist terms. The looming erasure of all facticity within the concept of subjectality would seem to

23 "Kant […] would rather acquiesce in the inconsistencies to which we have repeatedly drawn attention than create a seamless intellectual harmony which nevertheless would prevent him from delivering on his specific philosophical ambitions. To take matters to their logical conclusions means denying the existence of the block and laying claim to absolute identity. The dialectical or antinomic structure of Kantian philosophy means that it aspires to create a system, to provide a central point, which is that of the idea that can construct reality—but at the same time, it refuses to regard the world as identical with that idea […] I believe this is the deepest thing to be found in Kant." (Adorno 2001, 177)

have led Li to reembrace the unknowability of the thing in itself in a different fashion, precisely in order to reassert the limitations of human knowledge, and thus, in a sense, of our own existence as well:

> The reason why the universe exists and the fact that it exists in this specific way at all (that is to say, why its existence is orderly to begin with, or qualifies as what I call a "syncretistic form of communal being") cannot be known or explained rationally. (The specific laws governing the universe and nature accessible through experience on the other hand are inventions or "discoveries" of human beings, and can be known and explained.) I believe that Kant's transition from the "antinomies of reason" to the profundity of the noumenal as something unknowable has to be understood from this perspective as well. What we are dealing with here is the "mystery of reason".
>
> 宇宙存在和在根本上会如此这般的存在（即这存在为何在根本上具有规律性，即 "协同共在"）是不可以用理知去认识、解说的（至于可经验的宇宙—自然存在的具体规律性，则是人的发明或"发现"，即可认识解说的）。Kant由"二律背反"走向不可知的"物自体"的深刻性，我以为也在这里。这是"理性的神秘"。) (Li 2016, 569; cf. Li 2008, 53–54, 111–13; Li 2018, vii

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Li Zehou's Ethics and the Structure of Confucian Pragmatic Reason*

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Abstract

Li Zehou believes that human psychology, just like humanness or "human nature", is not fixed or given, but is rather something characterized by changing developmental forms of human pragmatic reason, which is formed over millions of years, and is still continuously accumulating and changing. However, reason alone is by no means something that would absolutely separate humans from their sensuality and thus from other animals. The difference between human beings and animals primarily occurs somewhere else, namely in the very realm of the specifically human social existence, which is defined by "subjectality" (*zhutixing* 主體性) and includes specific human values. In this context, Li shows that Confucian pragmatic reason is formed and functions within the "emotio-rational formation" (*qingli jiegou* 情理結構), which is deeply rooted in the human world. It is based on actual human conditions and arises from human social emotionality, transforming these culturally integrated general communal emotions through rites in the process of "condensation of reason" (*lixing ningju* 理性凝聚) into rational concepts of right and wrong, good and evil. The rationality of these concepts governs the subjective personal feelings of each member of a community; the pragmatic nature of this rationality, however, is tightly linked to and intertwined with human emotions. In the concrete social life, these rational concepts can nevertheless dissolve—through the process of the "melting of reason" (*lixing ronghua* 理性融化)—in the heart-minds of people and thus become an integral part of individual emotions. This paper aims to posit the Confucian pragmatic reason into the framework of Li Zehou's ethics and political axiology.

Keywords: Li Zehou, ethics, political philosophy, pragmatic reason, emotion-rational formations, Confucianism

Li Zehoujeva etika in struktura konfucijanskega pragmatičnega uma

Izvleček

Po Li Zehouju človeška zavest tako kot »človeškost« ali »človeška narava« ni nespremenljiva ali dana, temveč so zanjo bolj značilne spreminjajoče in razvijajoče se oblike

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človekovega pragmatičnega uma, ki se je oblikoval več milijonov let in se še zmeraj nenehno nalaga in spreminja. Toda sam um nikakor ni nekaj, kar bi povsem ločevalo ljudi od njihove čutnosti in s tem od drugih živali. Razlika med ljudmi in živalmi se pojavi bistveno drugje, namreč v sami sferi specifično človekovega družbenega bivanja, ki ga definira »subjektnost« (*zhutixing* 主體性) in vsebuje specifične človeške vrednote. Li v tem kontekstu pokaže, da se konfucijanski pragmatični um formira in deluje znotraj »emocionalno-racionalne formacije« (*qingli jiegou* 情理結構), ki je globoko ukoreninjena v človeškem življenju. Temelji na dejanskih razmerah in nastane iz človeške družbene emocionalnosti, ki v procesu »kondenzacije razuma« (*lixing ningju* 理性凝聚) z obredi spreminja te kulturno sprejete, splošne skupne emocije v racionalne koncepte pravilnega in napačnega, dobrega in zla. Racionalnost teh konceptov vodi subjektivne osebne emocije vsakega pripadnika_ce skupnosti; pragmatična narava te racionalnosti je tesno povezana in prepletena s človeškimi emocijami. V konkretnem družbenem življenju se lahko ti racionalni koncepti razpršijo – v procesu »raztapljanja razuma« (*lixing ronghua* 理性融化) –, prenašajo v srčno zavest ljudi in tako postanejo integralni del posameznikovih emocij. Ta članek postavlja konfucijanski pragmatični um v okvir Li Zehoujeve etike in politične aksiologije.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, politična filozofija, pragmatični um, emotivno-racionalna formacija, konfucianizem

Introduction: Li Zehou and the Importance of Ethics

Li Zehou believes that ethics belongs to the most important philosophical disciplines. He aims to revive, modernize, develop and complement Chinese traditional ethics through what he calls "transformative creation" (*zhuanhuaxingde chuangzao* 轉化性的創造). He takes Chinese ethics, which represents the main pillar of Chinese philosophy, as a vital basis for his elaborations on certain aspects of Kant's, Marx' and other Western theoretician's ethical thought and hopes to contribute in this way to the development of a new global ethics for the entire humankind (Li 2016a, 17).

In ancient and premodern history, traditional Chinese philosophy ascribed a lot more importance to ethics than the general Western philosophical tradition. However, in modern Euro-American philosophy, especially from Kant on, ethics and morality are also seen as discourses of utmost significance, for they are (as Li Zehou reveals) connected to the "substantial root of human beings" (*rende benti* 人的本體). Hence, it is not a coincidence that Li also attaches great importance to ethics and morality. For him, they are results of the long lasting process of those aspects of the humanization of the nature (*zirande renhua* 自然的人化), which pertain to our inner humanness; as such, they are that "which makes human beings human". Hence, Li emphasizes: "Both logically and practically speaking, ethics and morals have priority in relation to cognition" (Li 2016b, 1107). They are aimed

at something higher than the phenomenal world that can be explained by epistemology. In contrast to Kant, however, Li sees this human substance as a dynamic and changeable entity: he believes that no human moral capacities are inherent or *a priori*, but should rather be seen as results of history and education.

Particular Approaches and Specific Concepts

For him, the "substantial root of ethics" (*lunli benti* 倫理本體) is to be found in human free will, which he sees as a part of human psychological formations embedded in the realm of the cultural-psychological formation (*wenhua—xinli jiegou* 文化—心理結構) of the human mind. In Li's view, free will belongs to the most important mental formations. It originates in the conscious decisions of human beings to sacrifice their own, individual selfish interests for the greater good of a community. Human beings make such decisions when they consciously realize that their individual desires are in a sharp contradiction with the rational social demands of their community. Such decisions are special because they are results of conscious reflection; hence, they belong to conscious human behavioural patterns and attitudes. Precisely because such free decisions are often made in contradiction with individual interests, needs and desires, the free will cannot be seen as a simple result of causal laws or interests. Since it is not something subordinated to the laws of causality, which governs the phenomenal world, it is "free". Here, freedom is not understood in the sense of being able to do whatever one wants to do, but obviously rather as a kind of freedom similar to the one defining Kant's deontological ethics. It is a freedom in the sense of being unbound by (or liberated from) the primeval margins (limitations or laws) that determine the phenomenal world. This could also be seen as an expression of humans as supra-biological (*chao shengwu* 超生物) beings: "A human being is not merely a biological entity; to become a human being, necessarily means to possess an inner, conscious rational moral character" (Li 2016a, 20).

Hence, humans possess the capacity to surpass their biological limitations not only because tools (or technology) complete—and thus perfect—their limbs and organs, but also because they possess free will. In this sense, freedom is the opposite of necessity. It enables human beings to consciously decide to carry out moral actions, which can surpass the causal laws of individual harm and benefit. Animals do not possess this kind of freedom.

> The crucial point here is that human "free will" as such has a higher, sublime value. It cultivates people's universal psychological formations, bestowing them with social and cultural contents applicable for themselves and for their fellow human beings (including their descendants). In this

> way, it causes that the social existence of human beings is profoundly different of that, which defines animals. This is the so-called "substance of ethics", which surpasses the phenomenal world. (Li 2016a, 19)

Li points out that in China the process of this cultivation, which is already manifest in the earliest child education, is called "learning to be human" (*xue zuo ren* 學做人).

He admires Kant for his construction of the categorical imperative by which he described this characteristic of ethical behaviour determined by the governance of reason. In its function of an absolute order comparable to a divine decree, which has to be followed even without any additional argumentation, the sublime power of categorical imperative has liberated people from all fears, but also from all instantaneous worldly wishes (ibid., 20).

However, to a certain extent, Li Zehou agrees with Hegel's critique of this model: Hegel criticized Kant's ethics as being confined to pure formalism and for lacking any contents. According to Kant, these formal structures (of rational domination over desires) determine ethical action and even represent universal legislative principles for particular ethical norms. However, in specific and concrete historical contexts, this vision is difficult to uphold. Human beings exist in specific social and familial groups, they always belong to certain social strata and they are always necessarily defined by relations to other people and to the society as a whole. In other words, human existence is always conditioned by certain economic, geographical, historical, environmental, cultural and ideological factors. Because of this, the realization of moral actions, and the implementation of ethical relations and norms, have different qualities depending on the concrete circumstances, which defines the existence in which human beings live. Different cultures affirmed numerous different—often mutually conflicting—conceptions of what is moral. In this context, and as the results of particular social conditions, ethics and morality necessarily appear relative. This was the starting point for the evaluation of ethics by most modern philosophers, not only for Hegel and Marx, but even more so for the various streams of utilitarianism. For Li Zehou, it is also clear that ethics evolves with history. He reveals that we have to view it in a context of historicism, because an independent "ethicism" (*lunlizhuyi* 倫理主義) does not exist. On the other hand, however, such a critique is one-dimensional, because in Li's view benefit and harm alone (no matter if they are individual or group-based) do not suffice for explaining moral actions. This problem seems to point to the existence of a universal value, which exceeds the concrete material conditions of human life. Li proceeds from the question of where does this universality (or absoluteness) come from? For him, this belongs to the most important (and complex) issues of ethics. In Li's theory, the absolute ethical notions do not originate from an external God, nor from biological or neurological determinable aspects

of human consciousness. These foundations of ethical behaviour are imbedded in individual psychological formations, but these formations are not *a priori*, as in Kant's deontology. According to Li, they are a part of the crucial characteristics that define humankind as such. For Li, humankind as an entirety is a dynamic entity, which is constantly evolving due to its material practice, through which its experiences, modes of interactions and forms of knowledge (including moral knowledge) accumulate and shape mental formations. These universal principles are hence based upon the requirement for a sustainable existence and continuous reproduction of humankind. In this context, it is also important to note that the universal grounds of these principles are based upon Kant's rational categorical imperative, and not on any kind of moral feelings. The latter are secondary, and the former primary. The free will is rational, and not based on emotions.

Our rational characteristics are thus that which makes human beings truly human. In the process of human evolution, the most important formations, which pertain to the human ethical substance, are linked to the "condensation of reason" (*lixingde ningju* 理性的凝聚). However, this cohesion of rationality merely pertains to its structure or its form without any particular content. Its contents are always relative, always fitting to particular requirements of corresponding societies. Hence, the form of human ethics is absolute, but its contents are relative. This view, which is based upon a correlativity (or complementarity) of form and content and, analogously, of absoluteness and relativeness also enabled Li Zehou to oppose the (widely spread) theories of ethical relativism or even situationalism.

Li denotes this complementarity as "a dialectical relation between the 'absolute' and the 'relative' ethics" (Li 2016a, 24). In this model, which is based upon Li's important differentiation between the modern social and the traditional religious morality,[1] the absolute ethics shapes the relative one:

> From ancient times, human societies have always established various ceremonies, customs, laws, religions and arts. The concrete functions of these systems shaped the concrete "social morality", that is, the "relative ethics". Its wide-reaching substantial function, however, shaped the "absolute ethics" and the "religious morality", which is the breeding ground of the "free will". (ibid.)

1 Li Zehou differentiates between two kinds of morality. He draws a clear demarcation line between religious morality (*zongjiaoxing daode* 宗教性道德), associated with subjective emotions, values, and beliefs and social morality (*shehuixing daode* 社會性道德) which is linked to justice, equality, reason, independence, and human rights. In this schema, modern social morality and public virtue are distinguished from religious morality and private virtue. For Li, the former is primary, and he often emphasizes that "religious morality stems from social morality" (Li 2016a, 35). In several works, and particularly in his paper entitled *Liang zhong daode lun* 兩種道德論 (*Theory of the Two Kinds of Morality*), he explains the distinction between these in great detail (see ibid., 29–57).

In this model, the concrete contents of the social morality, which belongs to relative ethics, construct the psychological formations, which are absolute. In Li's view, this model simultaneously reflects the complementary nature of emotions and reason. The Chinese philosophical tradition, especially the ideational history of Confucianism, is full of examples of how to achieve this absoluteness: while the Confucian *Analects* lay stress on explaining rituality as a return to humaneness, Mencius speaks about the cultivation of one's vital potentials (*qi* 氣) in order to achieve the upholding of one's will (*zhi* 志). Zhu Xi 朱熹 recommends applying the method of the exploration of things in order to reach ultimate knowledge, while Wang Yangming 王陽明 reveals the importance of inner (or inborn) knowledge (*liang zhi* 良知). What is common to all these discourses is their tendency to construct psychological formations of condensed rationality by means of intense and hard moral training (ibid., 27).

Hence, Li's ethical theory, which manifests itself in his theory of anthropo-historical ontology, is tightly linked to traditional Confucian teachings. Through this synthesis, Li Zehou aims to explain his view of the Marxist[2] term "humanization of nature" (*zirande renhua* 自然的人化). In contrast to Marx, who chiefly dealt with the humanization of external nature, Li enriched the notion by his inspiring elaboration on the humanization of our internal nature.

As a philosopher who is intensely concerned with the future development of China and humankind in general, Li Zehou creates a theory that is not limited to the study of Confucian ethics or the formulation of his own (Jia 2018, 178). He also aims to uncover the "possible contributions that the Confucian ethics of emotion and the renewed emotio-rational structure can make to the development of Chinese and world civilizations" (ibid.).

Because for Li Zehou Western philosophy did not manage to elaborate on the true origins of human ethical substance, his reply (see 2011a, 9) to Nietzsche's famous exclamation "God is dead!" is that this is the exactly reason why it is high time for Chinese philosophy (and ethics) to take the centre stage.

The Ethics of Pragmatic Reason

Li Zehou emphasizes that traditional Chinese social, axiological and political systems were permeated with a rational attitude or spirit (Li 1980, 89), which

2 Because many Western and contemporary East Asian scholars do not see Marxist philosophy as compatible with the Chinese philosophical tradition, several Chinese scholars are making increased efforts to eliminate this prejudice. Tian Chenshan, for instance, often shows that Marxism has provided many opportunities for philosophical conversations with Chinese tradition (see for instance Tian 2019, 13).

defined what he calls "pragmatic reason" (*shiyong lixing* 實用理性). In the first version of his article "A Re-Evaluation of Confucius" (*Kongzi zai pingjia* 孔子再評價), Li initially denoted this kind of rationality as "*shijian lixing*" 實踐理性 (Li 1980, 77).[3] However, in Chinese translations of Western philosophical texts of the time, this concept was already widely applied as a translation of Immanuel Kant's "practical reason". Therefore, Li explained in a footnote to this text (ibid., 89, footnote 3) that Kant's "practical reason" differs from his own concept which derives from Confucian rationality.[4] Later on, he created the term "pragmatic reason" in order to clearly distinguish between the two notions. According to Li Zehou, the Chinese cultural tradition is focused upon this kind of reason because it looks down on pure speculative thinking:

> For the Chinese, "transcendental" or *a priori* cannot be the last word. The Chinese mind would ask, why is something "transcendental", or where does the *a priori* come from? Because of this "one-world-view", it would also be difficult to accept the idea of something "absolutely independent of all experience". This is also the reason why Chinese find it difficult to accept the formalism in Kant's ethics. (Li 1999, 180)

He noted, however, that even though they are different, there is still a certain similarity between Kant's and his own concept, especially concerning their close connection to ethics, which was a basic characteristic of both (Li 2008, 246).

In general, most people see reason (*lixing* 理性) as an epistemological category. In Li's system, however, it is also a fundamental concept pertaining to his philosophy of ethics, because epistemology arises from ethics and hence the latter defines the former: "Ethics is primary, and epistemology secondary. Cognitive laws (like linguistics or logic) evolve from ethical imperatives. This is immensely important" (Li 2016a, 260).

Ethical norms develop in accordance with the principles of pragmatic rationality, which are tightly linked to particular historical and social contexts and to *qing* 情, i.e. the shared emotional realms that arise in human beings in these contexts.[5] In

3 Prior to that, already in the 1960s, he simply applied a more general term "Chinese rationalism" (*Zhongguo lixingzhuyi* 中國理性主義) in order to highlight the specific nature of this kind of reason (Li and Liu 2014, 4).

4 In fact, Li Zehou viewed this kind of rationality as belonging to the central paradigms determining Confucianism, which he hence even defined as "a Chinese philosophy of pragmatic reason" (see Gu 2018, 77).

5 Li often exposes that instinctive human feelings had to be cultivated and molded into norms by reasonable, sensitive regulations. However, he never clearly defines the standards of such reasonableness, failing thus to demonstrate the actual criteria of determining what is actually "crazy", "evil", "ugly", or "deconstructive", and hence must be eliminated by the activation of

this sense, pragmatic reason is a product of human material practices. Li explained that pragmatic reason could therefore not be equated to the modern Western notion of cognitive (*renzhi lixing* 認知理性) or ethical reason (*lunli lixing* 倫理理性), which are both rooted in a strict separation between subject and object, neutrality of values, objective truth, natural rights, independent individual or formal justice. In this context, it has to be seen as a different kind of reason (Li 2016a, 304), one that simultaneously pertains to material practice and to cognitive patterns or laws (Li 2008, 246).

A detailed elaboration on pragmatic reason and its relations to other crucial concepts such as the "culture of pleasure",[6] was first published in Li Zehou's book *On Ancient Chinese Intellectual History* (*Zhongguo gudai sixiang shilun* 中國古代思想史論), which came out in 1985. At that time, it was popular to be anti-traditional, and many Chinese scholars harshly criticized him for promoting such ideas and thereby advocating a revival and transformed continuation of Chinese traditional culture, not only in terms of its superficial forms and patterns, but also in terms of its cultural "spirit".

Li Zehou elaborated further on the concept for many years in different ways. He explained it (as well as its connection to the specifically Chinese type of culture, i.e. "the culture of pleasure") in detail in a book entitled *Pragmatic Reason and the Culture of Pleasure* (*Shiyong lixing yu legan wenhua* 實用理性與樂感文化), which was completed in 2004, but first published in January 2005.

Typical for China, the pragmatic reason as a form of a non-transcendental moral reasoning was a product of the one-world-view, which is paradigmatic for traditional Chinese thought. It arose through the practice of its early shamanistic-historical

pragmatic reason. Even though he emphasizes the importance of the dynamic nature of pragmatic reason, its utilitarian tendency, and especially its openness toward innovations and alternations, it still remains difficult to understand what underlies such regulations, which chiefly appear in restrictions. Although Li mentions that (similar to Dewey's pragmatism), the truth is determined by what is positive and useful for a society, and although the concrete content of this usefulness is subject to continuous alternations, the question about what (or who) has the actual power of determining this usefulness (or this truth) remains open. The concrete contents of these regulations and restrictions changes according to the nature of power structures and relations existing in actual, changing cultures and societies.

6 With this term, Li denotes the characteristic spirit, which defined traditional Chinese cultures and societies. In his view, it was a product of the fact that its cultural psychology was not focused upon any kind of transcendental reality, but rather took human life as its elementary substance. Against such an ideational background, people could maintain their life as their ultimate ideal and goal, without suffering under burdens resulting from a division between body and mind (Li 2016a, 158). He emphasizes "'The culture of pleasure' does not separate the soul from the flesh. It affirms human existence and human life in this world. Even in the most devastating and difficult situations, people could still firmly believe that in the end, everything will turn around toward a bright future. This brightness did not come from any Heavenly kingdom, but was rather a part of this world" (ibid.).

tradition. Pragmatic reason is characteristic of classical Confucianism and a crucial element of the traditional Chinese culture of pleasure (D'Ambrosio, Carleo and Lambert 2016, 1063). "Li believes that this pragmatic reason and the Confucian humanistic tradition have formed China more than anything else and have contributed to its long and uninterrupted civilization" (Pohl 2018, 65). Hence, it is not a coincidence that this form of reason not only belongs to, but also determines and permeates all five major factors defining traditional Chinese culture, which can be found according to Li's analysis and interpretation of the Confucian *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) in the following features:

1. Blood (kinship) relations;
2. Psychological principles;
3. Humanism;
4. Ideal personality;
5. Pragmatic reason.

The characteristic feature of this kind of reason was its pragmatic orientation towards the actual, material world in which people live. This kind of reason was not limited to an abstract, cognitive, or theoretical kind of rationality.[7] The dominant cultures in ancient China were more or less indifferent towards such speculative reason. Already the earliest Confucian scholars mainly believed that abstract reasoning without a straight connection to actual life was meaningless. In this sense, pragmatic reason primarily means that the practical undertakings in actual society have to be governed by rationality. In such a framework, emotions and desires are cultivated by means of rational principles. Li Zehou believes that at the beginning of human evolution people's operative accomplishments in the form of making and applying tools offered them prospects for controlling the environments in which they lived. In the course of historical development, the accumulation of such experiences enabled them to surpass other species and become supra-biological beings. Such developments shaped this kind of specifically human reason, which sedimented in the vibrant formations of human mind. Even though this exclusively human feature was still rooted in our animal nature, it also allowed people to transcend their physical limitations. For Li, the making and using of tools is the original human practice and from this, through a long historical process of accumulation and sedimentation, a cultural-psychological formation takes shape that eventually operates beyond discrete practices (Ames and Jia 2018, 14).

7 Li also claims, however, that even though material practice is the very origin of any kind of rationality, human reasoning is evolving further and it surpasses such an origin. However, human societies and their specific conditions are always its concrete historical foundation, for "laws, standards, and values come from the historic building up of pragmatic reason, and they do so in the interaction of humans with the world; they do not depart from it" (Lynch 2016, 719).

In his anthropo-historical ontology, Li therefore argues that human rationality is generated from empirical reasonableness. The operational labour (*laodong caozuo* 勞動操作) of making and using tools shaped the specifically human forms of knowledge (logic, mathematics, dialectics and so on). When such labour advanced in human societies, it also generated ethics and morality.

The Confucian Roots

In this context, Li Zehou highlights that Confucianism has always laid stress upon the ethical practice. Even though for most Confucians, there is no supernatural or metaphysical source of human cognition, pragmatic reason still cannot be seen as functioning in a simple one-to-one correspondence with the empirical world (Lynch 2016, 718). To a certain extent and in certain aspects, Li's theory of pragmatic reason can be compared to Dewey's pragmatism, for both theories see usefulness as a measure for determining reasonable behaviour. However, there is a very important difference between them as well, and Li Zehou emphasizes that his ethics is not a form of pragmatism, but rather belongs to anthropological ontology[8] (Li 2011a, 159). The basic approaches of this theory can also help us to clarify a question that was raised in this context by Andrew Lambert, namely how can the categorical imperative (which Li Zehou unquestionably endorses)[9] be a foundational principle, given that he—on the other hand—rejects Kant's category of the *a priori* in human cognition.

> More specifically, given that such a form of rationality is not crucial to the Confucian tradition—a tradition in which, according to Li, pragmatic reasoning (*shiyong lixing*) dominates—then how could it come to hold a dominant place in the psychological formation of a subject immersed in that tradition? (Lambert 2018, 103–4)

Lambert finds the answer to this important question in the unboundedness of the cultural-psychological formation, which represents the central concept of Li's

8 Regardless of this, some Western scholars (such as Catherine Lynch) still believe that Li's ethics belongs to a wider field of pragmatism, and that Li is one of the most creative representatives of this current: "Lynch concludes that while Li's historical ontology fits within the scope and aims of pragmatism, it also steers pragmatism into some new, productive directions" (Ames and Jia 2018, 14).

9 He admires Kant for his construction of the categorical imperative by which he described the most fundamental characteristic of ethical behavior determined by the governance of reason. Li often emphasized that its function is comparable to the one of an absolute order or a divine decree, which has to be followed even without any additional argumentation. In this sense, Li believes that the sublime power of categorical imperative has liberated people from all fears, but also from all instantaneous worldly wishes (ibid., 20).

theory of mind. This means that this formation is open to all influences "as long as these can be integrated into existing social practices and categories of understanding" (Lambert 2018, 104). In Lambert's view, this is also the reason why in Li's system globalized psychological formations could gradually emerge in the cultural-psychological formations of different cultures. In this way, the Chinese tradition could absorb numerous initially foreign influences, including the idea of the categorical imperative. "In a global marketplace of concepts and ways of thinking and feeling, the categorical imperative could emerge as the acme of reason, something to which subjects feel a strong commitment" (ibid.).

It is certainly true that Li Zehou seems to present the categorical imperative as a universal ideal toward the realization of which all people and cultures evolve. However, Li never seems to have seen this form of reason as something that could be (*via* modernization and globalization) introduced from other cultures to the cultural-psychological formation of the "Chinese mind". Firstly, in Li's system, particular forms of human mind were shaped and accumulated through much longer periods of history. Secondly, categorical reason is not merely "a form of thinking and feeling" (see the above quotation), but a basic formation of human mind; hence, it cannot be limited to methods of cognition or a cognitive means to decide upon discrete moral actions. Thirdly (and perhaps most importantly), in Li's view, Confucianism certainly contained absolute principles that could have evolved through nothing else but a specifically Chinese version of categorical imperative. Here, we have to note that in contrast to pragmatism, Li Zehou's pragmatic reason not only accepts, but also respects, follows in and even underlines its correspondence with objective principles, laws or codes, which are independent from concrete, situationally conditioned human inclinations or experiences. The Confucian philosophical tradition denoted these objective orders and principles as "the Way of Heaven" (*tian dao* 天道) or the "decree of Heaven" (*tian ming* 天命) (Li 2008, 247). Although Li's pragmatic reason is by no means a transcendental instrument, it still governs human behaviour in accordance with absolute norms, which are certainly comparable to Kant's categorical imperative. Li namely repeatedly emphasizes that its sublime power is something, which is in principle shared by all human species, for it belongs to those special foundational principles, which make human beings human.[10] Hence, pragmatic reason can be seen

10 In fact, Li confirms the absolute nature of the categorical imperative and even of the free will. These two elements represent the first and third principles of Kant's deontology. However, Li denies such universal validity in regard to the second principle, which Kant still regarded as absolute; this principle reveals human beings as ends in themselves. In contrast to Kant's view, Li shows that this second principle is not absolute, for is a product of its time, defined by different social conditions and different contents of concrete historical situations. However, he emphasizes its overall importance and argues that China could benefit from assimilating Kant's idea that "humans should be treated as ends" into its moral culture (D'Ambrosio 2016, 725).

as a philosophical generalization of reason, but one that negates the pure form of speculative reasoning *a priori*. Although it considers the influences of relativity, uncertainty, and non-objectivity, it is by no means a kind of relativism, for it is still determined by absolute norms and principles.

This amalgamation of historical and categorical elements comprised in the concept of pragmatic reason is often difficult to understand through the lens of Western philosophy. This is because Western academia mostly proceeds from an approach which includes a strict division between the absoluteness of psychological forms on the one side, and multifaceted, changeable features of human historical development on the other. In Li's view, however, such a separation is a necessary result of the so-called "two-world view" (*liangge shijie guan* 兩個世界觀), which prevailed in Western philosophical discourses. Hence, Li highlights the double ontological nature of this kind of rationality: "Pragmatic reason … manifests itself on the surfactant levels of cultural features, but simultaneously, it also constructs deep physiognomies of human mind" (Li 2016a, 119).

In Li's view, the basic principles of Confucian ethics are hence comparable to those constitutive to Kant's categorical imperative. Both models are systems of self-inflicted restrictions or guidelines, standing in a stark contrast to those forcibly imposed on people from outside. In this context, Li emphasizes that such standards are not only an integral part of Kant's categorical imperative, but also represent a core part of Confucian ethics. He points out that this can be found in numerous well-known Confucian quotations (ibid., 208), such as in the following dialogue in which Confucius tried to explain to his disciple Yan Yuan that moral principle is a part of the inner nature of human beings, and not something enforced upon them from outside.

> Yan Yuan asked about humaneness. The Master replied: "Humaneness can be achieved through self-control and a revival of rituality. If you can control yourself and revive rituality only for one single day, all under heaven will return to humaneness. (Lunyu s. d., Yan Yuan: 1)

Li believes that such statements belong to rational categorical imperatives. In terms of their emphasis upon such characteristic features of moral psychology, Confucius and Kant are entirely equivalent (Li 2016a, 208).

Li emphasizes that in both Confucian and Kantian models such categorical imperatives belong to morality, which is internal and represents a crucial part of human psychological formations. In his view, categorical imperative is hence a mental form described by both (i.e. Confucian and Kantian) moral philosophies, which equally emphasize that while human beings (as individuals) are educated and cultivated by ethics, that is, by different systems and orders, they

all still possess psychological formations that have an absolute nature (Li and Tong 2012, 172).

Therefore, Li still considers Confucianism as comprising certain "semi-religious" elements, although the Confucian teachings are not based on any idea of an external (anthropomorphic) God.[11]

In this context, Li Zehou highlights that such a theoretical foundation pertains to agnosticism, which was philosophically quite mature for ancient times, because the existence of supernatural deities is difficult to confirm or to falsify. Hence, in his view, such an agnostic principle is a strong evidence for the "clear rational spirit" inherent to the Confucian ideational system (Li 1980, 89). Therefore, the rationalization of emotion, which took place in China in the course of transforming natural religions into the ethics of humaneness (*ren* 仁), was not based upon the restraint of human desires. In the traditional Chinese "culture of pleasure", people were instead offered a regulated way of satisfying their wishes and needs.

> There was no need for an external God, whose orders, which were based upon irrational authority, should be blindly followed. On the other hand, people still possessed hope for salvation (humanism) and self-fulfillment (individual sense of mission) without rejecting this world or humiliating themselves. […] Everything could be left to the balanced measure and regulative function of the pragmatic reason. (ibid., 89)

Similar to most other concepts of Li Zehou's ideational system, which is based on paradigmatic foundations of Confucianism and some other Chinese philosophical traditions, pragmatic reason is also a dynamic notion (Li 2008, 250). Its dialectical logic is by no means "fatalistically deterministic" (Lynch 2016, 719), but rather opens enough space for considerations of situationally determined necessities and contingencies, including the "potential and accidental elements of human choices and decisions" (ibid.). Li often writes that in applying pragmatic reason, people have the choice to modify and regulate their own lives: "'Pragmatic reason' is situational, it arises from a certain situation, but it does not belong to the situational ethics" (Li and Liu 2014, 214).

11 Confucianism was clearly defined by agnosticism (see Rošker 2019, 143). In the Confucian *Analects*, we can come across several passages in which the existence of deities is questioned, even though never explicitly denied. The Confucian *Analects* clearly state that Confucius does not teach about "strange powers and irrational deities" (子不語怪力亂神) (Lunyu s. d.: Shu Er, 490). Allegedly, he also claimed that "we are not even capable of serving humans, so how could (or why should) we serve ghosts" (未能事人，焉能事鬼) (ibid.: Xian Jin, 569), and that "we even don't understand life, so how could we know anything about death" (未知生，焉知死) (ibid.). Hence, the most reasonable thing one could do was to "keep a respectful distance from spirits and ghosts" (敬鬼神而遠之，可謂知矣) (ibid.: Yong Ye, 459).

In this way, the correlative dialectical interactions between eventuality and necessity, potentiality and factuality define the concrete operating dimension, and thus they came to be the historic keynote of human existence.

The Role of Emotions, Experiences and Practices

Although it operates in accordance with objective principles, pragmatic reason is not absolute in the sense of transcending all time and space; in this sense, it is not entirely *a priori*. Even though—as we have seen above—Confucian pragmatic reason includes the cultivation and the development of moral formations, which belong to human inwardness and can be regarded as a kind of categorical imperative, it also comprises emotions.

> There is also another famous reply, ascribed to Confucius, namely "a person who possesses humaneness loves human beings". That, which is emphasized in this reply, is indeed something emotional. We also saw that quotations such as "self-control and revival of rituality" lay stress upon reason. However, in general, we can see from numerous descriptions of humaneness given by Confucius that he mostly referred to human emotio-rational structure, which consists of both reason and emotion (*qing*). Kant, on the other hand, only speaks about reason. His concept of reason surpasses and outgrows the humankind, whereas the Confucian emotio-rational structure explicitly belongs to the humans. This is a fundamental difference. (Li 2016a, 208)

Because for Li Zehou material existence is fundamental, this kind of reason is necessarily a product of material practice and arises from it. According to him, the operative processes of work and its products provide the basic contents of experiences. However, symbolic operations abstracted from this foundation come to possess an independent character that can be separated from concrete experiences (Lynch 2016, 719). In this sense, reason cannot be hypostatized; it is just a manner of cognizance or an instrument that can be used by people when dealing with various issues and objects in their lives.

> Reason is merely a tool, and the ultimate goal of "pragmatic reason" is the sustainable preservation of human existence. Not only it does not possess any transcendental nature, it also never departs from experience and history. In the scope of such rationality, there can be no separation between "the Way of Humans" and "the Way of Heaven". They are both the same, and besides it is the "Way of Humans" which generates the evolution

> to higher stages. This implies that development does not proceed from Heaven toward humans, but in the opposite direction. (Li 2016a, 157)

On the other hand, pragmatic reason is a part of human universal necessity, because the human mind, which is an objective factor of that which makes us human, is rooted in natural biological instincts, which accumulated and were shaped through history (regarding humankind as a whole) and education (for the individual), respectively. Hence, it is also an outcome of rationalization. Such a process includes the condensation of reason, which is tightly linked to the shaping of moral consciousness and free will.

In this context, Li Zehou explains that because according to his theory human reason was originally generated out of the making and using tools in communities, he simultaneously proceeds from two well-known ancient definitions of humans: "humans are rational animals" and "humans are animals that create tools". For him, these two definitions are tightly linked to one another. Hence, his return to and modification of Kant's rationalism shows, on the one hand, that reason is a significant element of humanness, while on the other, it clearly shows that the notion of pragmatic reason cannot be seen as one that pertains to inherent and *a priori* mental structures.

> When I interpreted Kant in the past, I talked about "objective sociality". Now, I can confirm that it is an empirical rationality. The notion of pragmatic reason is a philosophical epitome of such "empirical rationality". One of the chief characteristics of Chinese philosophy and culture is that it denies the existence of *a priori* reason and it does not raise reason to the highest position. (ibid., 157)

In his view, pragmatic reason is rather something modifiable and mouldable that not only preserves, but also develops, humanity. It arises from practical initiatives and from practices that are based upon initiatives. It is a kind of empirical reasonableness, which does not rely on any kinds of transcendental formulas, but rather on the mere fact of human life, from which it arises and evolves, continuously discovering and accumulating new experiences (ibid., 163).

Li Zehou's understanding of the pragmatic reason is comparable to the approaches of the second period of Confucianism, which took place during the Han period and in which the more rationalistic tradition was in the forefront. In his book *On Ancient Chinese Intellectual History* (*Zhongguo gudai sixiang shilun* 中國古代思想史論), Li points out that in this second period Confucian philosophy transformed the structural pattern *li* 理 (which can, to a certain degree, be compared to the Western notion of reason) from the previously cosmologic

concept to one that refers to human inwardness, which is permeated with ethical connotations (Li 1985, 220–22). In the third period of Confucianism, (that is during the Neo-Confucianism of the Song period) this concept was further modified. At first glance, its main representative Zhu Xi's 朱熹 understanding of *li*, according to which it is inherent in every object of the factual world, stands in sharp contrast with Li's belief that reason is something impeded by or applied to objects from outside.

However, recent research into its semantic development showed that in the post-Han era the Chinese notion *li* was gradually understood as the mutually compatible, dynamic structure of the external word and the mind (Rošker 2012, 8). In the scope of Neo-Confucianism, the notion *li* was seen as both a particular structural pattern as well as the all-embracing, overall structure determining the universe. Cheng Hao 程顥, for instance, argued that "the basic structure of each single thing is also the basic structure of everything that exists" (一物之理即萬物之理) (Cheng and Cheng 1981: I, Yi Shu, 13).

Hence, Li points out that the moral foundations of human mind originated from the progressive internalization of rationality, which was imposed onto the human mind from outside, through rites and codes of ethical regulations (Li 1980, 85) and that being a result of this continuous process, pragmatic reason was never an unchangeable, fixed, or purely abstract entity. It must rather be seen as a flexible and dynamic formation, which allows humans to adapt to and regulate issues connected to historically different circumstances and requirements. Against such a background, it is even easier to understand the question why and in which way pragmatic reason could include a functional combination of emotion (*qing)* and rationality.

Conclusion

Such an amalgamation of reason and emotions is in the scope of pragmatic reason—in contrast to various religious approaches—possible without the help of any outward dogmas. This fundamental characteristic also enables pragmatic reason to permit (and even encourage) people to remain open to new insights and new things. In this way, pragmatic rationality inspires people to adopt historical experiences and adjust them in a way such that they could best serve the requirements of their concrete societies. Precisely due to such openness and dynamics, many contemporary Chinese scholars regard Li's concept of pragmatic reason as a most valuable contribution to the establishment of a modern Chinese ethics:

> Li Zehou's philosophical ethics, which is based upon "pragmatic reason", is permeated with openness and developmental potential. It thus offers

> us huge new spaces for research and at the same time, it invites the academic world to attach an even greater importance to investigating his ethical thought. (Zhao 2013, 19)

In this context, Li points to the destiny of science and technology in China. Even though the dominant intellectual history never established abstract foundations of scientific thought to any significant extent, the Chinese people nevertheless rapidly (and most capably) embraced all these methods of thought as soon as they came to understand their pragmatic value after Western thought was introduced to China:

> Due to "pragmatic reason", technology developed very rapidly in ancient China. But on the other hand, it was never able to produce a system of mathematical axioms or an abstract speculative philosophy like those that were developed in ancient Greece. Hence, in the modern times, it was confronted with enormous challenges. But precisely due to its pragmatic nature, it began effectively accept and assimilate them as soon as it became clear that abstract reasoning and scientific methods are beneficial to people. (Li 2016a, 157)

Hence, pragmatic reason is a most suitable tool for reasonable human development:

> Representing the structural principle of the cultural psychological activities of the Chinese people, pragmatic reason is by no means a static, unchangeable formation. What it values is precisely change, expansion, renewal, and development. Hence, Chinese tradition, Confucianism, and pragmatic reason cannot be seen as obstacles to modernization. (Li 2008, 251–52)

Li Zehou firmly believes that within the contemporary anti-rational trend China should put forth the reconstruction of rationality, although not one that is based on transcendental reason (Li 2016a, 1143). Instead, it should rather revive and employ the elementary potencies of traditional pragmatic rationality.

Therefore, Li's anthropo-historical ontology rejects post-modernism and promotes a re-establishment of the authority of pragmatic reason. It highlights that the traditional Chinese culture of pleasure discards nihilism. Instead, it encourages the belief in human life. Li Zehou argues that a creative transformation of such Chinese cultural characteristics could obtain universality and serve as new universal ideals. As Wang Keping (2018, 225) notes, Li has specifically been preoccupied with both the human condition in general and China's reality in particular. Hence, through his conceptualization of pragmatic reason, Li has

established a coherent theory for a new interpretation of human "becoming", which is not only important for future developments in China, but also in the world in general.

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON LI ZEHOU: ETHICS AND THE BEAUTY OF HUMAN BECOMING

Classical and Modern Theories: Reinforcements and Innovations

Li Zehou's Reconception of the Classical Confucian Concepts of Autonomy and Individuality: With a Focus on *Reading the Analects Today*

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Abstract

Li Zehou coins the term "guanxi-ism" (relationalism) to confirm the Confucian self with its two aspects of social relations and independent character, while elaborating the classical Confucian notions of individuality, autonomy, and self-realization in his many works, especially in *Reading the Analects Today*. Li argues that Confucius interprets external ritual as a person' own internal intention and drive, and as a result elevates social and ethical regulations as personal emotions and the autonomous power of decision. With a certain transformative construction, Li expects that this Confucian project can be efficiently applied in developing humanity and reconstructing the cultural order in today's world.

Keywords: Li Zehou, Classical Confucianism, Autonomy, Individuality, *Reading the Analects Today*

Li Zehoujeva nadgradnja klasičnih konfucijanskih konceptov avtonomije in individualnosti v delu *Današnje branje Razprav*

Izvleček

Medtem ko je v mnogih svojih delih, zlasti v knjigi *Današnje branje Razprav*, nadgrajeval konfucijanske koncepte individualnosti, avtonomije in samouresničevanja, je Li Zehou uvedel termin »guanxi-ism« (relacionalizem) za ponazoritev konfucijanskega sebstva, ki vsebuje dva vidika, namreč vidik družbenih odnosov in vidik samostojnega značaja. Li trdi, da je Konfucij interpretiral zunanjo obrednost kot notranjo namero in motivacijo posameznika, iz česar sledi, da je družbene in etične regulacije povzdignil na raven osebnih čustev in avtonomne moči odločanja. Li pričakuje, da bo tak projekt konfucijanske prenove – z določeno mero transformacijskih konstrukcij – lahko učinkovito uporabljen v razvoju in rekonstrukciji kulturnega reda današnjega sveta.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, klasično konfucijanstvo, avtonomija, individualnost, *Današnje branje Razprav*

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Introduction

Li Zehou was among the early scholars to notice the classical Confucian concepts of autonomy and individuality. He coins the term "guanxi-ism" 關係主義 (relationalism), promoting it as a reconception of classical Confucian ethics encompassing both human relationality and individuality, as well as social role obligations and personal autonomy. Li asserts that the core theme of the *Analects* is "learning to become a person" (*xue zuoren* 學做人; Li 2015, 192–93), in which a consummate person has come to realize both social responsibility and individual worth. In the preface to his *Lunyu jindu* 論語今讀 (*Reading the Analects Today*), Li summarizes three basic ideas of this classic: (1) a particular emphasis on the nurturing of human emotions, regarding emotion as the foundation, substance, and source of humanity and life; (2) an extreme emphasis on morality, integrating politics, ethics, and religion into one; and (3) a self-establishment of individuality and destiny in order to realize one's personal worth of existence (Li 1998, 18–21). Among the three, the first and the third concern the notions of individuality, personal psychology, autonomy, and self-realization.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a dominant opinion of scholarship was that Confucian ethics lacked the notions of self, individuality, subjectivity, autonomy, and free will. For example, Hu Shi 胡適 asserted that in Confucian ethics a person cannot exist independently, but is always subject to social relations (Hu 1919, 116). Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 also contended that Chinese society is relation-based (*guanxi benwei* 關係本位) and that "the biggest problem of Chinese culture is that the individual has never been discovered" (Liang 1974, 94, 260). Likewise, Herbert Fingarette opposed using the concept of self to discuss Confucian thought because Confucian ethics lacks the language of choice, responsibility, and subjectivity (Fingarette 1998, 18–36; 1979, 129–40. See also Hegel 1956, 120–21; Weber 1951, 241; Hansen 1972, 169–86; 1985, 35–56).

In recent decades, although a number of scholars have now confirmed the Confucian notion of self they still define it as being constituted mainly by relational roles, social responsibility, and communal values, rather than as describing a basically free, autonomous individual. For example, to A. C. Graham, although Confucius is very much concerned with individual choice, he "does not think in terms of choices between ends" but of simply spontaneously following the Dao as his intent and learning progresses, rather than the free choice of the individual will (Graham 1989, 27–28). Henry Rosemont, Jr. also believes that "Confucian selves are much less autonomous individuals than they are relational persons, persons leading lives integrated morally, aesthetically, politically, and spiritually; and they lead these lives in a human community" (Rosemont 2004, 62–63; 2015. See also Sun 2011; Ames 1991, 103–14).

Meanwhile, some scholars have found that Confucian ethics in fact advocates an organic relationship between the individual and society, and consider the two as interdependent and inseparable. For example, in Ambrose Y. C. King's opinion, Confucianism sees the individual as "a relational being endowed with a self-centered autonomy," with considerable social and psychological space for action and capable of shaping what kinds of relationships to have with others (King 1985, 57–70; 1992, 1–40). Yu Ying-shih 余英時 also indicates that Confucian ethics treats the individual as a whole being of reason, emotion, will, and desire; neither is the relational order forced on the individual from outside but rather it spontaneously emerges from within the individual (Yu 1989, 1–48). Heiner Roetz describes the Confucian moral person as a self-responsible, autonomous being who does more than simply fulfil assigned social roles and obligations (Roetz 1993, 149–84). Additionally, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, more and more scholars have applied the notions of self, autonomy, freedom, and individuality in a general sense for discussions of their presentation in Confucian ethics (see mainly Perkins 2002, 207–26; Shun 2004; Cheng 2004, 124–47; Brindley 2010; Chan 2014).

Against this background of scholarship, Li Zehou's plentiful, sophisticated discussion of classical Confucian notions concerning emotion, autonomy, individuality, and self-realization in his *Reading the Analects Today,* published in 1998 and absorbed from his many ideas presented in his works from the late 1970s to 1990s (Li 1979a; 1979b; 1981a; 1981b; 1985; 1987; 1989), appears both pioneering and inspiring in this regard. It therefore merits a detailed discussion.

Personal Emotions and Autonomous Decisions

Herbert Fingarette emphasized the importance of *li* 禮 or ritual regulations while asserting the lack of an individual power of decision and "inner psychic life" in classical Confucian ethics: "The moral task is to make a proper classification, to locate an act within the scheme of *li*. … In short, the task is posed in terms of knowledge rather than choice." Here "proper classification" refers to the "ordering of names" (*zhengming* 正名), which is related to the "knowledge" of ritual regulations. Although Fingarette admits that Confucius talks about a kind of self that is "self-observing and self-regulating", he describes it as representing the impersonal Dao without any true subjective state (Fingarette 1998, 18–36; 1979, 45).

Li Zehou shares Fingarette's emphasis on the relationship between ritual and classical Confucian ethics; indeed, to a certain extent Li's discussion on the magic and ethical power of ritual regulations (customs, institutions, social order, and laws) develops Fingarette's viewpoint (Li 2015). On the other hand, Li also pays close attention to the Confucian self of emotions, subjectivity, and autonomy,

indicating that one of Confucius' most important contributions is to root external ritual regulations in the internal psychology of *ren* 仁, which basically means to love people, or humaneness (Li 1985, 15–33; Jia 2016, 757–86). The integration of *li*/ritual and *ren*/humaneness in one's inner psychology thus forms what Li calls the emotio-rational formation (*qing-li jiegou* 情理結構) of classical Confucianism. As a result:

> By obtaining this internal psychological grounding, ritual regulations become part of humanity. … The standards and commands given by the divine shift into internal human drives and consciousness, and service to the divine shifts into service to humans and to self. This transformation possesses epochal significance in the history of ancient Chinese thought.
>
> 禮由于取得這種心理學的內在依據而人性化, …由神的準繩命令變而爲人的內在欲求和自覺意識, 由服從于神變而爲服從于人, 服從于自己, 這一轉變在中國上古思想史上具有劃時代的意義. (Li 2015, 118–19; Li 2018c)

The divine authority and ritual regulations thus become the inner emotion, drive, and consciousness of the individual. These are no longer forced from external orders but arise from the internal will. The individual is changed from following Heaven/the gods to following his or her own intention. As a result, individual decisions, choices, and autonomous actions are required for implementing the practices of ritual.

Li Zehou takes Confucius' conversation about the ritual of mourning with his disciple Zai Yu 宰予 as an important example of this. Zai Yu disagrees with the ritual of three years' mourning, claiming that a full year is long enough. Confucius asks if he is at ease with one year of mourning and Zai Yu replies yes. Confucius then tells Zai Yu that "if you feel at ease, do so by all means", while at the same time reprimanding him as "inhumane" (*buren* 不仁) because "a child ceases to be nursed by his parents only when he is three years old. … Was Zai Yu not given three years' love by his parents?"[1] (17.21*;* Lau, 1979*).* Li Zehou contends that Confucius directly explains the ritual of three years' mourning as an emotional and rational self-awareness that repays the parents' unconditional love for their children, as well as displaying the children's sincere love for their parents. Here the key word is *an* 安, or at ease, which refers to personal emotions and feelings but is also established on rational knowledge, as seen in the reciprocal care between parent and child. Confucius thus interprets the external ritual regulations as the individual's internal intentions; elevates the rigid, coercive regulations to the individual's conscious

1 Translations of the *Analects* in this article are adapted from D. C. Lau's.

concepts and autonomous decisions; and changes the religious, mysterious rituals into the individual's daily emotions and life experience. In this way, ethical regulations and psychological intentions are unified, and rituals are humanized because they have acquired psychological grounding (Li 1985, 18–22; 1998, 407–8).

Likewise, when interpreting Confucius' famous phrase, "to return to ritual regulations through mastering oneself, this is humaneness" (12.1), Li Zehou indicates that *ren* or humaneness is neither natural human desire nor a "Heavenly principle" (*tianli* 天理) that overcomes or extinguishes human desire; rather, it is the mastering of oneself to make one's words and acts conform to *li*/the ritual regulations that produce *ren* or the emotion of humanity. It is both humankind's historical achievement and the individual's psychological formation, and both a cultural-regulating scheme (human culture) and individual autonomous drive (humanity). As a result:

> Confucius transfers the practice of an external ritual institution into an internal drive and intention, and integrates reason and drive to become the specific process of emotion (humanity, i.e. *ren*).
>
> 孔子將實踐外在禮制化爲內心欲求，融理欲于一體而成爲情（人性，即仁）的具體過程. (Li 1998, 270)

The same integration of reason, drive, emotion, and will by the individual self, Li further indicates, is also present in Confucius' many other teachings; for instance, "Enacting humaneness occurs through oneself" 為仁由己 (12.1); "I desire to be humane, and humaneness arrives" 我欲仁, 斯仁至矣 (7.30); "A determined humane person does not seek to preserve one's life at the expense of damaging humaneness, but rather sacrifices one's life to achieve humaneness" 志士仁人, 無求生以害仁, 有殺身以成仁 (15.9); and "The Three Armies can be deprived of their commander, but even a common man cannot be deprived of his will" 三軍可奪帥也, 匹夫不可奪志也 (9.26; Li 2015, 194–98). In these expressions, Confucius ascribes to the individual the capacity of acting autonomously under the individual's own drive, will, and moral principles, independent of consequential considerations or external controls and forces.

In *Reading the Analects Today*, Li Zehou mainly uses the terms "individual freedom" (*geti ziyou* 個體自由), "individual autonomy" (*geti zizhu* 個體自主), or "psychological freedom" (*xinli ziyou* 心理自由) to signify the exercise of individual autonomy. In other works, and especially in recent years, Li has also used the term "free will" (*yizhi ziyou* 意志自由) for this signification. He explains that his use of free will is related to Kant's definition but has also been revised on classical Confucian grounds.

Kant describes the will both as practical reason that fulfils an end and as a faculty that produces rational action (Korsgaard 1996, 163; Li 2018a, 230–35). Like Kant, Li Zehou also emphasizes that the Confucian notion of free will is characterized by the governance of reason:

> I have repeatedly mentioned that the emotio-rational formation of moral psychology is characterized by the governance of reason. This can be seen where Confucius describes the great virtue of "humaneness" as "mastering oneself and returning to ritual regulation", which involves the categorical imperative of reason. Therefore, in terms of the psychological character of morality, Confucius and Kant are entirely in line with one another on this major point.
>
> 道德心理的情理結構我已反復講了, 就是以理性主宰爲特徵, "克己復禮爲仁", 克己復禮就是理性的絕對命令. 因此作爲道德的心理特徵, 孔老夫子與 Kant 在這一要點上完全一致. (Li 2015, 195)

Within the emotio-rational structure of moral psychology, reason governs individual emotions and desires through the exercise of free will. Confucius explains "mastering oneself and returning to ritual regulation" as *ren*/humaneness, which emphasizes the self-coercion of Kant's categorical imperative.

On the other hand, Kant's notion of free will is related to his epistemology that separates intelligence and reason from sensibility and emotion, *a priori* moral principles from historical, empirical factors of human psychology, and the noumenal from the phenomenal. He distinguishes the intelligible character of freedom from its empirical character, the former being the spontaneity of understanding and autonomy of the will, the latter being the receptivity of the sensibility and heteronomy of the will. In other words, we can gain full free will only in the "noumenal" world, not in the phenomenal one (Wood 1984, 73–101; Li 2018a, 230–34). In contrast, however, Li Zehou stresses the importance of emotion and how it is integral to reason in the Confucian notion of free will, thus differing from Kant:

> Confucius also famously states, "Humaneness is to love people". This statement clearly emphasizes emotions. Likewise, while "mastering oneself and returning to ritual propriety" stresses rationality, the totality of Confucius' teachings regarding "humaneness" ultimately focuses on the formation of humanity's emotio-rational structure, within which both emotion and rationality are integral. This differs from Kant's exclusive focus on the supremacy of reason. Kant's reason is above and beyond

> humankind, whereas Confucius' "emotio-rational formation" belongs only to humankind. This is their fundamental difference.

> 孔子還有 "仁者愛人" 的著名回答, 這個回答所突出的, 確是情感, 有如 "克己復禮" 的回答側重理性. 但總括孔子對 "仁" 的衆多回答, 其最終歸結仍在塑建既有情又有理的人性的情理結構, 而不同于Kant只講理性至上. Kant的理性是超于和高于人類的, 孔夫子的 "情理結構" 是專屬人類的. 這就是根本的不同. (Li 2015, 195–96)

> Therefore, the free will of the Chinese tradition is full of emotion and content, unlike Kant's free will of universal legislation but without content, as criticized by Hegel.

> 所以中國傳統的自由意志充滿情感和內容, 而不同于爲Hegel所批評的康德那雖普遍立法却無內容的自由意志 (Li 2018b, 14).

> "Free will" lies not in a Heavenly principle, but rather in the human heart-mind.

> 这自由意志不在天理, 而在人心. (Li 2011, 5).

Thus, first, the Confucian free will is filled with moral emotion, with the core notion of *ren*/humaneness stressing the emotion of loving people. Second, *ren*/humaneness also integrates emotion with reason to form one's individual moral psychology. Third, the Confucian religio-rational formation is historically and culturally relative, exclusively belonging to human experience. Therefore, in contrast to the Kantian universal legislative of "formal" free will, the Confucian free will is emotional, rational, substantive, and personal. For example, Li Zehou elaborates the description of "[Confucius] keeps working towards his goal while knowing it is hopeless to success" 知其不可而爲之 in the *Analects* (14.38) as follows:

> "Knowing it is hopeless to success" is an understanding [of the reality], while "still working towards one's goal" is to make efforts without calculating the result of success or failure, showing the understanding of ethical "noumenon" higher than phenomenal world and the dignity of human without submitting to causality.

> "知其不可" 是認識, "而為之" 則是偏偏不計較成敗因果而去做, 正顯示倫理"本體" 高于現象界的認識, 顯示了人的尊嚴, 不屈從于因果的自由 (Li 1998, 417).

The individual rationally estimates the reality of arduous circumstances in their life journey but still makes great efforts to overcome difficulties, thus showing their free will of not yielding to Heaven's mandate.

From Li Zehou's discussion of the relationship between *li*/ritual regulations and *ren*/humaneness, we can draw three key arguments of his. First, Li argues that Confucius internalizes external ritual regulations to within the individual to become humaneness, as a result providing the grounding of the individual's "inner psychic life" for implementing the moral tasks of the ritual regulations and relational social order. Second, according to Li, in the *Analects ren* is a kind of moral-rational emotion of loving people, representing fundamental humanity; it is universal but also personal at the same time, because it starts with people's specific feelings of love toward their parents as well as their rational drive to repay them. Finally, Li contends that the individual makes the autonomous decision to practice *ren* or not and to become a humane person or not based on their own emotions, drives, reasons, and free will. In the example of three years' mourning, Zai Yu feels "at ease" about not implementing the ritual and so chooses to be "inhumane", while Confucius determines on the opposite decision. These arguments thus insightfully reveal some fundamental conceptions of classical Confucianism with regard to the ethical categories of morality, humanity, emotion, reason, and individual autonomy.

In several other passages of the *Analects*, Li Zehou again looks into the depth and detail of Confucius' words to reveal the implied concept of personal independency, particularity, and autonomy. For example:

> The master says, "… A man good enough as a partner in a common stand need not be good enough as a partner in the exercise of flexibility".
>
> 子曰*:* "…可與立, 未可與權" (9.30).

As is well-known, "jing" 經 and "quan" 權 are paired concepts in Chinese intellectual history. Li Zehou explains jing as principle and quan as flexibility, contending that *jing*/principle is a universal law that cannot be changed, while quan/flexibility is related to individuality and personal autonomy, and thus the ability to undertake free and flexible decisions and practices. Classical Confucianism does not emphasize absolute imperatives and principles that never change, but instead stresses the integration of constancy and change, and principle and flexibility. Furthermore, Confucius says he differs from a number of virtuous hermits and officials because

he has "no preconceptions about the permissible and the impermissible" (*wuke wu buke* 無可無不可; 18.8). Li comments that this also displays Confucius' flexibility and particularity in making his own personal decisions and choices. Some additional examples from the *Analects* are as follows:

> The master says, "The gentleman agrees with others without being an echo. The small man echoes without being in agreement".
>
> 子曰: "君子和而不同, 小人同而不和" (13.23).
>
> The master says, "The gentleman is conscious of his own superiority without being contentious, and comes together with other gentlemen without forming cliques."
>
> 子曰: "君子矜而不爭，群而不黨" (15.22).
>
> The master says, "The gentleman enters into associations but not cliques; the small man enters into cliques but not associations."
>
> 子曰: "君子周而不比, 小人比而不周" (2.14).

For the three expressions concerning a gentleman's right acts—"agrees with others without being an echo", "comes together with other gentlemen without forming cliques", and "enters into associations but not cliques"—Li explains these as Confucius' emphasis on cultivating individual particularity and independency in order to maintain social and relational harmony.

The Ideal Personality and Self-Realization

In the early 1980s, Li Zehou had already listed "individual personality" (*geti renge* 個體人格) as one of the five components of Confucius' conception of *ren*/humaneness (Li 1980, 87–89; 1985, 25–29). Later, he further defined the Confucian program of constructing the ideal personality through self-cultivation as the practice of the "inner sage" (*neisheng* 內聖) or "religious morality" (*zongjiaoxing daode* 宗教性道德), in contrast with the practice of the "outer king" (*waiwang* 外王) or "social morality" (*shehuixing daode* 社會性道德). Li also reinterprets Confucius' "knowing Heaven's mandate" (*zhiming* 知命) and Mencius' "standing on Heaven's mandate" (*liming* 立命) as overcoming one's individual destiny and self-realization of personal worth.

Li Zehou argues that when Confucius roots external ritual regulations in the internal psychology of humaneness during the late Spring and Autumn periods, when the Zhou ritual starts to collapse, he is in fact entrusting the historical mission of restoring the institution of ritual to members of the aristocracy. To fulfil this mission, a *junzi* 君子 (literally "lord's son") must learn and cultivate himself to attain the ideal personality of humaneness. As Confucius says:

> A humane person helps others to take their stand if he himself wishes to take the stand, and helps others to accomplish if he himself wishes to accomplish.
>
> 夫仁者已欲立而立人, 已欲達而達人 (6.30).

Or as Zengzi says:

> A gentleman must be strong and resolute, for his burden is heavy and the road is long. He takes humaneness as his burden. Is that not heavy? Only with death does the road come to an end. Is that not long?
>
> 士不可不弘毅, 任重而道遠. 仁以爲己任, 不亦重乎? 死而後已, 不亦遠乎? (8.7)

Humaneness is thus both a social obligation and an autonomous choice, both the ideal personality and an individual act. It is to love and help others unconditionally, and at the same time complete the nurturing of one's individual personality and realize one's individual worth. As a result, both the individual and group reach perfection and elevation. Li Zehou contends that the personality of humaneness established by Confucius replaces the image of the religious saint while possessing the same strength and function, which in turn greatly promotes personal autonomy and independency. Following this ideal model, later Confucians always emphasized self-cultivation, or the "inner sage", as the foundation of governing the state, or the "outer king". Indeed, numerous Confucian scholars have practiced self-cultivation and pursued becoming a consummate person throughout their lives. This is the religious morality of Confucianism, which functions quasi-religiously in order to remove secular dirt from determined scholars. Here again we see that in Confucian ethics, social, relational persons are also dynamic individuals who actively construct their own and others' roles and personalities. This construction is not simply an action of following the Dao, but rather requires great strength in individual will, determination, and practice.

Confucius himself sets up an example for such self-cultivation of the ideal personhood. His famous self-reflection on life's stages describes the progressive process of his pursuing and becoming a consummate person (2.4). Among these stages, the central point is knowing Heaven's mandate at age fifty. Before this point, all his efforts in learning and practicing were making gradual progress toward this knowledge; after this point, all his free yet rational feelings and ideas were the outcomes of this knowledge. As for the implications of "knowing Heaven's mandate", both traditional and modern scholars have developed numerous interpretations, and controversies over whether it concerns a moral Heaven or amoral fate, and prescriptive/normative or descriptive dimensions, have continued (see mainly Ruan 1982, 1: 211–36; Feng 1948, 44–47; Fu 2000, 2: 499–666; Tang 1957, 1–33; Miyazaki 1963, 81–104; Xu 1969; Mori 1971; Schwartz 1985, 117–27, 285–90; Hall and Ames 1987, 206–7; Eno 1990, 249–50; Slingerland 1996, 567–81; Shun 2000, 77–88; N. Chen 1997a, 495–520; 1997b, 323–59).

For his part, Li Zehou has offered his own interpretation of Confucius' "knowing Heaven's mandate" together with Mencius' "standing on Heaven's mandate". He explains "Heaven's mandate" as personal destiny, which is determined by contingency (*ouranxing* 偶然性) beyond human knowledge and imagination, and argues that "knowing Heaven's mandate" refers to a person's power to decide and control his/her own destiny:

> Knowing and revering Heaven's mandate should not be explained as an external imperative or government. It should be understood as cautiously and reverently bearing all external contingencies, "without complaining to Heaven and people". Going through various difficulties and hazards in one's life journey, one establishes one's own necessity without the cost of autonomy. In this way, one is conscious of one's finitude but is at the same time using it to resist, commit, and establish. This is standing on destiny, correct destiny, and knowing Heaven's mandate. "At fifty I knew Heaven's mandate" means the completion of this kind of commitment and establishment, that is, one thoroughly controls one's destiny.
>
> 知天命畏天命便不釋爲外在的律令或主宰，而可理解爲謹慎敬畏地承擔起一切外在的偶然，"不怨天不尤人"，在經歷各種艱難險阻的生活行程中，建立起自己不失其主宰的必然．亦既認同一己的有限，却以此有限來抗阻，來承擔，來建立，這也就是立命，正命和知天命．"五十而知天命" 著意在這種承擔和建立的完成，即一己對命運的徹底把握. (Li 1998, 53)

Although views may differ about explaining destiny as contingency, Li's interpretation of "knowing Heaven's mandate" as a person's power and effort to decide and control his or her own destiny is insightful. Li argues that in Confucius' statement, to revere and know Heaven's mandate/personal destiny is not to submit and yield to it. Rather, it is a deep consciousness of one's own existence and its limits, finitude, and difficulty; from the basis of this consciousness one cherishes the worth, meaning, and mission of one's life and strives to realize it so that eventually one controls one's own destiny, as Mencius' notion of "standing on/establishing Heaven's mandate" expresses more clearly. Therefore, the Confucian view of Heaven's mandate is two-sided: on the one hand revering the unpredictable future and one's destiny, and on the other believing in one's own strength, effort, and capacity to exert significant control over that destiny. This two-sided view has long been the common understanding and practice of the Chinese people, as vividly presented in well-known sayings such as "Doing one's utmost while listening to Heaven's mandate" (*Jin renshi er ting tianming* 尽人事而听天命), "Knowing it is hopeless to succeed but still working toward one's goal" (*Zhi qi buke er weizhi* 知其不可而為之), and "The efforts lies with man while the outcome lies with Heaven" (*Moushi zairen, chengshi zaitian* 謀事在人, 成事在天; Li 1998, 277).

Li Zehou's argument can be further elaborated. The Qing scholar Sun Qifeng 孫奇逢 (1584–1675) insightfully indicated that Confucius' knowing Heaven's mandate was in fact Confucius' knowing himself (Yang 1985, 22). Through decades of diligently learning, cultivating, and practicing, at age fifty Confucius knew clearly his own disposition, intelligence, abilities, knowledge, moral virtue, social roles and obligations, and, most importantly, the socio-historical mission he had chosen to undertake. This notion of self-knowing was later correctly seized on by the author(s) of the Guodian 郭店 manuscript *Zun deyi* 尊德義 in saying: "There are those who know themselves but don't know [Heaven's] mandate, whereas there is never someone who knows [Heaven's] mandate but does not know himself" 有知己而不知命者，亡知命而不知己者 (Chen W. 2009, 213).

Heaven's mandate represents the cosmic authority; knowing and following Heaven's mandate means to conform to external authority. The significance of Confucius knowing Heaven's mandate lies in that, by changing the subject to be known from Heaven to himself, the cosmic authority is transferred to become the internal, individual authority that motivates one to choose, determine, and act. Thus, under the surface of Heaven's mandate lies a self-empowering and self-realizing agent who determines his own course of life.

Concluding Remarks

Classical Confucian ethics emphasizes both ritual/ethical regulations and personal emotion and power of decision, as well as both social/relational obligations and individual autonomy and realization. During the 1980s and 1990s, while most scholars focused on the social values of Confucian ethics, Li Zehou confirmed the Confucian self with its two aspects of social relations and independent character, while elaborating the classical Confucian notions of individuality, autonomy, and self-realization in his many works, especially in *Reading the Analects Today*. Li argues that Confucius interprets external ritual as a person' own internal intention and drive, and as a result elevates social and ethical regulations as personal emotions and the autonomous power of decision. *Ren*/humaneness, the core notion of Confucian ethics, is an emotio-rational formation of humanity, which is both governed by the rationality of ethical obligation and integrated with individual emotion, and the ideal personality of loving and helping other people. Through self-cultivation and practice, individuals can control their own destiny and realize their own personal worth by contributing to social and historical progress.

In addition to the term *guanxi-ism*, denoting both meanings of human relationality and individuality, as mentioned at this article's beginning, Li Zehou has also coined other novel, paired terms, such as emotio-rational formation, religious morality and social morality, ethics and morality, and subjectality (*zhutixing* 主體性) and subjectivity (*zhuguanxing* 主觀性; Li 1999, 174–83). In doing so he has reconceptualized the Confucian project of cultivating the ideal personality through integrating social values with individual worth, ethical regulations with autonomy, and relational obligations with personal realization.

With a certain transformative construction, Li expects, this Confucian project can be efficiently applied in developing humanity and reconstructing the cultural order in today's world. On the one hand, it stresses each person's emotions, autonomous decisions, free development, and self-realization; on the other, it revises modern liberalism's over-projection of the "atomic individual" and absolute freedom while ignoring social and community interests. Externally it can inspire us to build social harmony and interpersonal care based on individual rights and interests; internally it can guide us to foster personal emotions, character, and humanity (Li 2014, 105–7, 113–17). In the end, "everything, including ethics and morality, eventually completes in the individual"一切包括倫理道德最終歸結于個體 (Li 2017, 379), who can thus become fully human through the Confucian project of "person making" (Hall and Ames 1987, 114–25).

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Different Approaches to Modern Art and Society: Li Zehou *versus* Xu Fuguan*

Téa SERNELJ **

Abstract

Proceeding from the inseparable relation between ethics and aesthetics in traditional (and often also modern) Chinese thought, this article aims to illuminate two important approaches to the aesthetic foundations of Chinese modernity. The relation between the individual and society, which is a core question of modern ethics, is reflected in most of the ethical theories of 20th century China. In this context, the article first presents Li Zehou's theory of aesthetics and his definition of aesthetic experience. In this way, it aims to illuminate Li's interpretation of modern art and society, and to posit it into a contrastive position to Xu Fuguan's ethico-aesthetic theories, especially the ones regarding modernity and Western culture. The basic approaches applied by these two important modern Chinese scholars reveal great differences in attitude towards the spiritual and material development of humanity in the 20th century, which is especially interesting since they are both rooted in the abovementioned belief that ethics cannot be separated from aesthetics. Besides, Li Zehou sincerely admired Xu Fuguan's work on traditional Chinese aesthetics and referred to his comprehension of general concepts of traditional Chinese aesthetics in many of his own works dealing with aesthetics.

However, on a deeper level, Li's approach is diametrically opposed to Xu Fuguan's understanding of the development of modern abstract art and society, since the latter exposes regressive and conservative tendencies in approaching modern Western art and society. This dissimilarity is of utmost importance and has wide reaching implications, for their particular aesthetic attitudes also clearly manifest themselves in their respective systems of ethical thought.

Keywords: Li Zehou, Xu Fuguan, sedimentation, aesthetic experience, modern art, Western art, abstract art

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Drugačni pristopi k moderni umetnosti in družbi: Li Zehou *versus* Xu Fuguan

Izvleček

Izhajajoč iz neločljivega odnosa med etiko in estetiko v tradicionalni (in pogostokrat tudi moderni) kitajski misli pričujoči članek osvetljuje dva pomembna pristopa k obravnavi estetskih temeljev kitajske modernosti. Odnos med posameznikom in družbo kot osrednjim vprašanjem moderne etike je predmet razmisleka večine teorij estetike 20. stoletja na Kitajskem. V tem kontekstu članek najprej predstavi Li Zehoujevo teorijo estetike in njegovo definicijo estetskega doživetja. S tem osvetli Lijevo interpretacijo moderne umetnosti in družbe ter jo postavi v nasprotje etično-estetskih teorij Xu Fuguana, še zlasti teorije, ki obravnava modernost in zahodno kulturo. Osnovni pristopi teh dveh modernih kitajskih teoretikov razkrivajo velike razlike v odnosu do duhovnega in materialnega razvoja človeštva v 20. stoletju, ki pa je izjemno zanimiv zlasti zaradi že omenjenega prepričanja, da etike ne moremo ločevati od estetike. Li Zehou je odkrito cenil delo Xu Fuguana na področju tradicionalne kitajske estetike in se je v številnih svojih delih s področja estetike skliceval na njegovo razumevanje osrednjih konceptov tradicionalne kitajske estetike.

Toda na globlji ravni se Li Zehoujevo razumevanje razvoja moderne umetnosti in družbe diametralno razlikuje od Xu Fuguanovega razumevanja, saj zadnji pri obravnavi moderne zahodne umetnosti in družbe razkriva regresivne in konservativne tendence. Ta razlika je izjemno pomembna, saj se njuno estetsko dojemanje jasno kaže tudi v sistemih njunih teorij o etiki.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, Xu Fuguan, sedimentacija, estetsko doživetje, moderna zahodna umetnost, abstraktna umetnost

Introduction

The thesis of the present article is that although Xu Fuguan had profound knowledge in Chinese traditional aesthetics and art, he failed to understand modernity as something mainly derived from the West, whereas Li Zehou has a much deeper, more complex understanding of the process. His works also reveal that compared to Xu, he had a much more open attitude towards the development of art and society in China and the West. Although Xu was a member of the second generation of Modern Confucians who strove to build a bridge of understanding between China and the West, he failed to fully comprehend the main political, ethical and artistic agenda of modern Western art, because he generalized and misunderstood its fundamental characteristics, which led him to a misinterpretation of the socio-political background from which it emerged. Above all, he saw its development as a deformation and deviation of the function and the value of art in modern societies. Li Zehou, on the other hand, appreciated the aesthetic contents and the value of modern art precisely due to its being rooted in the specific historical development of Western societies, which he saw as an upgrading of aesthetic consciousness of

human beings. Hence, in spite of the fact that Xu Fuguan doubtless belongs to the pioneers of aesthetics studies in modern China, and even though Li himself has never criticized Xu Fuguan's conservativism, I try to shed some light upon the reasons behind the fact that Li Zehou's attitude towards modern art and society is progressive, while Xu's position is conservative and traditionalist.

In order to understand Li Zehou's attitude towards the development of art and society, we will first briefly introduce his theory of aesthetics and the concept of aesthetic experience. This will help us to illuminate the basic paradigms of his theory of human development and his ethical theory, which are both reflected in his views on modern arts and their role in contemporary societies. In the second part of the article I will present Xu Fuguan's views on modern art and culture, and reveal some fundamental differences between the two divergent approaches applied by these two prominent theoreticians, working in the field of aesthetics.

As is already widely recognized, Li Zehou's work in this field is of utmost importance, for he is the first modern Chinese scholar, who created a coherent and complex theory of traditional and modern aesthetics. Xu Fuguan, on the other hand, belongs to the pioneers of modern Chinese aesthetic theory. Although Li has often shown a deep respect for Xu's work, their approaches to aesthetics and its role in human societies are quite different, especially regarding the perception of modern Western art and its role in the process of Chinese modernization.

Li Zehou's Philosophical Aesthetics

Li Zehou's theory of aesthetics is based on the synthesis of traditional Confucian and Daoist philosophy with Kantian and Marxists aesthetics. The mutually interconnected key concepts in Li's aesthetics are the humanization of nature (*zirande renhua* 自然的人化), the naturalization of humans (*rende ziranhua* 人的自然化), subjectality (*zhutixing* 主體性) and sedimentation (*jidian* 積殿). For Li, history is the result of human labour and sociality that reached its goal in the domain of aesthetics, which he understands as the unity of nature and freedom. Thus, in his view, aesthetics can help us to understand basic values and constitutions of human existence. Similar to the nature of traditional Chinese aesthetics, Li's theory is also based upon the presumption according to which aesthetics is inseparably connected with ethics. He often points out that Chinese aesthetics does not refer to anything religious, mystical or transcendent, but is instead based on the fusion of reason and emotion; hence, it rather refers to the basic questions of human existence, the universe, societies and interpersonal relations. He also reveals that Chinese philosophy and aesthetics have typically been guided by the pragmatism and practical rationality of daily life, by human relations, and by political concepts, rather than by any abstract and abstruse rationalist theory (Rošker 2006, 186).

According to Li, pragmatism and rationality in Chinese culture can be traced back to the shamanist cultural tradition (*wushi chuantong* 巫史传统) of Shang and early Zhou dynasties. In shamanist tradition, human beings possessed the power to communicate among different realms of existence, including heaven and earth; they believed that human faculties and actions can influence and control these realms, and are therefore able to assume an active and determining role in the making of the world. In ancient China, the sages transformed and rationalized the power of shamans into external rites, which became rational guidelines for human behaviour, while music, dance and poetry became the emotional and poetic responses to the harmonies of the world (Li and Cauvel 2006, 24). When this shift occurred, music and poetry became transformative arts because they had the power to transform a person in ways reminiscent of the powers of the shamans (ibid., 25). This shift in ancient Chinese society also resulted in the unified relation between heaven (or nature) and man (*tianren heyi* 天人合一). It was enacted in shamanistic rituals that were led by practical goals (such as praying for rain), and not as a quest for the salvation of the human soul. Heaven was not represented as an anthropomorphic god or deities, but was revealed to humans in the course of ritual performance (Chan 2003, 117). The pragmatic content of the ritual is also the reason why rituality was not perceived as mystical or somehow metaphysical.

The concept of humanization of nature (*ziran de renhua*), a term which Li adopted from Marx's *Economic and Philosophic manuscripts of 1844* (1844), is based on his philosophy of anthropological ontology (*renlei xue benti lun* 人類學本體論), where everything that exists is connected with the existence of human beings and can be comprehended from a social and historical perspective rather than from the viewpoint of metaphysics (Li and Cauvel 2006, 40). Therefore, Li's anthropological ontology focuses on social practice as the concrete process of the historical development of human beings as a whole (ibid.). The humanization of nature evolved through a productive practice of labour, which Li describes as the *making and using of tools*[1] (*gongju* 工具), which manifested itself on two levels: The first level refers to the humanization of external nature, where humanity created material civilization. The second level refers to humanization of inner nature (senses, perception, feelings and desires), by which humanity created a spiritual civilization.

The main concept in this process is the practice of the so-called subjectality (*zhutixing* 主體性), which Li describes as the ability of culture to transform the natural world, and the inside and outside of the human world (ibid.), as well as the subjective human desire and the intention to understand the truth. All this was

1 The term was adopted from Georgi Plekhanov's aesthetics in which art as a form of social consciousness is subordinated to the mechanism of sociohistorical development where labour preceded and established beauty (Rošker 2019, 188).

reflected in the human longing for goodness and the love of beauty (Rošker 2006, 182). The manifestation of subjectality on the objective level is reflected in technology and in social existence, whereas the subjective level of subjectality manifests itself through the process of production, which also contains the subjective level of social consciousness. This level manifests itself in culturally conditioned mental structures. Hence, for Li, subjectality is not primarily the subjective awareness of an individual in the sense of sensations, feelings, desires etc., but rather refers to the results of human history that manifest themselves in deep structures of spiritual and intellectual culture, which also entail structures of ethical and aesthetic consciousness (Li 2001, 183).

For Li, human nature or the humaneness (*renxing* 人性) is a fusion of the social and rational, the biological and sensuous. It is the result of the coalescence of emotional life and rationality, the fusion of natural and social nature, which is a product of continuous evolution (Woei 1999, 106). This unification is achieved through the dynamic process of the humanization of nature, and thus through an interaction between human subjects and natural objects. In this process, sensitivity and naturalness are transformed by rationality and social factors (Rošker 2006, 183).

This transformation manifests itself in the sense of beauty (*meigan* 美感), which is the result of human social and productive practices. Li argues that the humanization of the external world reshapes the external world into beautiful objects and scenes, which thus become the source of beauty (Li and Cauvel 2006, 88). The humanization of the inner world forms aesthetic feelings in the subjective psyche, which is the origin of aesthetic experience or the sense of beauty. Thus, according to him, both processes are a result of the historical practice of human society.

Aesthetic Experience as the Product of Sedimentation

Li explains beauty in the framework of the Marxist conceptualization of humanized nature:

> 自然本身并不是美; 美的自然是社會化的結果, 也就是人的本質對象化的結果. 自然的社會性是自然美的根源. (Li Zehou 2002, 184)

> Nature as such is not beautiful. Beautiful nature is a result of socialized nature, i.e. a result of the objectification of human essence. The socialization of nature is therefore the basis of its beauty.

For Li, the essence of beauty originated from humans' making and using of tools, while the aesthetic experience emerged from the feelings associated with successful labour. The shaping of tools, the shaping of environment, and the reciprocal shaping of human beings are, according to Li, the original artistic activities, and the pleasure accompanying them is the earliest aesthetic experience (Li and Cauvel 2006, 5). The successful production of objects and the accompanying feeling of pleasure occur because of the correspondence between human beings and nature. Throughout the history of humankind, social and material practices have formed—and continue to form—innate human cultural-psychological formations through the process of sedimentation (ibid.).

In Li's theory, the concept of sedimentation is a historical process of accumulating human practical experiences which results in a fusion of the social and the individual, creating psychological and cultural formations of the human mind (Pohl 2015, 93). Human material production, with its psychological counterpart, leaks sediment into the human mind and is in fact an ongoing dynamic process within the cultural-psychological formation. In the human mind, sedimentation occurs on three levels (or sediments): species sedimentation, which includes forms common to all human beings; cultural sedimentation, which refers to the ways of thinking and feeling that are common to our own culture; and individual sedimentation, which is our individual life experience (Cauvel 1999, 158). These sedimentations are constantly in a dynamic process of change and interaction, and are by no means *a priori* categories of our mind (in Kant's sense), but rather represent a fusion of the social and the individual developed by society's historical evolution and material production.

Aesthetic sensibility is the most important human faculty, which through the process of psychological and cultural sedimentation transforms our comprehension of the world (Bruya 2003, 138). Nature became an object of aesthetic appreciation (or the aesthetic object) only after the process of the humanization of nature reached a certain level of historical development, when humans recognized the natural environment as a resource and instrument for their daily lives. Only then did the natural objects (mountains, rivers, clouds, rain, moon, etc.) begin to possess the essence of beauty and express aesthetic qualities (Li and Cauvel 2006, 72).

The perception of beauty and the aesthetic sensibility have been embedded in our psychological-cultural sedimentation throughout the historical process of humanizing nature, whereby naturalization of human beings occurs as its counterpart.

The term naturalized humans, which Li developed from Daoist, especially Zhuangzian philosophy relates to three meanings: a) to nature as the environment for living; b) to nature as an object of appreciation and entertainment, and c) to the integration of humans and nature through specific practices (e.g. *qigong*, meditation, etc.), where they learn to adjust their body and mind to the rhythms of nature (ibid., 75). In Li Zehou's interpretation, the concept of the naturalization of

humans thus appears as the corresponding element of the humanization of nature and functions as a process eliminating the alienation of human beings from nature.

According to Li, the humanization of nature and the naturalization of humans are based upon the classical Chinese concept of the unity of Heaven and man (*tianren heyi*). For Li, the specific spirit of Chinese aesthetics, which is based upon the complementarity of Confucianism and Daoism, can be found precisely in this unity. Hence, for Li Zehou, the theory of the unity of nature and man is simultaneously a theory of the transformation of men and nature, because it includes both the humanization of nature, as well as the naturalization of man. It aims to achieve human fulfilment or the wholeness of human nature.

The humanization of nature is represented in Confucian tradition as an emphasis on moral values and ethics, while the naturalization of humans is expressed in Daoist (especially in Zhuangzi's) philosophy, which emphasizes the value of personal freedom.

According to Li, Confucian humanization of nature is based upon the socialization and cultivation of human instinctive desires and needs, and the balancing and moulding of human emotions regarding interpersonal relations and morality.

Daoist (especially Zhuangzi's) naturalization of humans is founded on withdrawal from human affairs and moral laws, uniting solely with the laws of nature. Zhuangzi's speculation on the art of life unwittingly created the highest aesthetic spirit that consequently made artistic activities possible. Zhuangzi's philosophy of wandering at ease (*xiaoyao you* 逍遙遊) is comprised of mastering the technique (*gongfu* 功夫), the aesthetic perfection, and the freedom and liberalization of the human spirit to achieve unity with the Dao, which is the highest aesthetic experience.

Li's concept of sedimentation is the product of humanization of nature as well as naturalization of humans. It is expressed through the aesthetic awareness and creativity of particular historical periods. Sedimentation is the ongoing and dynamic process of human consciousness, and it forms the aesthetic experience of human beings. Li made a thorough historical and anthropological research in the psycho-emotional factors of aesthetic experience that forms the core of human aesthetic consciousness or awareness.

Aesthetic Experience as a Pleasant Sense of Freedom

Li Zehou defines aesthetic experience as the unity or the fusion of the rational and sensuous, and thus sensation, understanding, imagination and emotion. Aesthetic experience is the outcome of the process of humanizing inner nature, where human beings cultivate feelings, needs, desires, and sensory organs which

consequently change their physiological nature. The humanization of inner nature takes place in the process of humanizing external nature, in which human beings transform the natural environment in accordance with their needs through labour, thereby transforming the objective relationship between themselves and the nature. Aesthetic experiences emerge from the process of sedimentation, which refers to the accumulation and deposits of the social, rational, and historical in the individual through the process of humanizing nature (Li 2004, 94). In this way, humanization of the external environment transforms the world into a realm of beautiful objects and scenes, which become the source of beauty. The humanization of the human inner world, on the other hand, forms the aesthetic feelings in the subjective psyche and is the source of aesthetic experience or the sense of beauty. Both processes have been evolving through the historical practice of human society (Li and Cauvel 2006, 88).

For Li, the aesthetic experience is sensuous as well as supra-sensuous because it is sensuous, intuitive, non-social and non-rational, but at the same time social and rational but disinterested. In defining the aesthetic experience, Li agrees with Kant's definition of it as the harmonious interaction of the free play of the imagination and understanding, but for Li, the weakness of Kant's definition lies in the overemphasis on the rational and in his reduction of aesthetic experience to a mere interplay between imagination and understanding. For Li, it also includes aesthetic pleasure, which contains not only psychological, but also physiological factors (ibid. 107).

Classical art produces simpler aesthetic pleasure, while modern art feels unpleasant at first, but eventually it brings about a feeling of mental satisfaction in which pleasure arises from displeasure (ibid. 108).

The aesthetic experience or the sense of beauty of the external (natural) world, as well as of artworks, is in its essence a pleasant sense of freedom. How are these two, the aesthetic experience (or the sense of beauty) and the feeling of freedom, related? Li believes that human beings became familiar with the universal laws of the natural world through the human material practice of making and using tools. In the process of making and using tools productive labour utilized natural laws, which gradually acquired the form and the function of universal regularity. Step by step, people mastered various orders of nature and became familiar with different laws of form, which allowed them to imbue external things with aesthetic qualities. Because humans' material production brings about isomorphic structures[2], the properties of natural objects (growth, movement, development,

2 The sympathetic structural correspondence between the forms of nature and the structures of human mind/body, where the dynamics of external (physics) and inner worlds (psychology) exhibit similar principles due to their structural correspondence.

etc.) and their forms (rhythm, symmetry, balance, harmony, order, simplicity, repetition, etc.) enter into the realm of beauty (Li and Cauvel 2006, 56). For Li, beauty originates from the activities of making and using tools, and appears in the earliest human practices of reshaping (or humanizing) nature (ibid.). Li asserts: "Freedom is the power to understand the universal (natural) forms or laws by overcoming natural necessity. With this power, the subject is free before any individual object." (ibid., 57)

Therefore, both in real life and in the practice of art, freedom means subjective practice acting objectively in accordance with objective universal laws. It enables the human subject to create beauty and to enter into the realm of beauty, and to intermingle his or her subjective purposes with the objective laws of nature in perfect harmony.

> Freedom, which is the purpose of human beings, and the form of freedom, which is the root of beauty, are neither given by God nor exist naturally, nor are symbols of subjective ideas and emotions, but are objective powers and patterns of actions created by human beings through long historical practice. (ibid., 58)

However, Li argues that we must define freedom as the power to produce objective change. Freedom shapes objects in accordance with natural laws and, hence, it is a universal power for transforming things in the external world, as well as in the internal world of human beings.

Here we can see that, in the context of his anthropological ontology which is based on materialistic grounds, Li Zehou has to a certain degree upgraded Schiller's understanding of the relation between the aesthetic experience and freedom. Schiller argued that we experience beauty in those natural objects, the formation of which is based on rules. Therefore, the experience of beauty is rooted in the impression of regularity. Secondly, this rule must not be imposed on the object from the outside but rather stems from the object itself, which means that the object appears as self-determined, as self-regulated, as free. If both conditions are fulfilled, that is, if we perceive the object as following a rule imposed by itself, we experience it as beautiful. Since the experience of beauty implies freedom, beauty is nothing other than freedom in appearance. Human beings can hence experience freedom *via* their perception (Welsch 2006).

Schiller transfers the character of freedom from the human sphere into the natural world. In his idealistic aesthetics, freedom is already a natural phenomenon before becoming a part of human life. The difference between human beings and nature is not one between freedom and non-freedom, because both possess freedom. Hence, freedom is not a human privilege but rather a natural fact, and

this is precisely what is discovered and embraced through human aesthetic experience (Welsch 2006).

This assertion was of extreme importance in Western aesthetics because it aimed to abolish a dualistic worldview in which human beings were perceived as being separated from nature. In contrast, Li's theory of the so-called "one-world view (*yige shijie guan* 一個世界觀)", which is based upon the general holistic worldview that prevailed in the Chinese intellectual history, emphasizes that humans are an inseparable part of nature, and therefore the dualistic view (mind/body, subject/object, etc.) is absent from the Chinese ideational tradition. And further, Schiller's assertion that beauty is objective because it possesses regularity or laws that correspond to human perception is an idealist one, because it neglects the productive engagement of human labour and views humans merely as passive recipients of some higher powers of nature.

Hence, Li's position of the relation between the aesthetic experience and freedom is different from Schiller's in the sense that for Li Zehou the aesthetic experience (or the sense of beauty) is the product of human material production, which enabled people to gain comprehension of natural laws, to humanize nature and consequently to develop aesthetic experience and the sense of freedom, which are both exclusively products of human faculties.

Aesthetic experience is inseparably connected to art, as it directly reveals human creativity as the capacity and manifestation of human freedom. Although aesthetic experience cannot be limited solely to the experience of artworks, it is nonetheless the most crucial factor in human engagement and development of the world of art. On the one hand, it is an expression of the human sensation of beauty and freedom, and on the other it represents the sublime fusion of the external and internal world in human daily life, which enables us to resonate with the world and pervades human life with deeper meaning.

The Meaning of Art in Human Daily Life

According to Li Zehou, an object becomes an artwork only when it appeals to a person's psycho-emotional construction, when it is able to rouse emotions merely through its formal structure and not through direct representation of emotional images (Li and Cauvel 2006, 129). The power of formal structure acts on, influences and constitutes aesthetic psychological construction. In other words, objects become works of art when a person perceiving them has an aesthetic experience, which allows these objects to enter into his or her aesthetic awareness. However, according to Li, the very definition of art should be left open because there are no rules for art to follow, since materials change and so

do subjective experiences. An aesthetic object or an artwork is the manifestation and reflection of the states of mind of people living in different times and societies, as determined by specific socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions (Li and Cauvel 2006, 132).

Li asserts (ibid., 144) that art originated from witchcraft or developed along with it, while aesthetic experience originated from human labour. Witchcraft works to provide a tribal history (myths, legends) that can organize and mobilize people to preserve and hand down experiences of the past. Therefore, art was not created for the purpose of aesthetic experience. Still, although aesthetic experience does not primarily relate to art, it is inherently interwoven with it. If we understand aesthetic experience as our experience of the world where the inner world of human beings (which includes our emotions, understanding and senses) resonates and corresponds to the external world, and this fusion provides a profound feeling of beauty and freedom, it also gives us inspiration and contemplation that can be reflected and expressed not only in the sphere of artistic creativity or the arts, but also in our daily lives. As Li argues:

> It is possible to have an aesthetic experience of a daily experience, and even of universal aesthetic experiences. These ideas are consistent with the tendency of modern, popular art to invade daily life. Because of the mundane quality of daily experience, which confines us to fixed spaces and times, we naturally wish to have our imagination and expectations satisfied in the illusory world of art. (ibid., 146)

The function of art in human lives provides us with possibilities to contemplate on our emotions, on our life potential, and on the world itself. Hence, art as well as the aesthetic experience are both expressions and manifestations of human creativity and freedom. As mentioned above, Li Zehou emphasized that through time and material development, the aesthetic experience becomes more complex and profound because it is endowed with increasingly deeper contents. The development of aesthetic experience continuously produces new sensations and understandings which bestow us with new sediments in our psycho-emotional structure. Li finds modern abstract art a great stimulus for the development and enrichment of aesthetic experience because it is, in contrast to classical art, saturated with increasingly multifaceted socio-political backgrounds. Hence, abstraction as a specific mode of artistic expression provides the human mind with more complex and sophisticated sediments.

Li Zehou's Aesthetic Understanding of Modern Art[3]

As mentioned above, Li argues that the aesthetic experience is more complex in modern abstract art than in the traditional representational art. According to him, abstract art is more powerful because it does not use concrete images to express deeper psycho-emotional structures and emphasizes the artist's reflection on the socio-political and economic conditions of the era. Classical representational art, such as the Chinese landscape painting, for example, uses more or less concrete images to provide the aesthetic experience of the beauty of the world and contemplation of human emotions, whereas modern abstract art negates classical forms, and deforms concrete images in order to evoke more complicated intellectual feelings. Although these images seem simple, their content is rational, or super-rational, and therefore more difficult to grasp (Li and Cauvel 2006, 153). The fact that the works of the modernist school appear in an infinite variety of fantastic forms expands the meaning of art (ibid., 127).

Modern abstract art emerged as a response to the turbulent, grotesque, absurd and riotous world; it expressed feelings of alienation, terror and horror. In such a world, the presentation of beauty would be false, hence in modern art the representation of the ugly became the presentation of beauty. Although at first people feel discomfort with such artworks, it is precisely the emotional and intellectual content that consequently provides the satisfaction. As Li asserts,

> Modern art is the isomorphic structure corresponding to the hearts of modern people. The spirit of revolt in abstract art expresses people's desire to escape from limitations and oppressions of the finite world and displays a colourful rainbow of liberation. (ibid., 154)

In other words, modern art appears to be abstract because what it expresses cannot be expressed by concrete images. For Li, the abstraction presents something broader and more powerful. He argues:

> Why does Picasso[4] employ fragmented, deformed images of ox heads, horse bodies, women, and children to show the suffering and death brought about by the fascists in the Spanish civil war, instead of painting

3 The term modern art refers to the artistic styles and philosophy of art that emerged in the end of 19th century and lasted till the middle of the 1970s when postmodernism emerged. Modern art presents the abolition of features represented in traditional art, such as realistic depictions, narrative, etc. and engages in abstraction and experimentation. Modern art also includes avant-garde movements, such as fauvism, cubism, Dadaism, futurism etc. that emerged before and after WWI as well as abstract expressionism, pop art, minimal art, etc. that came to the fore after WWII.

4 In his painting *Guernica.*

> concrete scenes and images? Perhaps Picasso thought that no representative scenes could express both the artist's anger and the heinous nature of crimes. (Li and Cauvel 2006, 153)

In addition, argues Li, representational images are not able to express meanings that lie in deeper structures. In primitive art, the development from representation (mural paintings in caves) to expression (abstract decorations) often deepened the mystical colouring and sense of terror. The same phenomenon occurs in modern art. As Paul Klee said, the more terrible the world, the more abstract the form (ibid.).

During the transformation from concrete representations to abstract expression, the content conveyed in art becomes more and more complex. The content of emotion, imagination, and understanding expressed in abstraction is more profound and complicated than that expressed in representation. For Li, abstract art enriches and develops the aesthetic experience precisely because it opens up new forms of aesthetic experience and awareness that are the result of specific historical processes constituting a new psycho-emotional structures of human beings.

In modern art, abstract images reveal (or express) deep layers of the human psyche, especially the importance of human unconsciousness and the problem of (suppressed) sexual desires which were brought out by Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. The consciousness of death brought about by existentialism emphasized the awareness of the individual as the subject; Dadaism denied the meaning of art, beauty and aesthetics precisely in order to provoke the existing socio-political attitude towards the value of human beings and their creativity as such. These and many others artistic and philosophical currents that emerged in the 20th century influenced and shaped Western art in accordance with new reflections on individuality and on the relation between individuals and society. Hence, they represented a critical evaluation of the prevailing ethics and tradition.

For Li, the value and importance of modern abstract art lies in its reflection of the position of modern people as well as in its critique of the socio-political and economic conditions of the 20th century. Through such an abstract presentation and reflection of modern world, the aesthetic experience of human beings necessarily developed significantly as it gained more complex and profound dimensions.

For Li Zehou, art is the sedimentation of life. Therefore, the development of art and aesthetic awareness leak new sedimentations in the human psycho-emotional construction. In this dynamic process of change, the aesthetic experience of human life and that of artworks, become naturally endowed with new meanings. According to Li, this development is beautiful because it enriches us and gives us new vital potentials, despite all the objective difficulties.

Hence, Li's attitude towards new developments in aesthetics and society is very progressive and open to multi-layered contents that are brought about in these processes. In contrast to Li, Xu Fuguan represents quite the opposite view. Xu was one of the first Chinese scholars who made a thorough comparative research on Chinese and Western art and aesthetics in the middle of the 1960s. Li Zehou deeply admired Xu for his pioneering work and frequently mentioned and quoted him in his works on aesthetics. Although Xu was a great admirer of traditional or classical Chinese and Western art, he had a great aversion towards modern abstract art. In the next section, I will present his understanding of modern Western abstract art which will illuminate some fundamental differences between his views and Li Zehou's comprehension of modern art and society.

Xu Fuguan's Understanding and Attitude towards Modern Art

Xu Fuguan[5] views on modern art were published in the form of essays written mainly before he published his main work on Chinese art and aesthetics, *The Spirit of Chinese Art*, in 1966. It is important to mention that Xu admired traditional Chinese art and aesthetics immensely, therefore he felt an urge to write at length about its history, development and central aesthetic concepts. After he came across modern (or abstract) art while living in Japan, his compulsion to bring forward the richness and the profound value of classical Chinese art became even more pressing. As Su San Lee (1998, 318) pointed out, Xu's inspiration for writing *The Spirit of Chinese Art* was born after he visited Tokyo in 1960, where on the one hand he was overwhelmed by Japan's progressive economic and technological development, but on the other he was horrified by the popularity of modern Western art in which, as we will see, he not only beheld the destruction of art itself, but even the destruction of humanity. The popularity of modern Western art was also spreading among Taiwanese intellectual and artistic circles, and Xu was afraid that in their search for a new identity the Taiwanese youth would unreflectively and uncritically adopt this newly emerged art and completely do away with Chinese traditional culture and its artistic heritage. In his view, this new Taiwanese identity should be founded on a creative fusion of Chinese aesthetic tradition with certain elements deriving from modern Euro-American and Japanese cultures.[6]

5 Xu Fuguan (1904–1981) is one of the main representatives of the second generation of Modern Confucians who worked and lived in Taiwan and in Hong Kong after 1949 (Rošker 2019, 250).

6 Xu's fear that Taiwanese artists will adopt the Western worldview was also linked to the fact that Taiwanese youth did not perceive themselves as members of a concrete (i.e. Taiwanese) society. Besides, in the White Terror period most of the young Taiwanese were apolitical. In the 1960s, the young artistic, literary and intellectual circles found inspiration in Western literature and philosophy, in particular in the works of Kafka, Sartre, Camus and Nietzsche, along with others which became the true cultural heroes of desperate Taiwanese youth. In aesthetic circles, students of art quickly

For Xu, the elementary function of traditional art lies in a representation and integration of ethics, morality and the freedom of the human spirit. In this regard, Xu Fuguan's and Li Zehou's axiological aesthetics are equally rooted in a fusion of Confucian and Daoist philosophy. Although Xu deeply valued the Confucian notion of art as an educational tool for self-cultivation, and as the function of moulding and balancing human emotions that enabled humans to discover moral subjectivity, he nevertheless emphasized that the Zhuangzian attitude towards life is aesthetic in itself. Xu exposed Zhuangzi's aesthetic notions such as relativism, integral subjectivity, liberation of the Self through the methods of fasting of the mind (*xinzhai* 心齋) and sitting in forgetfulness (*zuowang* 坐忘), in order to show that the tendency of pursuing human liberation was something that existed in Chinese philosophical and artistic tradition long before its emergence modern Western art.

Modern Art as the Symbol of Destruction of Humanity: An Analysis of Five Essays

In this section, I will introduce Xu's assessment of modern or abstract art through the lens of five essays that were all published in the scope of *A Collection of the Existing Essays of Xu Fuguan* and *Selected Essays of Xu Fuguan* in 1980. However, most of the essays in which he elaborated upon this kind of art were written and published independently during the early 1960s. Through his writing it becomes clear that Xu was not only a traditionalist and conservative, but also that he quite severely neglected the importance of the origins of modern Western art, its ideational development and its socio-political backgrounds. The five essays discussed below elaborate on different aspects of modern art and Western culture, leading from simple historical descriptions to severe critiques of their "destructive" elements.

In his essay *The Problem of the Eternity of Modern Art* (*Xiandai yishu de yonghengxing wenti* 現代藝術的永恆性問題) written in 1965 (Xu 1980d), Xu pointed out that the spiritual background and characteristics of modern art derive from despair regarding the present era. Because of such despair, individuals sought to cut off all their ties to society and nature and lock themselves into their unconsciousness, expressing thereby either their supressed libido or their feelings of isolation and darkness. As regards the historical development of art itself and its pursuit of new forms, these are just secondary factors. Therefore, Xu pointed out

adopted abstract art. The members of these circles perceived themselves as representatives of a modern elite that was stuck in a conservative and backward society. The sense of alienation, which is one of the central features of modernism, coincided in this regard with the mindset of young Taiwanese writers and painters (Lee 1998, 318).

that modern art is but a transitional phenomenon in the development of art. This kind of art can hence be seen as an expression of a historical trauma, but it can by no means imply the eternity of art[7] (Xu 1980d, 268).

In his essay *Inhumane Art and Literature* (*Feirende yishu yu wenxue* 非人的藝術與文學), written in 1961 (Xu 1980a), Xu argues that abstraction departs from nature and the surreal departs from human life and society. The core issue of abstraction and surrealism was WWII, and both movements completely disintegrated and crushed the previous traditions and ideas in art. Art is not beautiful anymore, it is not alive and is not a part of the spirit. They initiated the idea that art is stupid, bad, and purposely insane. Through the whole chaos and darkness of a revolt against nature, they want to establish a new realm. Painters and poets who concentrated on the spirit and life belong to the past, but abstractionists and surrealists think that art is a collection of sporadic, everyday objects. In their view, parrots and similar natural creatures were able to create art, and combs, pieces of paper, nails and stamps could be taken as material for artistic creations. Xu claimed that the attitude of modern art and literature towards tradition represented a thorough revolution. He believed that his analysis clearly showed that such art is merely an expression of the infinite depression of the era within the century of nihilism. Because its main source is despair and terror with regard to reality, modern art would necessarily lead to the destruction of humanity. In this way, modern artists would complete the fate of their era (ibid., 212–14).

In the same year, Xu published an essay entitled *Modern Art's Revolt against Nature* (*Xiandai yishu dui ziran de panni* 現代藝術對自然的叛逆) (Xu 1980e), beginning with the foreword, where he emphasized that in ancient China people saw themselves as arising from the same source as all the things around them. Hence, there existed mutual harmonious loving relation between human beings and nature. This idyllic foreword is followed by a severe critique of the modern age and modern art, in which Xu Fuguan argued that the latter left both human beings and nature behind. Actually, it was against nature itself. In Xu's view, this was inhuman. For him, abstract and surrealistic art were basically the same, for through their forms they both express chaos and irrationalism, deforming thereby human beings, society and nature. He believed that the ideological background of surrealistic art could be found in Freudian psychoanalysis, and the ideational background of abstract art in the abstraction and elimination of human feelings. Hence, in his view art which departs from nature also necessarily departs from people (ibid., 249–52).

Xu Fuguan declared that an artistic image without the image of nature is a symbol

7 For Xu, the eternity of art is found in mutual relationship between the subject (artist) and the object (nature and society) (Xu 1980d, 268, 271).

of destruction and denial of art itself. He did not promote realism and naturalism as the appropriate art forms, for art is neither completely subjective nor completely objective, but a transfer of the artist's spirit through an objective image. Nevertheless, he emphasized the importance of "depicting nature" in order to limit the tendency to excessive expression of individuality in modern art. He believed that nature was the main theme of both traditional Chinese and Western art since the Renaissance (Xu 1980e, 249–52).

For Xu, nature could not be equated with the objective world as such, which includes both natural objects and the objects created by man. Instead, it was a wild, untamed landscape where one was liberated from social pressures, and thus able to feel communion with all creatures (Lee 1998, 331).

In an essay entitled *The Signal of Dadaist Era* (*Dadazhuyi de shidai xinhao* 達達主義的時代信號) written in the same year (Xu 1980b), Xu discussed the Dadaist art movement and quoted from the *Dada Manifesto* the main goal and content of the movement, emphasizing its negation and revolt against art as such, society, ethics, and law. He further explained his view on the movement and defined it as a form of destructive mischief that reflects the background of modern circumstances, but is unable to bear any fruit. He claimed that even though the origin of this movement was connected to the revolt of spirit and individual temperament, the most important feature that led to it was actually the fact that, since the Renaissance, European thought was defined by the contradiction between society and culture on the one hand, and by the opposition between mechanistic civilization and humanism on the other. This phenomenon became even more obvious after WWI, when people felt that (Western) civilization was moving straight to its own suicide.

He argued that people lost their way out of this sense of terror, destabilization, and depression. Hence, weak-willed people saw no other way out than through the destruction of reality and the history from which it emerged. For Xu, Freudian psychoanalysis and the natural sciences encircled this callous atmosphere and encouraged these tendencies. Further in the text, Xu argued that Dadaism is the expansion of surrealism and abstractionism, while Sartre's existentialism as well as logical positivism are in their essence a kind of profound Dadaism. For Xu, the spirit of Dadaism is the inevitable emergence of the spirit of Western civilization in the present time. He concluded this essay with the rhetorical question: "Where to is the present era actually leading us" (ibid., 241–44).

In the essay *The Goal of Modern Art* (*Xiandai yishu de guiqu* 現代藝術的歸趨) written in 1961 (Xu 1980c), Xu is similarly wondering where the abstract art of modern times will lead to. He believes that in the eyes of modern artists anyone asking that question is considered to be ignorant, lacking knowledge on true art, or even as someone who want to destroy it. Xu argues that the crucial aim of modern

art is to be found in the image of destruction; for modern artists, the true artistic image should arise from objective nature, and therefore their so-called abstraction completely eradicates the artistic images of nature. In Xu's view the image is the life of art, so he wonders why modern artists want to destroy it. Although artistic images come from nature, the images on the paintings actually contain the emotions and individuality of the artists. Therefore they represent the crystallization of the fusion of object and subject. For Xu, the image of an artwork is not imitation, but rather a sort of creation. The creation of art is unlimited like the universe, but modern art, which is using abstraction to destroy the image, disregards the fusion of new elements with the old tradition, and eliminates the significance of art. The second characteristic of modern art is for him its anti-rationalism. It does not recognize the laws of science and the natural order, and therefore it also opposes morality and culture. Modern artists excavate a hidden consciousness of chaos and darkness. They consider reason as hypocritical and not as a part of the human character, and they cannot recognize the value-system inherent in tradition and in social reality. Instead, they emphasize the need to overthrow tradition and humanism. In this aspect, they can be compared to communist materialism. The only difference between them lies in the fact that the communists still recognize objective laws and aim to construct a bright new future, whereas modern artists are a profoundly negative and chaotic group of people. They refuse the past and the future and are stuck in gloomy darkness. If this destructive work of modern surrealistic art would be accomplished, where would it actually lead people to? He concludes the essay with the statement: "They don't have anywhere to go and will only open up a path for communism" (Xu 1980c, 215–17).

With this essay, Xu gained quite a number of opponents in art circles, since he did not consider the fact that under the White Terror in Taiwan, any denotation of communist tendencies was severely punished, besides he was not aware that there were quite a few young painters in Taiwan who experimented with abstract expressionism. The young painter Liu Gongsong[8] responded harshly to Xu's essay and this was published in his book *The Path of Chinese Modern Painting* (*Zhongguo xiandaihua de lu* 中國現代畫的路) in 1965. Liu succeeded in convincing the public of the importance of modern art, and of the fact that it was "resistant" to communist manipulations, since it symbolized the individualistic creativity of the so-called free world (Lee 1998, 313).

In this essay, Liu Guosong also responded to Xu's attitude to Dadaism and showed that Xu more obviously did not know the differences between particular currents of Western art, since he often mixed up or equated Dadaism with surrealism and abstractionism. Besides, the slaughter of WWI led the Dadaist movement to a

8 Liu Guosong is the first and most important representative of modernist and abstract Chinese painting in Taiwan, and also the leading figure in Taiwan's avant-garde circles.

derogative scepticism towards art and all of Western culture; in contrast, surrealists and abstractionists still sought to develop new forms of art in order to create an artistic world that could coincide with the natural world. Liu Guosong argued that Xu misinterpreted Japanese sources on abstract Western painting, Dadaism and other art movements, and that Xu was incapable of understanding abstract paintings (Lee 998, 313). Nevertheless, Liu admitted that Xu correctly understood Dadaism as an artistic direction which mocks aesthetics, aesthetic taste and meaning, and indulges primarily to the expression of the human sub- and unconsciousness (Liu 1965, 157–76).

It is important to see that although Xu recognized the fundamental issues brought about by Dadaism, as Liu pointed out, he completely misunderstood the actual reasons for its intervention in Western society. The Dadaist negation of the abovementioned features lies precisely in their critique of the socio-political abolishment of the value of human beings, humanness and humanistic values. The existence and survival of art in such world is for them impossible.

Xu Fuguan's antipathy towards modern Western art was based on his belief that it radically opposed the moral consciousness of human nature and any form of civilized life. Modern art eliminated human reason and therefore brought out the manifestation of the obscure and absurd. For Xu, contemporary artists did not recognize the rationality of human nature, nor the system of values, which are both the foundations of any tradition, reality and culture as such. They purposively eliminate all these basic features of humanity.

Xu Fuguan's rejection of modern abstract art is based on his view that it denied the organic and interdependent connection between the individual, society and culture, which results in a feeling of alienation, solitude, and sadness. Therefore, for Xu, the problem of modern Western culture and art is that they are antisocial and anti-cultural (Huang 2019, 142–44). According to Huang (ibid.), what Xu Fuguan emphasized in his opposition to modern art is the "individualist mentality" presumably existing in modern Western art and culture. For Xu, the individual who manifests him- or herself in contemporary Western art and culture always exists outside of cultural, traditional, interpersonal and social contexts. Among other issues, this assumption is doubtless also reflected in Xu's ethical thought.

Conclusion

Although Li Zehou and Xu Fuguan share the view that the profound and rich heritage of traditional Chinese aesthetics is based on the fusion of Confucian and Daoist philosophy, they greatly differ in their particular understandings of modern abstract art and aesthetics. Because they both proceed from the viewpoint that

ethics cannot be separated from aesthetics, this difference also has wide-ranging implications for their respective systems of ethical thought.

For Li Zehou, the development from classical and representational art to abstract art is endowed with a new aesthetic experience which brings forward deeper and more profound developments in the human psycho-emotional structure. The sedimentation of complex intellectual and emotional experiences brought about by the new aesthetics of modern abstract art results in an advancement of human aesthetic faculties. The profoundness of modern abstract art is for Li also a reflection of economic and socio-political circumstances, which reveal the unique position of human beings in creating new conditions for human life in modern societies. The advance of modern abstract art and aesthetic experience therefore becomes endowed with political connotations which enable human beings to engage more intensively with specific conditions of a given reality. In his analyses of modern abstract art, Li thoroughly follows the historical conditions which lead to its emergence and sees it as a constructive and creative response to the difficult situation Western culture was facing in the early 20th century.

In contrast to such views, Xu Fuguan sees modern abstract art as an occurrence of hideous artistic forms without any aesthetic value and content. Besides, for Xu, abstract art induces or even supports the socio-political situation Western society was facing at that time. Although he emphasizes the collective trauma and hopelessness of after both the First and Second World Wars, which were obviously reflected in modern art, he still blames such art for its negation of traditional values and culture. This ambiguous and ambivalent position towards modern abstract art and society reveals his lack of knowledge in the field of Western aesthetics.

Li Zehou's approach to human development in arts, aesthetics and society is hence progressive and open to new human experiences, while Xu Fuguan's attitude could be seen as regressive and even nihilistic. This becomes even more problematic if we consider the fact that the philosophical current of Modern Confucianism, to which Xu belonged, has widely been regarded as a progressive in its attempt to establish a fruitful dialogue with Western philosophy and culture. Considering the inseparable nature of ethical and aesthetic treatises in Chinese discourses, the paper has shown a profound axiological difference between the two scholars, for it illuminates the manifold reasons behind the fact that, in essence, Xu's theory is essentially neoconservative, while Li's ethics and moral philosophy are permeated with a much more positive and open-minded spirit, which is—*inter alia*—reflected in his cosmopolitan understanding of modern art.

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON LI ZEHOU: ETHICS AND THE BEAUTY OF HUMAN BECOMING

On the Edge between Politics and Ethics: The Precarious Relationship between Harmony and Justice

Behind Harmony and Justice

WANG Keping *

Abstract

The proposition of "harmony higher than justice" was initiated by Li Zehou in 2007. It implies a hierarchical consideration rather than value assessment, thus schemed to reveal at least five aspects: (1) Harmony on this account is to be preconditioned by justice. (2) Harmony largely stems from human emotion instead of human rationality. (3) There are three forms of harmony in the societal, personal and eco-environmental domains. (4) What makes the three forms of harmony possible involves some key notions that vouchsafe a theoretical ground and a primary part of the "Chinese religious morality". (5) The morality of this kind procures a regulative principle to facilitate an appropriate constitution of "modern social ethics" with regard to harmony as the ultimate destination of the future society and world alike. Accordingly, the proposition can be employed to further develop "the Chinese application" and impact "the Western substance".

Keywords: Li Zehou, harmony, justice, three forms of harmony, Chinese religious morality, modern social ethics

Onkraj harmonije in pravičnosti

Izvleček

Predpostavko o tem, da je »harmonija višja od pravičnosti«, je Li Zehou izpostavil leta 2007. Bolj kot vrednostno sodbo pomeni ta predpostavka zlasti hierarhično vzpostavitev, ki se deli na pet vidikov: (1) V tem kontekstu je pravičnost predpogoj harmonije. (2) Harmonija izhaja predvsem iz človeških čustev in ne toliko iz racionalnosti. (3) Obstajajo tri vrste harmonije na družbeni, osebni in okoljski ravni. (4) To, kar te tri vrste harmonije omogoča, je povezano z določenimi ključnimi pojmi, ki zagotavljajo vzpostavitev teoretske podlage in primarne vloge »konfucijanske verske morale«. (5) Tovrstna moralnost predstavlja regulativni princip, ki olajšuje ustrezno konstituiranje »moderne družbene etike«, ki se nanaša na harmonijo kot najvišji cilj za prihodnost družbe in sveta. V skladu s tem lahko to predpostavko uporabimo tudi za nadaljnji razvoj »kitajske funkcije« in za vpliv na »zahodno substanco«.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, harmonija, tri vrste harmonije, kitajska verska moralnost, moderna družbena etika

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In his recent ponderings over East-West ethics from a transcultural horizon, Li Zehou brings forth the proposition of "harmony higher than justice" with reference to the ideal of classical Confucianism and the future of human society. Following Li's line of thought, it is assumed that the proposition refers to at least five things: (1) Harmony is to be preconditioned by justice. (2) Harmony largely stems from human emotion instead of human rationality. (3) There are three forms of harmony in the collective, personal and eco-environmental spheres. (4) What makes the three forms of harmony possible involves some key notions that vouchsafe a theoretical ground and a primary part of the "Chinese religious morality" (*zhong guo zong jiao dao de*). (5) The morality of this kind procures a regulative principle to facilitate an appropriate constitution of "modern social ethics" (*xian dai she hui lun li*) with regard to harmony as the ultimate destination of the future society and world alike.

What is the ultimate *telos* then? Pragmatically speaking, the proposition itself is schemed to shed light on two entities: the "Chinese application" (*zhong yong* 中用) and the "Western substance" (*xi ti* 西体). That is to say, it is employed to further develop "the application of Chinese learning" (*zhong xue wei yong* 中学为用), and exert more impact upon "the substance of Western learning" (*xi xue wei ti* 西学为体) according to specific situations and contexts. This discussion looks at the subtle connections and interactions between harmony and justice in view of Li's philosophical ethics and ontological approach. In addition, it is intended to reveal what matters behind the hypothesis of harmony in light of some key elements of "Chinese religious morality".

Harmony and Justice in Question

The idea of "harmony higher than justice" (*he xie gao yu zheng yi*) was first advocated by Li Zehou in 2007 (Li 2010, 158).[1] He then briefly discussed it during an interview that appeared in his *Ethics* (2010, 188–95). In his publication *A Theory of Anthropo-Historical Ontology* from 2016, it is slightly modified in Chinese by changing "*zheng yi*" (正义) into "*gong zheng*" (公正), and it hitherto appears as such (*he xie gao yu gong zheng*) (Li 2016, 151–57).[2] This modification attempts to deprive "*zheng yi*" (文本) of its emotional implication rooted in the word *yi* (义) as righteous obligation,[3] and to justify "*gong zheng*" (justice) in terms of impartial

1 *'Tan "ce yin zhi xin,"'* 谈"恻隐之心" (*Of 'Compassion'*) (in Li 2010, 158). The original expression is "和谐高于正义" in Chinese.

2 The modified expression is "和谐高于公正" in Chinese.

3 According to Li Zehou, the Chinese notion of *yi* (义) is inaccurately translated into either righteousness or justice. It might be better rendered as obligation. Such obligation must be appropriate above all because it is associated with reasoning but stems from emotion. (see Li 2010, 190)

reasoning and impersonal judgment without any emotional engagement. As noted in his new book, *A Sequel to Ethics*, it is rephrased as "emotion-based harmony higher than rationality-based justice" (*qinggan hexie gaoyu lixing gongzheng*), and further explained during a series of related seminars and interviews (Li 2017, 55–59).[4]

The given proposition is most likely conducive to two main interpretations: One may take it as a value assessment on an ethical basis, which gives more credit to harmony than justice. For it assumes that harmony, as a supreme paradigm of the political ideal in Confucianism, is more significant and difficult to attain than justice, a cardinal imperative of social ethics. The other may treat it as a hierarchical consideration, which claims justice as a principle of "modern social ethics" and a prerequisite for harmony in the network of human relationships. That is to say, only when justice is full-fledged in practice can harmony be feasible and attainable to a significant extent. Frankly speaking, Li's proposition strikes me as a hierarchical consideration rather than value assessment. By "hierarchical consideration" I mean placing the role of harmony on a level over that of justice according to the hierarchy of human needs. In other words, it does not really present a value judgment with the intention of figuring out which of the two concepts is more important or noteworthy than the other. Instead, it implies a critical necessity with regard to the human condition in one sense, and in another a hypothetical sequence wherein the attainment of harmony presupposes the exercise of justice in its all-round range.

The inherent logic between harmony and justice can be sorted out amid a number of explicative statements. According to Li Zehou, the notion of harmony is drawn from classical Confucianism with regard to its rites-music tradition and socio-political *guanxi-ism* as relationism.

> Although it is somewhat idealized, harmony is characterized with a clear and final goal, emphasizing that humans are not merely rational and social beings constrained by norms and institutions, but also emotional and relational beings in favour of psychological concordance. "Justice" comes from "rationality" whereas harmony from "emotion". Without being normalized by this "rationality", such "emotion" could be in no way acquirable at all. This can be termed as "moderated emotio-rational synthesis" (*he qing he li*) that corresponds to assurance of "emotional understandability and reasonable acceptability" (*tong qing da li*). (Li 2010, 190)

4 The rephrased expression is "情感和谐高于理性公正" in Chinese.

In any case, "emotion" is normalized by "rationality" such that it is no longer primordial and instinctive at all. It stands for human emotion instead of its animal counterpart. It is therefore alleged to be unattainable in a humanized manner resulting from human enculturation.

Further on, Li points out that the proposition is directed to the future of human society, and meanwhile proclaims it as part of China's contribution to the future of the world. Its philosophical basis is "the emotional root" as he articulated in the late 1990s. Still, he is aware of the fact that "the right is prior to the good" in respect to the views of the good and the evil promoted in various religions, cultures and philosophies. This is chiefly because justice, public reason and "modern social ethics" are rather elusive in the socio-political life of individual citizens in China. On this account, people must keep alert against utilizing the doctrine of harmony to conceal or prevent the solid development of justice-based "modern social ethics" and its institutional system (Li 2010, 194).

As discerned in his argument, Li seems to be preoccupied with a transcultural reflection in this domain. He links harmony with "emotion" and "situation" from the Chinese sources, and identifies justice with "rationality" and "social contract" from the Western ones. Deliberately, he makes a particular reference to the Dao for further rectification. The Dao as human way is presented as originating from emotion as the most essential aspect of human nature. With the passage of time, the Dao has evolved into a total sum of rites comprising laws, regulations, propriety rituals, social mores, codes of conduct and so forth. Simply put, "rites" also stem from "emotion", and are taken as precepts to shape the moral acts of human individuals. In a gregarious society, "rites" are adopted and exercised as social norms and ethical principles to coordinate human relationships. As regards the mind-heart of every human being, such "rites" are there to have a commanding influence upon one's "emotion" and specific "situation" altogether.

As a rule and over a long history, harmony has been recommended as an ideal paradigm of good governance in Chinese heritage, and justice has been worshiped as the most important foundation stone of good governance in the West. For example, Confucius celebrates harmony as the final objective of wise leadership. Aristotle respects justice as comprehensive of all other cardinal virtues. In reality, what is comparatively weaker in China now is persistently stronger in the West with respect to justice, public reason and "modern social ethics" overall. Noticeably, justice is most elementary in that it provides human society with an ontological basis with regard to its organization and administration alike. In the long course of human history, the vital role of justice has been ostensibly evinced and embraced ever since the milestone of the ancient Athenian polity and its healthy democracy. It has proved to be the keystone for both reciprocal

collaboration and the common good. Hence without an adequate exercise of justice, a human community could neither last long nor retain its order. Still, justice is not enough to ensure the efficacious management of human affairs in their entirety. For humans are both rational and emotional beings by nature. Their varied needs range from low to high, encompassing the physical, social, affective, cognitive, aesthetic and spiritual aspects. As ascertained in principle, justice is grounded on rationality and helps secure social order in particular; harmony is grounded on emotion and facilitates human affinity in essence. Both of them are desirable in light of the varied human needs. However, it follows that justice is to be taken up as the first priority to secure social order, and harmony is to be pursued afterwards as a *promis-de-bonheur* for the future of human society and the world alike.

In practice in the *status quo* of China, what is more than necessary first of all is to reinforce justice and apply it to harnessing the frequency of wrongdoings and consolidating the foundation of social order, especially in the rural regions across the country. In my view, it would be better to think about how to exercise justice before harmony in the present-day context. Otherwise, it will be less constructive than expected. If it is necessary to deploy the general guideline of harmony prior to the solid operation of social justice, then the possible outcome will be like building a castle on the sand, as well as creating obstacles on the path to justice-based social institutions and "modern social ethics". This is dramatically exemplified through the lessons gained from the large-scale experimentation of "constructing a harmonious society" launched in the past decade in China (Wang 2019, 131–34).

It is argued that Li seems to hold a paradoxical stance to justice on the one hand, and keeps himself in favour of harmony on the other hand. Thus he affirms the inevitable service of rationality-based justice in the scope of public reason and "modern social ethics". He even proceeds to identify justice as the determinant premise of approaching harmony. Yet he remains rather sceptical about rationality supremacy in the Western mentality. He never hesitates to criticize the negative and rampant aspects of instrumental rationality, and claims, implicitly or explicitly, that it is not enough to have rationality-based justice alone to cope with all human affairs in the most appropriate manner possible. In order to address this problem, he moves on to formulate a deliberate extension of his theory of emotion as substance, and develops an alternative to counterbalance rationality-oriented supremacy and justice-bound worship. He repeatedly proposes the conception of emotion-based harmony, and stakes out its unique role in the enrichment of human relationships and the construction of social symbiosis. As far as I have seen, Li thinks over all this with reference to his final purpose. That is, he tries to render the positive aspects of the Chinese

way of thinking and value system into an indispensable and complementary part of today's social ontology. Moreover, he takes it as a fruitful contribution to humankind at confrontation with varied challenges in human encounters. In short, he attempts to develop a holistic paradigm of human co-existence by virtue of transformational creation from a transcultural outlook.

Li's constant efforts in this regard are partly embodied in his pragmatic consideration of the interconnection between harmony and justice, as is more clearly expounded in his work from 2017. Here he affirms that harmony is higher than justice in view of the reciprocity of human relationships and the future of human society. But at the current stage of social reality, justice stays in the first priority as it bears a clear-cut distinction between right and wrong, and produces the virtues of equity and reasonability, among others. That is why harmony can neither substitute for nor manipulate justice, because harmony is only attainable on the basis of justice *par excellence*. However, harmony can be utilized as a principle to regulate an appropriate constitution [of "modern social ethics"], and attributed to educating people by morality in contrast with justice that is used to govern the state through rule of law (Li 2017, 49). Subsequently, Li goes further to clarify the point as follows: The link between harmony and justice is the same as that between the rule of law and rule by humans. Harmony can be considered only when justice has come into effect. Likewise, rule by humans can be deployed only when the rule of law has been carried out in practice. It could be rather dangerous to advocate harmony and rule by humans at a time when justice and the rule of law have not yet been actualized (ibid., 60). As for "rule by humans" in a positive sense, it is intended to be humane governance by wise and virtuous leadership, which has been glorified as a political ideal of "sageliness within and kingliness without" (*nei sheng wai wang*) in Confucianism. With regard to the potentially "dangerous" tendency, it is supposed that this approach might go astray so far as to interrupt or suspend the ongoing legal reform to modernize China, and eventually prompt a throwback to a semi-feudal past. To note in passing, what Li Zehou emphasizes is his constant concern for the "rule of law supplemented by human emotion" (Li 2010, 193).

Notwithstanding the explication given above, what haunts us again on this occasion are such queries as the following: why does "harmony" count so much in the time to come? What does it mean specifically to human becoming and social development? To what extent is it related to the "emotio-rational structure"? What "guiding service" is it referring to when compared with the social function of justice? How is it possible to apply it to human relationships and human-nature interactions? So on and so forth. Naturally, all this leads to the question of what "harmony" is in Li's philosophizing, and we will consider this below.

The Three Forms of Harmony

Reconsidering what John Rawls (1971) and Michael Sandel (2010) have argued about the modes and limits of justice, Li Zehou outlines his "philosophical ethics" with particular reference to the Confucian tradition. In contrast to the "common good" and the "good life" promoted by Sandel, Li himself champions three forms of harmony (文本), as follows:

> It pertains to the harmony of human relationships, the harmony of body and mind, and the harmony of Heaven and humankind (i.e. natural eco-environment and human race). They are associated with "emotio-rational structure" and "guanxi-ism" that serve to "regulate an appropriate constitution" of "modern social ethics". Moreover, they help maintain the "common good" and the "good life" that stand for the highest level and most fundamental dimension of the continuing human existence. They are therefore the "telos" itself. (Li 2010, 193)

To my understanding, the three forms of harmony hereby represent a critical necessity to improving the *status quo* of the human condition at confrontation with numerous challenges and crises, for instance, social fractures and political in-fights, psycho-cultural problems and suicide, global warming and eco-environmental damage, among many others. In addition, they provide an alternative framework that is not solely teleological in a theoretical sense, but also desirable in a pragmatic one. As for the two assumptions mentioned, the "emotio-rational structure" (*qing li jie gou*) and "guanxi-ism" (*guan xi zhu yi*), they are an important foundation of "Chinese religious morality" in classical Confucianism. In Li, this kind of morality can foster a regulative principle for an appropriate constitution of "modern social ethics" that is rationality-based, instrumentality-oriented, and utility-ridden by nature. Now leaving this topic for later examination, let us focus more on the three forms of harmony and their theoretical grounds.

In my observation, "the harmony of human relationships" can be seen as a remedy to resolve social fractures and political in-fights, "the harmony of body and soul" as a therapy to reduce psycho-cultural problems and suicide, and "the harmony of Heaven and humankind" a solution to global warming and eco-environmental damage. The three forms of harmony appear to engage in three domains: the societal, the personal and the eco-environmental.

First and foremost, let us look at the societal domain in light of "guanxi-ism" underlying Confucian heritage. The new coinage "guanxi-ism" can be well

rendered as "moral relationism", which conceives of human relationships as moral ones. As applied to the treatment of these relationships in complex social networks, it is deeply rooted in the Chinese mentality and social reality alike, and therefore adopted to contrast with the stereotyped usage of "collectivism" and "individualism" (Li 2017, 27). In short, "guanxi-ism" is emotional and affectionate in kind when directed to the "harmony of human relationships". Its origin can be traced back to the ancient culture of rites and music that was designed to govern the state and educate the people. As acknowledged in the past, the rites would be a comprehensive synthesis of laws, regulations, propriety rituals, social mores, moral codes and so on. Moreover, they would be a sophisticated system of tenets to set up class stratification and social stability. Some of the tenets still remain influential today. Some examples are the primordial hierarchy of "Heaven, Earth, ruler, ancestors and teachers", the "five human relationships" (*wu lun*) between "father and son, husband and wife, ruler and minister, elder and younger brothers, peers and friends", and the "ten moral obligations" (*shi yi*) demanding that

> the father be kind to the son; the son be filial to the father; the husband be gentle to the wife; the wife be obedient to the husband; the elder brother be friendly to the younger brother; the younger brother be deferential to the elder brother; the senior be generous to the junior; the junior be compliant with the senior; the ruler be humane to the subject; the subject be loyal to the ruler.

The primordial hierarchy is highlighted in terms of the "three bases" (*san ben*) entrusted to the rites proper. According to Xunzi,

> Heaven and Earth are the basis of life, the ancestors are the basis of the family, and rulers and teachers are the basis of order. If there were no Heaven and Earth, how could man be born? If there were no ancestors, how would the family come into being? If there were no rulers and teachers, how would order be brought about? If even one of these were lacking, there would be no safety for man. (Hsun Tzu 1963, 91)

Therefore, the rites advise people to serve the Heaven above and Earth below, respect their ancestors, and revere their rulers and teachers. Noticeably, the act to "serve the Heaven above and Earth below" calls for the virtue of piety, the act to "respect the ancestors" the virtue of filialness, and the act to "revere the rulers and teachers" the virtue of reverence. They are all emotion-based, indicating relational levels of social structure with a quasi-religious touch. Deliberately, Li

replaces "the rulers" by "the nation-state" that requires "the act to love" instead of "the act to revere" (Li 2010, 187–90).[5] This replacement is more suitable to modern people and social life, for "the rulers" (*jun*) denotes no other than a feudal legacy and historical era.

As it occurs to me, the "five human relationships" are extended from the "three bases". They form a more sophisticated social network. Respectively, the relationship between father and son is grounded on the virtues of kindness and filial piety, the relationship between husband and wife on the virtues of gentleness and obedience, the relationship between ruler and ministers on the virtues of politeness and devotion, the relationship between the senior and the junior on the virtues of generosity and compliance, and the relationship between peers and friends on the virtues of sincerity and trustworthiness. They are sustained by "human emotions" that are socialized and normalized. Accordingly, human individuals are living intimately within this "*guanxi*" (network of human relationships) without equality. Therein they discover and experience life-meaning, life-value and life-style. The "ten moral obligations" involve more people and more relationships. The scope is tremendously expanded to sustain the harmonious atmosphere in a large community. The virtues are multiplied but remain emotion-based and affection-oriented. They turn out to establish a kind of guanxi-ist ethics. If the "three bases", "five human relationships" and "ten moral obligations" are properly managed through emotional and virtuous bonds, the "harmony of human relationships" is to be effectively nurtured and secured. Even though the social structure or network is consisted in inequality amid family and societal members, it keeps a constant stress on harmony *per se*. According to Li, harmony is emotional. And it is only by means of harmony that the human relationships can truly continue and endure for long. The "ten moral obligations" help rationalize and normalize the physical *eros* of people, thus bringing an "emotio-rational structure" into the "human relationships" in a deontological and reciprocal manner. Naturally, this "emotio-rational structure" varies in accord with different sets of "human relationships", relationships that are apparently unequal but harmoniously coexistent. In short, Chinese guanxi-ist ethics is distinguished from both Greek virtue ethics and Rawls' "sense of justice", as both of these are premised by equality and individualism (Li 2017, 54–55).

Nevertheless, Confucianism upholds that the "harmony of human relationships" cannot be completely cultivated on a single track. In actuality, the culture of rites

5 The old hierarchy of "Heaven, Earth, rulers, ancestors and teachers" (*tian di jun qin shi*天地君亲师) is replaced by a new hierarchy of "Heaven, Earth, nation-state, ancestors and teachers" (*tian di guo qin shi* 天地国亲师). The new hierarchy is taken as part of Chinese religious morality. (see Li 2010, 187–90)

and music is characterized with a two-dimensional service. It is thus convinced that rites impose from without whereas music cultivates from within. Music entails harmony, for music comes from the inner being and originates in the emotions that have been evoked by external things. Then the harmony sought by music has multiple functions. For instance, it underlies the concrete examination of the emotions aroused by things, satisfies the human need for happiness or joyfulness, and facilitates the harmonious concomitance of human relationships for the sake of social order. For this reason,

> When music is performed in the ancestral temple of the ruler, and the ruler and his ministers, superiors and inferiors, listen to it together, there are none who are not filled with a spirit of harmonious reverence. When it is performed within the household, and father and sons, elder and younger brothers, listen to it together, there are none who are not filled with a spirit of harmonious kinship. And when it is performed in the community, and old people and young together listen to it, there are none who are not filled with a spirit of harmonious obedience. Hence music brings about complete unity and induces harmony. (Hsun Tzu 1963, 113)

Observably, the three kinds of spirit are endowed with the potential to harmonize human beings from all walks of life. In this regard, musical harmony is structurally similar to the "harmony of human relationships". The music education in Confucianism works complementarily with the rites education in order to produce harmony. This harmony, according to Li, is very much concerned with its actualization through human emotion. It is not only rational order, but also emotional logic, serving to retain both familial harmony and social harmony (Li 2017, 56–57).

As regards the personal sphere, the "harmony of body and mind" is cultural-cum-psychological on its own. It is largely dependent upon the "emotio-rational structure" that is furnished within human individuals. In Platonism, the body-mind dichotomy stays strong and persistent. Owing to its physical mortality and negative constraint, the body is conjectured as the prison of the mind whereas the mind is assumed to feature immortality and reincarnation according to the "Orphic-Pythagorean conglomerate" (Morgan 1999, 236). Conversely in Chinese tradition, the concept of body-mind oneness (*shen xin he yi*) is always approved of and highly celebrated despite the distinction between them. Such oneness implies body-mind concordance or harmony not only in a psychomotor sense, as is demonstrated in performing martial arts, but in a cultural-psychological sense, as is exposed through the development of "emotio-rational structure".

According to the Chinese mode of thought, the human body is allegorized as the fountainhead of physical desires for one's daily necessities, living conditions

and procreation, which may produce problems if not satisfied. The human mind is coupled with the human heart, which serves as the faculty for such cognitive activities as reasoning and thinking. When individuals are dominated by physical desires alone, they will become so greed-ridden and self-centred that they will see themselves but not any others in their own eyes. However, such desires can be enculturated into human emotions by means of human rationality and human culture. Then human emotions get rationalized, moralized or socialized in general, because people are rational, moral and social beings above all. When human emotions are cultivated to a sufficient degree, human individuals will become so considerate and thoughtful that they can see not only themselves but also many others from a reciprocal perspective. When such emotions are exalted to a noble degree, they will most likely become so selfless and altruistic that they will focus more on others than themselves. This process of transforming physical desires into human emotions is the remoulding of the "emotio-rational structure".

In Li's opinion, the "emotio-rational structure" is peculiar to human beings alone. It is complex on its own and underlies human nature or human psychology (Li 2016, 648). By the same token, human nature is not physical nature, but humanized nature as an outcome of human culture and human capacity. It is therefore as a matter of "emotio-rational structure" in principle. This structure that is hereby internalized in human nature coordinates human emotions, human capacity, and notions of good or evil (Li 2017, 64). This being the case, the remoulding of "emotio-rational structure" is no other than the building of human nature, because it determines the becoming of the human as human. Human nature is primarily tripartite, involving three interactive and inter-permeating dimensions known as the cognitive, emotional and volitional. The cognitive dimension is chiefly epistemological, the emotional dimension aesthetic, and the volitional dimension moral. They are subtly inter-related to different areas inside the human brain, usually functioning in varied modes, types and manners at distinct levels (ibid., 400).

As a result, these three dimensions lead to the growth of human capacity out of three components. The first is the "construction of reason (rationality)" (*li xing nei gou*) with reference to the epistemological power that enables humans to tackle numbers, logic and so forth. The second is the "solidification of reason" (*li xing ning ju*) with reference to will power that enables humans to behave properly. And the third is the "melting of reason" (*li xing rong hua*) with reference to aesthetic sensibility that enables humans to feel into the beautiful and find out the good and the true (Li 2010, 163). These three components are closely related to the complicated and interwoven connection between emotion and rationality, which in turn enhances the development of the "emotio-rational structure".

The "emotio-rational structure" of human individuals is regarded as the deep structure of Confucianism. It is a conscious and unconscious complex that mingles

the emotional and rational aspects of human nature into a complicated whole. The two aspects are therefore interacting, interweaving, and inter-permeating (Li 2017, 368). In Li Zehou, the methodology of remoulding the "emotio-rational structure" is chiefly based on a due consideration of "historical specifics" (*li shi ju ti*) and a good command of "proper measure" (*du de ba wo*). In contrast with the "rational supremacy", the methodology itself neither shares any sympathy with the abstract rational principle that is directly applied to all specific things and situations, nor does it agree with the ethical standards that originate from abstract rationality with so-called universal applicability (Li 2017, 25). As far as I can see, "historical specifics" vary from time to time as well as from situation to situation. They are related to the Chinese idea of emotions evoked by or experienced in specific situations. Hence there are far more specifics than universals in human life, culture, history, and practice. As regards the "proper measure", it is employed to do right things for particular reasons in specific situations. It is a kind of art, working to coordinate and procure an appropriate proportion of the key elements in order to achieve a good consequence. In this way, when it is applied to remoulding the "emotio-rational structure" of human individuals, for instance, it is prone to create a moderated "emotio-rational" synthesis, say, a harmonious integration of the emotional aspect and its rational counterpart. All this is presumed to make possible the "harmony of body and mind" mentioned above.

To extend the scope of our understanding in this regard, it is worth sparing a few minutes on the Platonic conception of justice with reference to harmony. Herein justice is practically acted out through the just person, and harmony is psychologically displayed through the harmonious personality. The argument is as follows:

> One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low and middle. He binds together those parts and any others may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act. And when he does anything, whether acquiring wealth, taking care of his body, engaging in politics, or in private contracts—in all of these, he believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and calls it so, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions. And he believes that the action that destroys this harmony is unjust, and calls it so, and regards the belief that oversees it as ignorance. (Plato 1997, 443c-e)

A surface reading of the above-cited passage may lead some people to take the just person as a harmonious being, and correspondingly, to perceive justice as a container of harmony. But this perception appears so ambiguous that it demands clarification at this point. With regard to justice, what threads through *Republic* is how to address and rectify the issue of justice as the most cardinal of all virtues concerning both the character building of the guardians and the good governance of the *kalipolis* as a beautiful city-state. In Plato, justice is essentially two-dimensional: psychological and political. In its psychological dimension, justice seems to be the most important craft of virtue as it includes all other key virtues, including courage, temperance and wisdom. It is principally directed towards one's own self for the sake of becoming a just citizen. In its political dimension, justice is by nature directed towards others involved in the enterprise of the community. It entails the most fundamental craft of ruling in the *kalipolis* and thus points to a regulative principle of the division of labour, a principle that enables everyone to do what he is good at without trespassing into other professions or trades. As hinted in the quote above, the craft of ruling is believed to procure an art of administration and ensure the social order. Teleologically, the craft of ruling and the craft of virtue seem to be distinct from one another, but in practice they are interrelated to some extent because they share something in common. That is, they "both have as their goal the happiness of the one on whom they work. The virtue conferred by the ruling craft is explicitly identified with happiness; the advantage conferred by the craft of virtue is also happiness" (Parry 1996, 91). Moreover, they both take the *psyche* as mind or soul to be their object in spite of their differences in dealing with certain desires.

The *psyche* as their object is no easy matter to handle due to its complicated formation. It therefore calls for harmony to assist them. In a specific formulation, at *Republic* (1997, 435c–441d), Plato reveals the three parts of the *psyche*: reason, appetite and *thymos*. Reason is the first part, associated with one's cognitive ability that is designed to learn the truth and wisdom as real knowledge. It is apt to calculate long-range consequences and consider what should be done or what actions to be taken. The appetite is the second part, and this does not calculate at all. It simply desires what it wants for the sake of immediate satisfaction. It is thus identified with desire or desires. More often than not, reason finds itself at odds with appetite. The *thymos* is the third part, which is usually termed as the spirit. It conventionally mirrors the character of Greek warriors and serves as an aggressive principle impelling one to adventure across rough seas or to fight bravely in a terrible battle. It is purposely made an ally of reason in its conflict with the appetite.

This being the case, there arises the need for harmony. In other words, Plato's tripartite *psyche* requires the role of harmony in order to coordinate and integrate the three parts into a harmonious unity. Otherwise, no craft of virtue could be

produced out of the conflicting parts within the *psyche*, not to speak of the craft of ruling pertaining to the good governance of the whole community. In plain language, if the appetite of the *psyche* wants what it wants as much as each member of the community wants what he or she wants, what will most likely happen to them all in the end? Rampant chaos or awful disorder for certain. Plato is highly aware of the classic conflict between the three parts as one of the fundamental issues of ethics in his worldview, and wishes to provide a resolution of the conflict with his account of virtue. Thus he strongly suggests that the reason do its job to guide the appetite and ally itself with the *thymos*. For reason is related to cognitive ability and knows the Idea or Form of justice as the paradigm of proportion and harmony. Having this knowledge, reason can find out that the proper arrangement of the *psyche* under its guidance is the one that not merely represents the authentic image of the Idea of justice, but also allows each of the three parts to fulfil its appropriate service. In order to attain such objectives, Plato resorts to the notion and function of harmony (*harmonias*) to synthesize (*synarmosanta*) all the three parts of the psyche by having them fit together in unison (*sōphrona kai hērmosmenon*) (Plato 1963, 443b–444c). By so doing, a person is able to "bind together those parts" or integrate the three parts into a whole, "put himself in order," and "become entirely one, moderate and harmonious". In addition, one is able to realize the value of being just in the social context. As noted at the end of Book IV of *Republic,* Plato comes along with his spokesperson Socrates to put an emphasis on the value of justice in the *psyche* (ibid., 435b–448e). He reconfirms that justice is valuable in itself for human individuals and in its consequences for the social community. In order to illustrate this, he goes on to analogize the *psyche* to the *polis* by portraying the former as having the same parts as the latter, the same structure, and the same virtues. This eventually leads to class stratification, the division of labour and social ethics depicted in *Republic*.

In the final analysis, the Platonic conception of justice pertains to the craft of virtue and the craft of ruling in the main. The former is mostly psychological whereas the latter political. However, both of them are also ethical or moral. As for the Platonic notion of harmony, it is functionally psychological as is deployed to synthesize the partition of the *psyche* into a harmonious whole under the guidance of reason. On this account, justice cannot be perceived as the container of harmony. Instead, it can be understood as the teleological fruit of harmony as a medium to make the three parts fit together.

Now turning back to the foregoing citation for a second reflection, we can see that justice is the most distinguished craft of virtue and craft of ruling embodied in the person who is just in the pure sense of this term. Being just as such, he is so fair-minded and righteous that he keeps himself in order and harmonizes his own tripartite *psyche*. For example, he works as a musician who harmonizes

the three parts of his *psyche* in either the individual or the social context. Under such circumstances, he seems to bear a sort of "emotio-rational structure" inside himself since the appetite and the spirit are attributed to the emotional category in contrast to its rational counterpart. Nevertheless, in Plato, the rational category is identified with the leading element of controlling whereas the appetite and spirit are identified with the subordinate elements of being controlled. This means the three parts have no equal footing at all. The harmonization of them is accordingly defined as "a natural relation of control and being controlled" in Plato's terminology.

Then, in Li Zehou, the "emotio-rational structure" indicates a kind of causal relation in one sense, and in the other the emotional and rational are conceived to be synthetic or inseparable, as though they share an equal footing and interdependent connection. When it comes to the "harmony of body and mind" in Li, it is apparently in opposition to the "dichotomy of body and mind (soul)" in Plato. The former emphasizes the oneness between body and mind as it threads through the Chinese heritage of personal cultivation, but the latter denounces the body as "the prison of the mind", as it exists in the Hellenic tradition of philosophical learning. However, the Platonic mode of thought is more dialectical than straightforward in most cases. In his empirical elucidation, for instance, Plato compares the way of producing justice with that of producing health, and draws out the resemblance between them. In order to produce justice, it is necessary to establish the three parts of the *psyche* in "a natural relation of control and being controlled"; in order to produce health, it is necessary to establish the components of the body in "a natural relation of control and being controlled" (Plato 1963, 444d-e). Even though he distinguishes between the two teleological pursuits, he seems to know that they enlighten each other as though a complementary link arises from the harmonization of the parts of the *psyche* and the harmonization of the components of the body. Yet, one must remember that the two types of harmonization are definitely characterized by "a natural relation of control and being controlled".

Now let us turn to the eco-environmental realm. The "harmony of Heaven and humankind" is conceptually hidden in the "oneness between Heaven and human" (*tian ren he yi*). In Chinese heritage, the notion of Heaven is used for the Heaven and Earth, cosmos, universe, nature, Heavenly Dao or principle. Nowadays it is extended to cover a most important item of natural eco-environment in particular, because people are growing more and more conscious of global warming and thus the need for eco-environmental protection for the sake of all beings on this planet.

The "harmony of Heaven and humankind" points to the harmonious coordination of the human-nature relationship, which leads to taking care of nature and a better quality of life for all people in its entirety. According to Li, it involves an "affective view of the cosmos" (*you qing yu zhou guan*) in contrast to

the "scientific view of the cosmos" (Li 2016, 393). This view denotes a positive stance to the physical world, human life and human existence. It therefore links the human body and mind-heart with natural things in an analogical way. Accordingly, it tends to affirm, emphasize and sublimate the physical needs and human emotions of rational human beings, but not strive to have the soul free from the body and fly up to the Heaven, as is expected in Christianity (Li 2017, 62). As proposed in Confucianism, the meaning of life lies in human affairs. In order to find such meaning, humans must live between Heaven and Earth (the cosmos or nature). It is no easy matter for humans to live under such circumstances, because to live often means to struggle and even fight against endless difficulties and hardships of all conceivable kinds. On this account, Confucianism gives credit for the meaning of human life in terms of the affective view of the sublime and eternal Cosmos. Actually, the cosmos is extra-emotional and nature is neutral as well. Yet, Confucianism claims that the "greatest virtue of Heaven and Earth is to beget life" (*tian di zhi da de yue sheng*), "humaneness is the heart of heaven" (*ren, tian xin ye*), and "the action of Heaven is strong and dynamic; in the same manner, the noble man never ceases to strengthen himself" (*tian xing jian, jun zi yi zixiang bu xi*). "Heaven and Earth" or "Heaven" alone here denotes the cosmos or nature. "To beget life" means to give birth to all beings and things alike. This capacity of the cosmos is respected as the "greatest virtue" identified with "humaneness or benevolence". Apparently, such virtue is affective in essence. It serves not merely to make "human life" worthwhile in light of the pan-affective cosmic, but also to wrap up the cosmos in warm and affirmative human love (Li 2016, 393). Hence humans are encouraged to pursue the full development of their own natures and help other fellow beings to do the same. Moreover, they are advised to know and assist the transforming and nourishing operations of Heaven and Earth. By so doing, they may with Heaven and Earth form a ternion.[6] By "ternion" it is meant that the three entities of Heaven, Earth and humankind are united into one. It is the same with the "harmony of Heaven and humankind", when "Heaven" is identified with Heaven and Earth. Then, in an eco-environmental sense, it requires both relevant consciousness and concrete action on the part of humans to look after the myriad things and protect the eco-environment for all people.

What Matters Behind Them?

Pragmatically speaking, what matters behind the three forms of harmony? That is to say, what facilitates their attainability after all? In Li Zehou's opinion it is the

6 *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong*). 1992. In *The Four Books,* translated by James Legge, 22(49), 32 (59). Changsha: Hunan Press.

"Chinese religious morality". The morality of this kind comprises the four given notions, namely the primordial hierarchy, "guanxi-ism", "emotio-rational structure" and "affective view of the cosmos". In addition, it involves more elements such as the "concordant coexistence of humankind with the cosmos" and "celestial people", among others.

The "concordant coexistence of humankind with the cosmos" (*ren yu zhou xie tong gong zai*) (Li 2017, 142) is occasionally shortened to the "coexistence of humankind with the cosmos" (*ren he yu zhou gong zai*) in Li' usage (Li 2005, 53). It is an extension of the "affective view of the cosmos", working towards the becoming of the human and the preserving of nature in a concomitant mode. Genetically, it is drawn from the conventional idea of Heaven-and-Human Oneness (*tian ren he yi*) that signifies the interdependence between the two sides. Philosophically, it is considered to be a metaphysical assumption with reference to the "thing in itself". Without this assumption, there is neither the source of perception-based experience nor the cause of form-based power and feeling. The cosmos itself is conducive to an unknown object *a priori*, whereas the man-made operational and symbolic system is creating a cognitive subject *a priori*. Both are unified on the basis of human praxis from the outlook of historical ontology. By means of "illuminating the true through the beautiful" and "free intuition", human beings manage to glimpse the mysteries of the cosmos, and thus locate a position for their becoming therein. Thanks to their active life saturated with contingency and spontaneity, they proceed to make possible their communication with the cosmos. They therefore find it necessary to have a metaphysical hypothesis of the "thing in itself" in the name of "physical concordance and coexistence of humankind with the cosmos". This hypothesis will change into an indispensable premise that enables people to bestow kinds of order to the cosmos (Li 2005, 53–54). Notwithstanding the fact that "kinds of order" vary historically, culturally and conceptually, they are all inclined to acknowledge the dynamic, constant, and significant interaction between human beings and the myriad things within the cosmos as a whole. In this respect, they seem to manifest a principle of symbiosis in a physical and metaphysical sense.

The "celestial people" *(tian min*) are proposed as the supreme model of human becoming in Mencius. They are literally referred to "those who first apprehend the principles and then instruct those who are slower to do so" (Mencius 1992, 9.7). Furthermore, they are commissioned to shoulder a sense of mission for their own. They will "promote the principles throughout the world, and proceed persistently to carry them out" (ibid., 13.19). The "principles" in this case stand for either the "Heavenly principles" or "moral principles". According to Mencius, the "celestial people" are virtuous and noble, even higher than the "great men" (*da ren*), and ready to "serve Heaven" (*shi tian*) by fulfilling their inborn nature

and looking after the myriad things. Then, from a pragmatic viewpoint, Mencius seems to identify them with those who are warm-hearted towards their fellow beings and the myriad things under Heaven. In other words, they would devote themselves to the ideal of "loving humans and treasuring things" (*ren min er ai wu*) (ibid., 13.45). "Loving people" (*ren min*) is the result of extending affection from one's kin relatives to other community members in general. "Treasuring things" (*ai wu*) signifies the taking care of all things according to the law of reciprocity. For instance,

> If the farming seasons are not interfered with, the grain will be more than can be eaten. If close nets are not allowed to enter the pools and ponds, the fishes and turtles will be more than can be consumed. If the axes and bills enter the hills and forests only at the proper time, the wood and timber will be more than can be used. (Mencius 1992, 1.4)

Consequently, things are protected and multiplied at the same time, and people are, in turn, enabled to enjoy sufficient means and live a reasonably good life. Otherwise, it would bring about a detrimental outcome of abusing the natural resources and depriving Nature of its generative capacity. This is often metaphorically described in Chinese as though a greedy farmer kills the hen for its eggs.

Then, one may wonder what other contribution the "Chinese religious morality" can make to the human condition at large? In Li's opinion, it elicits a kind of "transformational creation" that aims to develop a new style of ethics and politico-economic institution. It can be therefore deployed as a regulative principle, a principle that will be applied to regulating or adjusting an appropriate construction of "modern social ethics" and politico-economic institution at its best. All this is to be tried first in China, and then promoted gradually across the globe by adapting it to meeting the needs of humankind in general (Li 2016, 140–41). In other words, it can be employed to upgrade "the application of Chinese learning" (*zhong xue wei yong*) on the one hand, and to impact "the substance of Western learning" (*xi xue wei ti*) on the other.

Teleologically, what Li Zehou tries to pursue is at least three-dimensional along his line of thought. First of all, he conceives religious morality as a "regulative principle", and "modern social ethics" as a "constitutive principle". Religious morality from Chinese sources consists in the leading notions given above, and concerns "the three forms of harmony". In contrast, "modern social ethics" from the Western sources is primarily composed of liberty, equality, human rights and democracy, and principally preoccupied with the efficiency of justice (Li 2016, 391; Li 2017, 63; Li 2010, 33, 190). Pragmatically, "Chinese religious morality" is aligned with the "proper measure" (*du*) as a practical art

and the "emotional root" (*qing ben ti*) as its philosophical basis. When utilized as a "regulative principle", it can serve to "regulate an appropriate constitution" of "modern social ethics".

Clearly, social life today relies on a diversity of rules from the warehouse of "modern social ethics", legal codes, formal justice, individualism, utilitarianism, liberalism, and public reason that upholds the precept of "right prior to the good". These rules are not to be put into practice in any abstract and mechanical fashion. Otherwise, they would either spur something harmful or plunge social encounters into jeopardy. For this reason, they should be introduced into social life with due consideration of specific situations, and modified by "Chinese religious morality" from classical Confucianism. They may help reduce the negative effects caused by rigid rules, because they pay more heed to harmony than to any other values. If "Chinese religious morality" can be adaptable to different circumstances across the world, I think it fairly possible to enrich global moral standards in favour of "transnational beneficence". According to Richard W. Miller, the real demands of transnational beneficence go hand in hand with the moral demands of transnational interaction and transnational responsibility. These demands could not be met without such conditions as mutual reliance, mutual trust, equal respect for all and appreciating the equal worth of everyone's life. Beneath such conditions are partly the principles of sympathy and sacrifice. Faced with these two principles, genuine practitioners should ground the former in the latter. By so doing, they can make the most of the merits of the two principles so as to foster great concern for and responsiveness to those in need (Miller 2010, 6, 17–18, 23–25). However, there are limits in this moral field, and legal protection is therefore indispensable in most cases, because "the implementation of demands for beneficence by laws rather than private initiative protects responsible people from comprehensive defeat by those who do not live up to their own duties of beneficence" (ibid., 212).

In the second place, "Chinese religious morality" can help build up a humanized world (*ren xing hua shi jie*) that features harmonious interaction and emotion-reason synthesis (*qing li jiao rong*) amid human beings and their relationships. This humanized world parallels the thing-in-itself world (*wu zi ti shi jie*) that features human-nature coexistence and rational mystery (*li xing shen mi*). As observed in current social life, human relationships are becoming increasingly thin, like the rare air at high altitudes. This phenomenon is rather universal, as a consequence of excessive individualism and inadequate compassion. Fortunately, the Confucian "guanxi-ism" can play a crucial role in this regard. With a reciprocal concern for personal lives, human relationships and family-like climate in communities, it is possible to have social encounters and human affections interwoven to a sophisticated degree. It can therefore be implemented to rebalance rampant individualism

when used as a principle to regulate the proper construction of "modern social ethics", and provide emotional support to public reason along with the rationalized social order. In short, Confucian "guanxi-ism" is both moral and affective concurrently. It works to overlap and reinforce the emotional basis of social ethics. Naturally, it cannot evade contradictions and even conflicts between the two arenas. It needs therefore to be analysed and treated in accord with the specific situations or contexts (Li 2017, 58–62).

Finally, the "Chinese religious morality" is emotion-based and humanity-oriented, but not rationality-denying at all. It calls for a moderated emotio-rational synthesis in praxis. On this account, it can be employed to counterbalance the excess of instrumental rationality in the Western mainstream. As is often detected in the problematic human condition and social life of today, the excess of instrumental rationality is utility-directed and self-interested in most cases. It remains rather detrimental to human relationships and social interactions altogether. Hence what is greatly needed is an alternative remedy with reference to the "Chinese religious morality" in general, and moderated emotio-rational synthesis in particular.

Plausible as this might be as a theoretical vision, it is demanding in practice, from my observation. The prerequisite is none other than justice on which "modern social ethics" is founded, because the priority of the right over the good cannot be passed over at all. In present-day China, this ethics is not solidly established such that there is an occasional violation of civil rights and duties. This being true, the Chinese religious morality cannot work as a regulative principle in an adequate sense, even though the moral sense is deeply rooted in the Chinese mentality. Hence I share some sympathy with Rawls' conception of "justice as fairness". For it is related to the original position of equality and the traditional theory of the social contract. Characteristically, according to Rawls,

> Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. … Therefore, in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests. … an injustice is tolerable only when it is necessary to avoid an even greater injustice. Being first virtues of human activities, truth and justice are uncompromising. (Rawls 1971, 3–4)

Moreover, in practice justice involves a series of leading principles. Some of them include, for example, the rule of law to constitute a well-ordered society, democratic equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties, and the institutional principle of fair opportunity for personal development, among others. In short, justice is social justice by nature. As the most cardinal virtue of social institutions, it entails the most decisive way in which "the major institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation" (Rawls 1971, 7). All this turns out to be critical for the sake of social development and legislative reform in China.

However, when it comes to the construction of a just society in the full sense of this term, it is not sufficient to confine the concept of justice to political discourse in terms of utilitarian and liberal perspectives alone. The utilitarian approach conceives justice as maximizing utility or welfare. However, it has two defects: First, it makes justice and rights a matter of calculation instead of principle; and second, it flattens all human goods and takes no account of their qualitative differences by translating them into a single, uniform measure of value (Sandel 2010, 260). As for the liberal approach, it perceives justice as respecting freedom of choice, and thus it takes rights seriously and insists that justice is more than calculation. But it tends to accept people's preferences as they are, and not to require us to question or challenge the preferences or desires brought to public life. According to the freedom-based theories, "the moral worth of the ends we pursue, the meaning and significance of the lives we lead, and the quality and character of the common life we share all lie beyond the domain of justice" (ibid., 260–61). Hence it calls for a third approach to deliberating about justice by taking into due consideration of how a just society is associated and interacts with the cultivation of virtue and the common good. This leads to the robust position of Michael Sandel. To his mind,

> a just society can't be achieved simply by maximizing utility or by securing freedom of choice. To achieve a just society we have to reason together about the meaning of the good life, and to create a public culture hospitable to the disagreements that will inevitably arise. … Justice is inescapably judgmental … questions of justice are bound up with competing notions of honor and virtue, pride and recognition. Justice is not only about the right way to distribute things. It is also about the right way to value things. (ibid., 261)

This being the case, the political discourse of liberal neutrality needs to be compensated for or complemented by moral and religious judgments with reference to the civic virtues for character building, and the common good for the good life. Positively speaking, this communitarian approach is assumed to help people to go beyond "the complacent way of life" embroiled in self-satisfaction and material

preoccupations, and to embrace a public life of larger purpose that is to be sustained by political rights, moral and spiritual aspiration, among others. Negatively speaking, in Sandel's opinion,

> the attempt to detach arguments about justice and rights from arguments about the good life is mistaken for two reasons: First, it is not always possible to decide questions of justice and rights without resolving substantive moral questions; and second, even where it's possible, it may not be desirable. (ibid., 251)

And on this account, he proceeds to arrive at this conclusion: "A politics of moral engagement is not only a more inspiring ideal than a politics of avoidance. It is also a more promising basis for a just society." (ibid., 269)

Taking Sandel's stance of justice as a whole, I find it to some extent a modern echo of Aristotle's voice. Sandel himself is inclined not only to emphasize the connection between distributive justice and the common good, but to insist on the teleological and honorific aspects of justice. Moreover, he reveals the primary cause of the "impoverished public discourse" that is "lurching from one news cycle to the next, preoccupied with the scandalous, the sensational, and the trivial" (ibid., 268). Sure enough, the prevailing surface reading of such discourse serves to create a kind of social ambiance, which will in turn sway, confuse, dominate, and even distort the public opinion, if not the public reason, under certain circumstances.

Noticeably, in this respect Li Zehou shares some sympathy with Sandel, for both of them address the question of justice from political, teleological, moral and religious perspectives at once. What rounds their viewpoints out is their tendency to take justice as the means for an ends instead of the other way round. In addition, they maintain that the principles of justice are practically fundamental, but not enough, to attain the final *telos*. They therefore propose the complementary or regulative principles of moral and religious judgments in order to secure a complete vista of a just society in search of the common good for the good life. Quite distinctively, Li steps forward along the Confucian line of thought against the background of East-West meeting, and Sandel goes ahead along the Aristotelian line of thought against the background of American *status quo*. In spite of that, Li differs from Sandel in his anthropo-historical ontology. In Li, people are historical beings, and human nature is the outcome of human culture. As the fruition in part of human culture, morality or ethics not merely points to the codes or mores about what one ought to do, but also to the emotion-rational structure and cultural-psychological formation of what one should become. When applied to human practice in the social domain, the ontology will have an impact upon the framework or organization of social institutions.

A Closing Remark

To sum up, the proposition of "harmony higher than justice" is a hierarchical consideration instead of value assessment. Harmony is preconditioned by justice in principle, and thus exemplified in the three forms of harmony that are lined with the "Chinese religious morality". Within the framework of Li Zehou's "philosophical ethics" (Li 2017, 63), morality as such is schemed to "regulate an appropriate constitution" of "modern social ethics". That is, it resorts to emotion and faith so as to adjust the cold reasoning, legal rigidity, rampant individualism and calculated utilitarianism that underlie such ethics. However, they can neither replace nor determine one another. They are conducive to the main content of "psychological substance" that resembles "cultural-psychological formation". As a matter of fact, Li uses these two terms ("psychological substance" and "cultural-psychological formation") interchangeably, and confirms their equivalent identity on some occasions. For instance, the "cultural-psychological formation" is peculiar to humans alone, and identified with the "psychological substance" from a philosophical perspective. On this account, what is attributed to the human race (as a historical whole) is sedimented into human individuals; what is rational is sedimented into what is perceptual; what is social is sedimented into what is natural. At the same time, the originally animal faculties that *homo sapiens* used to have are already humanized, which means the natural psychological formation has been transformed into its human counterpart. The process of sedimentation results from the construction of human nature. It lies in fact in the "humanization of internal nature", "cultural-psychological formation", and "psychological substance". These terms bear the same content but different names, for they are related to the three spheres known as the cognitive (logical), volitional (ethical), and emotional (aesthetic) (Li 2016, 475).

In Li's ethics we are exposed to such concepts as "philosophical ethics", "philosophical psychology", "psychological substance" and "ethical substance", among others. Then, there arise two issues: one is about the connection between the "philosophical ethics" and the "philosophical psychology", and the other about the linkage between the "psychological substance" and "ethical substance". In order to better understand these, two quotes are offered here for reference:

> The theory of "humanization of the inner nature" results from the synthesis of the "anthropo-historical ontology" with Chinese classical Confucianism. It strives for the "supreme wisdom of the golden mean". First of all, it takes the Kantian absolutism of practical reason (e.g. categorical imperatives) as a foundation stone for the construction of human ethical substance (*lun li ben ti*), and then proceeds to specifying it into the remoulding of human "cultural-psychological formation". What is meant

> by "psychological" herein is a philosophical assumption instead of a positivistic study of empirical science. Secondly, it helps inculcate the emotionality of "humaneness" from Chinese Confucianism into **the ethical substance** through psychological channel, and facilitates the "transcendental" reason to develop a possibility of empirical operation. In other words, it pertains to "pragmatic reason" instead. Thirdly, it provides a theoretical foundation for a relevant distinction between "religious morality" and "social ethics". This theory may be named "philosophical psychology" or "transcendental psychology". (Li 2010, 14–15)[7]

> The religious morality bears two wings: one is the Confucian notion of "making one's home in a sense of spiritual belonging", and the other is the Western idea of "ultimate concern". The morality of this kind is used to "regulate the appropriate constitution" of "modern social ethics". Moreover, it thus serves to bring body, desire, personal interests and public reason back to emotion and feeling, and enables human beings to move from the empty concept of man as purpose (Kant) and the empty idea of man as *Dasein* (Heidegger) and step into the concrete and specific human beings in the human world that is saturated with a variety of rich, complex and detailed emotional settings. It requires an intellectual digestion of Kant, Marx and Heidegger with the help of Confucius, and strives to approach the global centre. This is what the anthropo-historical ontology explores. (Li 2010, 195)

To my mind, Li's "philosophical ethics" seems to overlap with his "philosophical psychology". It is the same case with the "psychological substance" and "ethical substance". Even though they all appear to be notionally distinctive, they remain functionally interrelated in search of similar objectives. Moreover, they turn out to be a matter of ontology related to the becoming of human perfection or the tendency of human fulfilment. They thus pertain to the investigation of "anthropo-historical ontology" that provides a bigger umbrella and covers a life-long mission in Li's philosophizing.

7 The statement is made available in Li's essay on "The Humanization of the Inner Nature" delivered in 1999.

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Li Zehou's "Harmony is Higher than Justice": Context and a Collaborative Future*

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Abstract

In this paper I will delve into Li Zehou's idea that "harmony is higher than justice (*hexie gaoyu zhengyi* 和諧高於正義)". Firstly, I will situate this proposal within the context of the contemporary debate on harmony and justice in Western and Chinese traditions. The position Li holds generally belongs to those who see justice and harmony as representative of a West-East difference. However, it can be developed to promote a more nuanced understanding. After giving due consideration, brief though it must be, to his argument, I will sketch some of the other major views on the relationship between harmony and justice, providing a critique from Li's perspective. In the final section I seek to expand on Li's theory by outlining a more collaborative path for thinking about harmony and justice.

Keywords: Li Zehou, ethics, harmony, justice

Li Zehoujeva ideja »harmonija je višja od pravičnosti«: kontekst in kolaborativna prihodnost

Izvleček

V pričujočem članku avtor obravnava Li Zehoujevo idejo o tem, da je »harmonija višja od pravičnosti (*hexie gaoyu zhengyi* 和諧高於正義)«. To predpostavko najprej umesti v kontekst sodobnih razprav o harmoniji in pravičnosti znotraj zahodnih in kitajskih tradicij. Na splošno spada Lijeva pozicija med tiste, za katere vprašanje o pravičnosti in harmoniji odraža razlike med vzhodom in zahodom. Vendar pa jo je mogoče obravnavati tudi v okviru bolj niansiranega razumevanja. Po krajši obravnavi tega argumenta avtor skicira nekatera druga osrednja razumevanja razmerja med harmonijo in pravičnostjo ter predstavi Lijevo kritiko le-teh. V zaključnem delu avtor poskuša nadgraditi oziroma razširiti Lijevo teorijo s pomočjo vzpostavitve bolj kolaborativne metode razmišljanja o harmoniji in pravičnosti.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, etika, harmonija, pravičnost

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Introduction: Appreciating Harmony and Justice

In recent years there has been a growing trend for comparative studies on "harmony" and "justice" in philosophical and political circles. Broadly speaking, there are two camps in these discussions. Firstly, there are those, such as Li Zehou 李澤厚 (2014), Henry Rosemont (1988), and Roger Ames (2011), who contend that we can use these concepts to distinguish between general trends in Western and Chinese philosophical discourses writ large. Secondly, there are those, such as Huang Yushun 黃玉順 (2013; 2015) and Erin Cline (2013),[1] who find theories or "senses" of justice in both traditions—and similarly some scholars, including Li Chenyang (2014) and Yu Jiyuan (2016), who see appreciations of harmony and justice in both traditions. Thus, harmony and justice are often used to either parse out the differences between these traditions, or as evidence of some commonality between them. However, a third perspective can be introduced. Li Zehou's proposal that "harmony is higher than justice" is particularly conducive to developing an alternative "collaborative" view on the relationship between the two notions—one that goes beyond both camps, including Li Zehou's own classifications.

At their extremes, harmony and justice could hardly be more dissimilar. A naïve take on harmony sees it as "innocence" or "consistency." As Li Chenyang (2014) argues, one version of this is represented in Max Weber's (1951) and Martha Nussbaum's (1990) critical presentations, where harmony is coupled with sameness or identity and eschews any divergences.[2] Everything matches a pre-determined order, which neutralizes the very possibility, and reality, of conflict. Similarly, the extremes of justice—as demonstrated by Michael Sandel (1982) and Li Zehou's (2014) respective criticisms of John Rawls and others—are overly reliant on adhering to abstract principles, prioritizing reason at the expense of emotional considerations, and a conception of the person devoid of concrete ties to communities and others. While these extreme versions of harmony and justice are not necessarily juxtaposed, they are decidedly distinct. But as we move either harmony or justice into the practical sphere, or when critics or proponents of either talk about their actual implementation, we often find that the differences between the two begin to blur and dissolve. In other words, harmony and justice tend to share more in common in actual practice than in their theoretical accounts. Here their respective dissimilarities read more like nuanced emphases

1 Huang Yushun and Erin Cline only represent a small number of scholars who have written on justice in early Chinese philosophy. Their works, which will be discussed below, are the most recent monographs on this topic. However, there are many others who have also addressed this issue. For example, Cline points out distinctive arguments for early Confucian notions of justice in the works of Randall Peerenboom, Alan Fox, Xunwu Chen 陳勛武, Yang Xiao 蕭陽, and Ruiping Fan 范瑞平 (Cline 2013, 16–18).

2 For more on this, see Li Chenyang 2014.

rather than stark discrepancies. One way of making sense of the complex relationship between justice and harmony involves understanding their historical developments, and envisioning their ideal relationship. Li Zehou's reading seems to involve this twofold task. While suggesting that all moral principles are products of historical trends, Li Zehou proposes the idea that "harmony is higher than justice" as a way towards thinking about a more collaborative interaction between the two notions. Even though Li himself uses harmony and justice as ideal types for the Chinese and Western philosophical traditions, his proposal opens up the possibility of symbiosis.

In what follows I will offer a detailed account of Li Zehou's idea that "harmony is higher than justice", situating it within the context of the abovementioned debate. Though generally understood as belonging to those who see justice and harmony as points of difference between Western and Eastern thought, Li Zehou seems to promote a more nuanced understanding, which reveals an inherent connectivity and complementary relationship between the two notions. After briefly presenting Li Zehou's argument, I will provide a summary of some of the other major views on the relationship between harmony and justice, examining them critically from Li Zehou's standpoint. In the final section, building upon Li Zehou's theory, I will outline a more collaborative path for thinking about harmony and justice. I will attempt to demonstrate that, rather than comparing or contrasting the two notions, taking a collaborative perspective enables and points out the need for harmony and justice to function as mutually informative and corrective. When the two are viewed as integrated we may actually gain a much richer appreciation of not only the comparison of Chinese and Western philosophies, but of ethics, morality, and order as such.

Harmony *versus* Justice

In this section I will sketch the discussions given by three proponents of the argument that harmony and justice are critically dissimilar notions—that early Confucian thought focuses mainly on harmony as opposed to justice, and that the emphasis in the Western tradition is exactly the opposite. As mentioned above, I will outline the relevant works of Henry Rosemont and Roger Ames, before turning to Li Zehou's idea that "harmony is higher than justice". Here is worth acknowledging that the lack of any lexical equivalent to "justice" in early Chinese has been widely noted.[3] Indeed, some have suggested that the modern translations "*zhengyi* 正義"

3 For an excellent discussion on this, reviewing thinkers such as Randell Peerenboom, Alan Fox, Xunwu Chen, Yang Xiao, Ruiping Fan, Henry Rosemont, Roger Ames, Brian Van Norden and others, see Cline 2013, 8–18.

and "*gongzheng* 公正" have more to offer for theories of justice as they are similar yet alternative notions. This issue will not be addressed at length here.[4] Below I will focus instead on how scholars have dealt with conceptions of harmony and justice as distinguishing features of Chinese and Western philosophical traditions.

Henry Rosemont and Roger Ames have long been outspoken critics of any attempt to read (overly) Western concepts and vocabulary into classical Chinese thought—perhaps even to an extreme. Their general position, and reason for holding this view, is summarized by Rosemont: "to learn not simply about, but *from* other cultures", which means "we must endeavor to let their thinkers speak to us as much as possible in their terms, not ours". (Rosemont 2015, 27) Rosemont further extends this position in a provocative argument:

> the only way it can be maintained that a particular concept was held by an author is to find a term expressing that concept in his text. Thus we cannot say so-and-so had a "theory of X", or that he "espoused X principles", if there is no X in the lexicon of the language in which the author wrote. (Rosemont 1988, 41)

According to Erin Cline, who also refers to this quote and to Rosemont's claim that there is no semantic equivalent for justice, Rosemont "maintains that without a term for 'justice' in classical Chinese, we cannot show that the concept of justice exists in classical Confucian thought" (Cline 2013, 11). Indeed, in his most recent book Rosemont mentions justice at the top of his list for topics that might inhibit us from understanding Chinese texts "*in their own terms*" (Rosemont 2015, 5). Cline's use of the word "concept" is quite accurate here. For Rosemont would likely agree that there is no "concept" of justice in early Chinese texts—however we should not assume that this equals a lack of any *appreciation* for justice. In other words, for Rosemont, the Western and Chinese traditions differ in that the former has a concept of justice, and the latter does not. However, this does not necessarily imply that there is no conception or sense of justice in the latter.[5]

4 Li Zehou and Yang Guorong 杨国荣 have both suggested that *zhengyi* 正義 and *gongzheng* 公正 are separate concepts, neither of which are fully in line with modern notions of justice. According to Li Zehou *gongzheng* is more closely related to public "consulting" (*xieshang* 協商) in establishing "consensus" (*gongshi* 共识), and *zhengyi* has to do with "natural principles" (*tianli* 天理) and "argumentation" (*liyi* 理義) (Li Zehou 2015, 7). Li Zehou adds that "*gongzheng* has more to do with reason, whereas *zhengyi* includes more emotional elements" (ibid., 8). Yang argues that "the cognate *gongzheng* often refers to the values of *gong* and *zheng*" which he defines as "transcending individuality and privacy (*si* 私)" and "integrity, fairness, and appropriateness" respectively (Yang 2014, 215). Though it is well worth looking at the way the uniquely Chinese notions of *gongzheng* and *zhengyi* can contribute to discussions of justice, it falls outside the scope of this paper.

5 Here I am loosely referring to Rawls's distinction between a "concept of justice" and a "conception of justice". For Rawls the general difference is that the concept of justice refers to an actual theory,

Since justice is not a major focus of Rosemont's studies, it is perhaps best to turn to his long-time friend and collaborator, Roger Ames. Both Rosemont and Ames share in finding the Chinese and Western traditions different in terms of lacking and having a specific concept of justice. However, they do not suggest there is nothing similar to "justice" in Confucian texts. Indeed, there is certainly sufficient room here for appreciating the values associated with theories of justice in a different way—one which begins with respecting concrete experience as fundamental for all moral and ethical claims. In other words, we can derive some Confucian understandings of something like "justice", even though they are decidedly dissimilar from the theories of justice commonly found in Western traditions. Ames writes,

> And the notion of justice—rather than being an appeal to abstract principles to enforce a blind impartiality that requires all particular differences to be set aside and all persons be treated equally—references the complex, creative process of achieving what is most appropriate in the specific, usually inequitable relations and situations that locate us within family and community. The resolutely hierarchical and dynamic pattern of the human experience that begins in family relations is going to have to be included in the equation that expresses *a Confucian notion of justice*. Such a Confucian understanding of freedom, equality, and justice, without deploying such terms specifically, is nested in the concrete project of achieving consummate conduct (*ren*) by being optimally appropriate (*yi*) in one's proper roles and relations (*li*). (Ames 2011, 123; italics added)

Thus, for Rosemont and Ames the lack of any lexical equivalent to "justice" in early Chinese is significant in that it shows there is no abstract concept or theory of justice. This is a true dividing point between Western and Chinese traditions. But it does not preclude the possibility of developing uniquely Chinese notions of justice derived from appreciations and senses of justice or associated values found already in classical texts.

Similarly, Li Zehou finds the Chinese and Western traditions can be broadly differentiated in terms of emphasizing abstract principle-based justice on the one hand and considering concrete particulars in working towards harmonious interactions on the other. Li Zehou writes, "Chinese culture looks for harmony where the

whereas a "conception of justice is an interpretation of [its] role" (Rawls 1999, 9). For Rosemont, as will be explicated in the analysis of Ames, we could say that a "concept of justice" refers to abstract principles or rules, whereas a "conception of justice" speaks to ideas or values that might be similar to, or enhance, a general theory of justice. Thus, Rosemont might admit that certain aspects of "humaneness" (*ren* 仁), "ritual propriety" (*li* 禮), and even Confucian Role Ethics, include understandings of fairness or (graded) equality that are somewhat similar to some theories of justice.

West strives for justice" (Li Zehou 2016, 1093). In this way Li Zehou's argument is somewhat more decisive than Rosemont's or Ames's in assigning justice as a concern of Western traditions and harmony as an ideal for Chinese ones. Compared to Rosemont's or Ames's accounts, however, Li Zehou also provides a much more robust description of how theories of justice and understandings of harmony can interact. For Li Zehou, the difference between justice and harmony involves distinct emphasis on the role of reason and emotion in moral consideration. Harmony in China is based on emotion, which is cemented in ritual. These rituals are, in turn, "generated from emotionality" and are intimately related to *guanxi* 關係 ("personal relationships") (ibid., 1079). Justice, on the other hand, is both a product of, and places absolute value upon, reason. Instead of concentrating on human relationships and interactions, justice prioritizes the individual—as abstracted from relationships and concrete particulars. Thus, while Chinese harmony includes both emotional and rational elements, Western theories of justice have generally not been inclusive of emotions, and thereby comparatively impoverished. In this way harmony is clearly "higher" than justice, it binds both emotional and rational considerations, while justice is limited to rational judgments alone. To better understand what this means we need to consider Li Zehou's overall moral theory.

Harmony is Higher than Justice

Li Zehou's moral philosophy is concentrated on what he considers his most significant contribution to moral discourse, namely, his so-called "two-morality theory" (*liang de lun* 兩德論). Most Western thinkers, Li Zehou contends, have failed to recognize the distinction between two types of morality, namely "religious morality" (*zongjiaoxing daode* 宗教性道德) and "social morality" (*shehuixing daode* 社會性道德). "'Religious morals' involve personal beliefs, moral convictions, values, and conceptions of the good." They are "also the seat of moral virtue and an important element of individual education" (D'Ambrosio, Carleo, and Lambert 2016, 1064). In contrast to religious morals, social morals are more closely associated with abstract notions such as reason, justice, freedom, independence, and human rights. Social morals developed out of shamanistic ceremonies, which were the earlier predecessors of social customs, including norms, practices, and other social arrangements (*chengxu* 程式) necessary to sustain society. In terms of Chinese philosophy, we can find expressions of this morality connected to "ritual" or "ritual limitations" (*li* 禮).[6]

In the Confucian tradition "ritual" (*li* 禮) needs to be understood in a concrete sense. While more abstract "dogmas", "principles", or "doctrines (*jing* 經)" exist,

6 "Ritual limitations" is Li Zehou's own (suggested) translation.

they need to be checked by "expedients", "measuring", or "discerning" (*quan* 權) methods that allow them to be implemented (Li Zehou 2013, 89).

> In this way [Li Zehou] argues that morality is constituted by the actualization of a harmonious balance between guiding regulations and appropriateness (*fandao he shidang* 範導和適當). Dogmas and doctrines, such as universal moral principles, need to be negotiated with the particulars of the actual situation in order to figure out the "proper measure" or "degree" (*du* 度) to which the universal principle should be actualized. One finds a balance between contingent conditions of the situation and ideal doctrines. This means, for example, that there are limits on when treating people as ends is proper. In extreme circumstances, such as war or terrorist threats, people can be used as means, and torture or sacrificing one person to save many others may be the moral thing to do. Li defends this position as being in line with both reason and emotions (*heqingheli* 合情合理), which he believes differentiates Confucian harmony from approaches to morality and justice in the Western tradition. (D'Ambrosio 2016, 726)

According to Li Zehou, the Chinese tradition is far better than the Western tradition in appreciating the importance of "proper measure" (*du* 度). This is due in large part to the former's understanding of the role emotions have in moral behaviour. Li Zehou introduces his neologism "emotio-rational structure" to explain the foundational role of emotions. He writes:

> The emotio-rational structure refers to the concrete intersection of emotion with reason and emphasizes that emotions and reason exist in dynamic, constantly changing relationships of different ratios and proportions with one another. (Li Zehou 2014, 38)

Harmony trades on incorporating emotions into moral understanding—and not simply as a matter of consideration, but as an integral part of moral judgment (or perhaps better understood as a "moral sense") itself. In this way harmony is taken to be higher than justice:

> Li states his position clearly in a phrase he frequently repeats: "harmony is higher than justice" (*hexie gaoyu zhengyi* 和諧高於正義). He further claims that the Western philosophical tradition fails to notice this fact (ibid., 25). Accordingly, he finds systemic flaws in the individualism advocated by Western philosophy. Individualism theorizes about the individual abstractly, which sets the ground for isolating reason and

> extracting principles from concrete situations. The focus then lies on justice as an abstract set of rationally defined rules. Chinese culture, on the other hand, recognizes the importance of social ties and roles in forming the individual. This means that context and emotion are important factors. Morality is then conceived of as a harmonious interplay of various persons who are always embedded in social roles and relationships. Li calls this a contrast between individualism and guanxi-ism. Individualism understands the self as an isolated individual that is essentially equal to others. Communitarianism, as a development of individualism, only admits the importance of social *influences* on individual identity. Confucian guanxi-ism is unique because it recognizes that individuals are *constituted* by society. (D'Ambrosio 2016, 726–27)

A Western conception of justice is not altogether thrown out. In fact, it is absolutely essential for developing a robust notion of harmony today. Harmony being higher than justice does not simply mean it is better, though it does carry this connotation. Even more importantly, it means that justice is the foundation upon which, and only upon which, harmony can be developed. Especially in today's pluralistic world, where shared social customs, norms, practices, and other social arrangements (*chengxu* 程式) are gradually thinning, justice can be used to form the common base upon which harmony can flourish:

> Li is adamant that his idea "harmony is higher than justice" means that he wants to infuse Western principles of justice into Confucian emotion-based morality, and not that he wants to abandon theories of justice. Rational principles [i.e. Western theories of justice] would ideally provide the grounding upon which emotion-based harmony could be established. Li argues that rituals, customs, and social norms are generated by emotions (*li shengyu qing* 禮生於情), which is another way of stating that emotions are the substance (*qing benti* 情本體) of morality. In other words, morality is founded upon the rituals, customs, and social norms that are solidified patterns of productive and effective human interaction. [Li's theory of] Guanxi-ism [which stresses that human interaction is the foundation of morality] shows that these are based on natural human emotions that are developed and cultivated broadly in society and narrowly in the individual's psychological structures.
>
> In place of disembodied reason used to establish absolute principles of justice, Li understands psychological structures as the grounds for morality. Li envisions psychological structures, guanxi-ism, and the two types

> of morality in a dialectical relationship. His position begins with a reinterpretation of the human. For Li there is no such thing as human nature. Li prefers to interpret the term *xing* 性, commonly translated as "nature", as "psychology". Furthermore, he argues that human psychological structures are not entirely given. They develop, both in the individual and the species, through time. As expressed in his two-morality theory, Li thinks that norms and moral systems develop and are solidified (*ningju* 凝聚) when they are able to meet certain socio-historical conditions. On the individual level this means that norms are useful for creating harmony in interpersonal relationships given particular social, political, and economic circumstances. When an individual internalizes social norms, they identify with them both emotionally and rationally, and then act accordingly. Norms are then abstracted and rationalized into moral systems. Li praises Confucianism, especially in contrast to the Western tradition, for remaining aware of conditional and emotional factors in moral considerations. (D'Ambrosio 2016, 727–28)

Western theories of justice are also founded, Li Zehou thinks, on the solidification of individual psychological structures and guanxi-ism. However, these Western theories forgot their more particularistic foundations. They became increasingly abstract. Philosophers such as John Rawls represent the epitome of this trend. The "veil of ignorance" for example, is a useful thought experiment, but it should only be incorporated as a regulatory guideline (*fandao* 範導). Those who find similar theories of harmony and/or justice in both Western and Chinese traditions downplay the significance of their differences.

Harmony and Justice

Huang Yushun is probably the most prolific scholar of justice in Chinese philosophical thought. His books, *Zhongguo zhengyi lun de chongjian* 中國正義論的重建 (2013) (officially translated as *Voice From the East: The Chinese Theory of Justice* [2016]) and *Zhonguo zhengyi lun de xingcheng* 中國正義論的形成 (2015) (which carries the English title *The Formation of Chinese Theory of Justice*), argue that Chinese Confucianism has a rich tradition of theorizing about justice. Similar to many of the authors considered in this paper, Huang sees distinctions between the Western notion of justice and the Chinese terms *yi* 義 and *zhengyi* 正義. Despite this, the differences do not play a major role in Huang's works. "Justice" is looked at in terms of a general, almost common-sense, notion of impartiality and fairness. As Huang writes, "from ancient to modern times, both Western countries and China have had their own issues about justice" (Huang 2016, 17–18).

These "issues" mainly concern social and communal organization (Huang 2013, 9), which require impartiality and fairness and contribute directly to harmony (ibid., 17). Justice is then a unifying theme in comparisons between the philosophical concerns in Chinese and Western traditions.

In *Confucius, Rawls, and the Sense of Justice* (2013) Erin Cline provides a similar argument in her specific comparative study of the *Analects* and Rawls. Here she tackles the position that there is no single term for "justice" in classical Chinese from various perspectives to demonstrate that this does not preclude the possibility that classical Chinese philosophers had an understanding of justice. Using Bryan Van Norden's arguments against this "lexical fallacy" as a starting point (Van Norden 2007), Cline notes that, "Although there is a well-developed account of self-cultivation in the *Analects*, a single term does not consistently represent this idea in the text" (Cline 2013, 15). Accordingly, the focus is shifted from finding a single term or defining a concept of justice, which has been the subject of much debate, to a "sense of justice". Cline defines the "sense of justice" as "the capacity to feel or perceive what is fair" (ibid., 18), and thereby circumvents many of the potential problems presented in the previous section.

In general agreement with Rosemont and Ames, Cline does not "think there is a full-fledged *theory* of justice in the *Analects*" nor is there anything like "rules or principles of justice" (Cline 2013, 151). She finds instead that many key terms in the *Analects*, such as "*yi* 義 ('rightness'), *shu* 恕 ('reciprocity'), *Ren* 仁 ('humaneness'), *xin* 信 ('trustworthiness'), *bu bi* 不比 ('not partial or biased') *zhou* 周 ('associates widely, keeping the public good in mind'), and *xing* 刑 ('punishments and the sense of fairness that is associated with them'), contribute to the development of a strong sense of justice, which is part of the broader Confucian project of self-cultivation and political ideals" (ibid., 152–53). In examining these terms Cline provides a nuanced account of how they are used in the *Analects*, and how they comprise a uniquely Confucian sense of justice.

Yi 義, for example, is investigated in terms of how it functions in the *Analects* before any definition is given. Ultimately Cline concludes that "*yi* reflects a sense of rightness, fairness, and honesty" (Cline 2013, 139). In other words, *yi* exemplifies the very definition of a sense of justice. Again, this does not imply that a specific theory or concept of justice is espoused through *yi*. Cline cautions,

> *yi* seems to mean a sense of fairness, although it does not concern fairness in the sense of a disposition to adhere to the law or in regard to distribution and retribution. Rather, it means something more like fair-mindedness or the tendency to make balanced judgments about persons or situations. (Cline 2013, 139–40)

In Cline's view, this sense of fairness and justice is so strong in the *Analects* that it actually overrides the goal of harmony. In direct conflict with Li Zehou's view, she argues:

> As we have seen, *in spite of* the social stigma, Kongzi [Confucius] gives his daughter in marriage to someone who was convicted of a crime [5.1]. In 15.28 he tells us to judge a person's character for ourselves *in spite of* the fact that others already hate them or love them. In these cases he calls us to go against the grain, rather than to accede to the judgments of others. This implies that he values fairness and good judgment even when they do not help to preserve harmony. Indeed, harmony could be attained fairly easily in some cases simply by going along with the judgment of the majority. But what Kongzi indicates in these passages is that he thinks it is wrong to sacrifice one person for the sake of harmony. Or, perhaps more accurately, if one person's well-being is sacrificed in the name of preserving harmony among the majority, then the state of affairs is not really harmonious at all. (Cline 2013, 144)

This account of harmony is, as we will see below, extremely oversimplified, which results in Cline reading into the text the argument she already wants to make. From Li Zehou's perspective 5.1 is simply about not being too hasty to judge others (Li Zehou 1998, 87)—which is exactly what passage 15.28 says: "The master said '[When] everyone hates [someone/something] one must closely examine it, [when] everyone likes [someone/something] one must closely examine it'." Neither passage is about going against the grain (and consensus does not, anyway, equal harmony) at all. Instead they simply ask people to reflect for themselves. The background for this is clearly spelled out in how the notion of a "village worthy" has been understood.[7]

Li Zehou would likely agree with Cline's appreciation of valuing fairness and good judgment in a general sense, but would argue that this is precisely what marks the Confucian tradition as holding harmony as an overarching value—not something to ever be sacrificed. Additionally, what Cline refers to as "a sense of justice" is far too vague for Li Zehou. Introducing the term "justice" adds nothing to the comparison, besides blurring otherwise relevant distinctions with a philosophically meaningless gloss. Indeed, Li Zehou points to Rawls in particular as representative of a Western take on justice that emphasizes principles, laws, abstractness, and reasons, at the expense of emotions, and failing to recognize the distinction between "religious morality" (*zongjiaoxing daode* 宗教性道德)X and "social morality" (*shehuixing daode* 社會性道德). The basis for Rawls' argument is

7 See Mengzi "Jin Xin II".

a conception of the person as individuated, atomized, and abstracted from their concrete environment—a self whose social ties do not meaningfully comprise who or what they are. This is true, according to Li Zehou, not simply of Confucian accounts of morality and ethics, but of morality and ethics in a universal sense:

> Human ethics and morals are built and created by humans, not as atomic individuals, but as social, communal people—selves that are the result of history, education, and socialization. (Li Zehou 2014, 13)

Although Huang focuses on the importance of social and communal ties in the Chinese tradition, Li Zehou would likely criticize Huang's gloss of "justice" along the same lines Cline could be criticized. Huang's treatment of "justice" neglects the historical, social, and philosophical importance of this concept. It amounts to appropriating a Western notion of "justice" without properly delineating an extremely important division between Western approaches to principles and Chinese ones. Classical Chinese debates, Li Zehou says, are centred around the use of *jing* 經 (dogmas, principles, doctrines) and *quan* 權 (expedients, measuring, discerning) (ibid., 89). The Western tradition is more unilaterally focused on the principles or doctrines themselves, and obsessive about matching them without exceptions, expedients, or other types of allowances—a perfect theory outweighs actual implementation. The Chinese view, with its eye on harmony, balances the two sides.

Despite potential criticisms from Li Zehou's perspective, Huang and Cline do help develop a more robust view of the problem. They hit on one of the central philosophical concerns in the discussion of the relationship between harmony and justice; namely, where should we draw the line between the two? When is preventing, solving, or dealing with conflict more important than preserving fairness? When and to what degree should fairness be sacrificed for cooperation? And perhaps most importantly, how should we balance between abstract theories (where "justice" dominates) and their concrete implementation (which concerns harmony)?

Harmony as Justice, Justice as Harmony

In his book *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony* (2014),[8] Chenyang Li provides the first English language monograph on Confucian harmony. Explicating the complexity, dynamicity, and richness of the Chinese concept of harmony

8 Many of the articles in the third issue of the 2016 volume of *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* were devoted to a discussion of Chenyang Li's book, and more reviews and articles are currently in the works.

are his main goals. In doing so Chenyang Li contrasts Chinese harmony, and specifically Confucian notions of harmony, with what he calls "consistent" or "innocent" harmony. These latter terms are borrowed from interpretations of ancient Greek—mostly Pythagorean and Platonic—conceptions of harmony that have been popularized by scholars from Max Weber and Karl Popper to Stuart Hampshire and Martha Nussbaum. In agreement with these, Chenyang Li presents Pythagorean and Platonic understandings of harmony (and justice) as established on a pre-set static order;[9] requiring conformity that eschews conflict or even difference. Using famous Chinese idioms Chenyang Li describes this kind of harmony as "a pool of dead water" (*yi tan si shui* 一潭死水) or "uniformity" (*tong* 同)—which is contrary to Chinese notions of harmony, especially Confucian ones (Li Chenyang 2014, 12).

Confucians, Chenyang Li argues, advocate a complex theory of "deep harmony", prioritizing relations, interactions, and methods that are "harmonized but not identical" (*he er bu tong* 和而不同). Accordingly, there are at least seven major differences between Greek harmony and Confucian harmony.[10] The latter includes heterogeneity, tension, coordination and cooperation, transformation and growth, and renewal, which are, according to Chenyang Li, *all absent* in the former. Chenyang Li concludes that while harmony may be important in both the Western and Chinese traditions, the concept differs greatly in terms of the depth of appreciation, and its dynamic and complex nature.

In *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony* Chenyang Li also discusses the importance of justice in Chinese and Western traditions. Here Chenyang Li recognizes a much more productive overlap between Western and Chinese thought. Speaking to Confucianism Chenyang Li writes,

> A harmonious society is a just society. Just societies cannot exist without operating principles ... the Confucian ideal of harmony promotes equity as a principle of justice, and that equity is an essential characteristic of the Confucian harmonious society. (Li Chenyang 2014, 120)

Chenyang Li elaborates, "For Confucians, equity (各得其所 *ge de qi suo*) is a philosophical principle extending far beyond the legal domain" (Li Chenyang 2014, 122). So while he acknowledges that harmony and justice emphasize different aspects of individual morality, social ethics, and political structures, Chenyang Li ultimately

9 There is, of course, a lot of room for discussion here. For example, it is quite easy to give a reading of Plato that highlights the importance of developing an exceedingly dynamic and creative notion of justice. However, this argument falls outside the scope of this paper.

10 Again, we might easily argue that this depiction of Greek harmony is overly simplistic. But this criticism falls outside the scope of this paper.

finds that the two are mutually dependent. More specifically, Chenyang Li's use of the word "order" provides a suggestive wedge for incorporating justice into a Confucian philosophy of harmony, and *vice-versa*. Chenyang Li writes, "Although order itself is not harmony, harmony cannot be realized without order. ...Order makes it possible for harmonizing parties to find their own place in the appropriately structured system" (Li Chenyang 2014, 70). Again Chenyang Li uses the phrase "letting each get its due" (各得其所)[11], but here to argue that "sacrifice at lower levels" may be required "in order to achieve harmonies at higher levels" (ibid., 8).

For Jiyuan Yu, Chenyang Li presents a perfect starting point for what could be called a "collaborative approach" to the issue. The concluding paragraph of Jiyuan Yu's review of *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony* reads,

> Our discussion of the contrast between the Confucian harmony and the Platonic one shows that both sides share points [concerning heterogeneity, tension, and coordination and cooperation] but differ over points [concerning transformation and growth, and renewal]. However, we also found that the most important comparison is that both sides take harmony to be "letting each get what is due". The key question, then, is to determine what is due. [...] Li's work has established a solid starting point. From here on, we should try to develop a Confucian rational justification of the belief that the world is harmonious, to have a more detailed philosophical explanation of determining what is due, and to provide a clearer guidance of how the Confucian harmony can be achieved and maintained "with creative tension" and "in a perpetual process of transformation and renewal". (Yu 2016, 419)

Importantly, while Jiyuan Yu argues for explicating the similarities between Confucian notions of harmony and Platonic ones, this really only serves to form the background of his larger point—namely, to develop a rational justification for harmony in the world in order to decide how to give each what is due "in a perpetual process of transformation and renewal" while at the same time maintaining "creative tension".[12]

Much of what Chenyang Li says about harmony is in line with Li Zehou's general take on the Chinese tradition. Chenyang Li hits on the major ideas Li Zehou signals as important, including downplaying the importance of reason, principles, and abstract notions of the self in favour of bringing emotions, particularistic-concerns, and a socially/community-constitutive view of the person. However,

11 The variance in translation of *ge de qi suo* 各得其所 follows Chenyang Li's own English renderings.

12 In the longer version of this essay Jiyuan Yu's arguments will be further examined.

Li Zehou would likely ask for a more robust notion of justice to ground harmony. His idea that "harmony is higher than justice" relies on a thickly construed and broadly encompassing notion of justice. Chenyang Li's take on justice is thus too thin, and too simplistic, to achieve what Li Zehou has in mind. Moreover, throughout his monograph Chenyang Li clearly expresses the view that harmony is a much better way to organize society or develop morality. A superficial reading of Li Zehou's "harmony is higher than justice" might come to the same conclusion, but Li Zehou is actually presenting a much more complex argument. Harmony being "higher" does not make it patently better. Justice is rather the foundation, a grounding that is absolutely essential and extremely difficult to achieve. It incorporates the notion of "order" Chenyang Li defines as "equity"—but appreciates how extremely difficult and complex bringing about this order can be. Li Zehou does not envision justice as limited to "equity" (各得其所) and his critique is far more penetrating.

Of all the scholars considered here, Jiyuan Yu's take on the relationship between harmony and justice is perhaps the closest to Li Zehou's. Yu's suggestion that Chenyang Li provides a good starting point helps elucidate where more work needs to be done. Specifically, this means developing a "clearer guidance of how the Confucian harmony can be achieved and maintained 'with creative tension' and 'in a perpetual process of transformation and renewal'". To be fair, Li Zehou does not present a very clear understanding of either justice or harmony, and both are mentioned in rather broad strokes. Li Zehou's discussion of their relationship is extremely typical for his works: he provides compelling outlines for framing how philosophical arguments and debates should take place. The precise content of discussions is not given by Li Zehou himself. Like Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, or other masters, Li Zehou offers space for readers to reflect. He constructs challenging avenues for thought. But he does not give answers, or pave the way. In line with Yu's comments about Chenyang Li, we might find that Li Zehou's thought can be developed into a more collaborative approach between the somewhat different trajectories of harmony and justice.

Collaboration, Mutually Informative, Mutually Corrective

In is important to note that almost all of the scholars mentioned above express positive attitudes towards the prospect of a collaborative approach to the relationship between harmony and justice—they simply have not capitalized on it. Cline, for example, ends her project expressing an openness to, and even some engagement with, collaborative dialogue:

> This is one area where the *Analects* can make a significant contribution to ongoing discussions in political philosophy, in ethics, and even … in the area of public policy. Indeed, the potential for these kinds of contributions is one of any things that a comparative study of a sense of justice in Rawls and the *Analects* can help us to see. (Cline 2013, 272)

Although Cline repeatedly claims to be expounding the virtues of a comparative approach to justice, her hints at the back-and-forth contributions Rawls and the *Analects* can make to one another is clearly a demonstration of the possibility of collaboration.

Roger Ames approaches the issue more directly, arguing that justice may serve as a corrective for harmony. Justice should be used as not only a regulative for the construction of harmony, but that it may further regulate notions of harmony themselves. Ames writes,

> While the familiar appeal to universals might suffer from the ambiguity of practical applications, the Confucian attempt to extend consideration to all involved is handicapped by the need for more abstract regulative ideals such as courage and justice that provide direction for what is a legitimate claim for consideration and inclusion. (Ames 2011, 268)

Here Ames gives justice a much more staunch role in moral and ethical consideration than Li Zehou—in fact we might venture to say that for Roger Ames "justice is higher than harmony".[13] Justice may be useful as a foundation for harmony, as Li Zehou would have it, but it can also serve as a point of reference for making theoretical claims about, and actual implementation of, harmony.

Over the past few years Ames has increasingly turned to the work of Michael Sandel to bolster his claims about the importance of concrete particulars and sparing use of abstract principles. In essence, this is a move towards a collaborative dialogue between (the way many scholars have classified) Western theories of justice and Chinese notions of harmony. Truly, Sandel's criticisms of Rawls's theory of justice and his subsequent arguments about how to productively enrich notions of justice from the standpoint of encumberedness, provide a good starting point for collaboration with Chinese conceptions of harmony.

However, as Chenyang Li points out, Sandel does not often use the word "harmony" (Li Chenyang 2017). In fact, in his book *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (1982) "harmony" appears only once. This does not, however, mean that

13 As an anonymous reviewer of this paper accurately comments: "Tempting, yes, but surely that would be going too far. He simply acknowledges that justice can be useful as a regulative ideal."

Sandel's approach lacks any appreciation for harmony—or, to use Cline's term, a "sense" of harmony. Sandel uses the family as an example of where we might find some of the "limits of justice", which, though he does not say it, might mark the realm of harmony:

> Consider for example a more or less ideal family situation, where relations are governed in large part by spontaneous affection and where, in consequence, the circumstances of justice prevail to a relatively small degree. Individual rights and fair decision procedures are seldom invoked, not because injustice is rampant but because their appeal is pre-empted by a spirit of generosity in which I am rarely inclined to claim my fair share. Nor does this generosity necessarily imply that I receive out of kindness a share that is equal to or greater than the share I would be entitled to under fair principles of justice. I may get less. *The point is not that I get what I would otherwise get, only more spontaneously, but simply that the questions of what I get and what I am due do not loom large in the overall context of this way of life*. (Sandel 1982, 33; emphasis added)

Considered in the light of what Chenyang Li refers to as "deep harmony", Sandel is certainly promoting something extremely similar to a Chinese or Confucian notion of harmony. If we add to this Sandel's overwhelming emphasis on public discourse and public reason, it would not be hard to imagine a notion of justice that could include Chenyang Li's seven defining points of Confucian harmony (i.e. heterogeneity, tension, coordination and cooperation, transformation and growth, and renewal).

The challenge, therefore, is to think about how we might enlarge or broaden such an understanding to encompass other aspects of life (or how we already do without realizing it). If harmony cannot exist without order, it may be fair to say—in line with Li Zehou, and reflecting Plato's *Republic*[14]—that the real goal of justice is harmony. Creating a just society is one means for establishing harmony in society. So while focusing too narrowly on justice may lead to "dead pool" conformity or identity, and focusing too narrowly on harmony may breed corruption or unfairness. Through a collaborative dialogue we promote a more nuanced appreciation of the two, and their relationship with one another. Accordingly, we find that they actually have common goals and similar suggestions for how we conceive of ethics, morality, and order in individuals, social relationships, and political theories.

14 We might even read Li Zehou's entire argument as a development of what Plato writes in the *Republic*.

Conclusion

Li Zehou's study provides an excellent starting point for a serious consideration of collaboration between the Western emphasis on justice and the Chinese concentration on harmony. Li Zehou argues that harmony "involves transforming the people through virtue (education), whereas justice involves governing by law", and believes that both are needed (Li Zehou 2016, 1093). Harmony itself rests on a strong foundation of guanxi-ism, proper measure, and emotions (as substance), that can only be secured once justice is firmly in place—"justice is higher than harmony". For Li Zehou this claim reflects an actual hierarchy (ibid., 1098). He maintains that harmony is higher than justice, because justice is "primarily a rational principle (*li* 理), whereas harmony involves the integration of emotionality and rationality (*qing-li* 情理) (ibid., 1069). The broader inclusiveness of harmony means that it represents a "higher" ethical understanding, albeit one that should be constructed on "just" foundations. Harmony can thus contribute to "checking" justice (and *vice-versa*):

> Li thus argues that public reason and modern social morals (especially liberal notions such as human rights and justice) are essential to society, but sees their outlook of individualistic equality, abstract principles, and value neutrality as needing to be supplemented and regulated by traditional religious morals. This involves proper measure (*du* 度) and flexibility (*quan* 權). (D'Ambrosio, Carleo, and Lambert 2016, 1066)

Read in concert with Sandel's similar criticisms of overly abstract theories of justice, and his alternatives, Li Zehou's view can certainly be developed away from a strict hierarchy, including any logical or practical priority contained therein. What both Sandel and Li Zehou are moving towards is an ethical and/or moral understanding that is neither overly theoretical nor unreflective. An approach where reason and emotions inform one another, where abstract ideals and implementation are balanced. Much of what this entails is already included in Li Zehou's own thought, but deserves to be fleshed out into a full-fledged collaborative project.

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Confucian Post-Liberalism

Robert Anthony CARLEO III *

Abstract

This paper reviews parallel attacks on the ethical basis of liberal principles from within and without that tradition, one the Confucian-Kantian perspective of contemporary philosopher Li Zehou 李澤厚 and the other the un-Kantian "post-liberalism" of John Gray. Both reject foundational claims regarding the universality of liberal values and principles while still affirming the universal value of those principles via their practical function in fostering for human flourishing. I point out that Gray's anti-foundationalist liberalism not only aligns with the Confucian elements of Li Zehou's theory, but may even be enriched by them.

Keywords: Li Zehou, Confucian Ethics, Confucian Political Philosophy, Liberalism, Post-Liberalism

Konfucijanski postliberalizem

Izvleček

Pričujoči članek vsebuje kritiko etične osnove liberalnih principov z dveh vidikov: od znotraj in od zunaj. Prvi obravnava konfucijansko-kantovsko perspektivo sodobnega filozofa Li Zehouja 李澤厚, drugi pa ne-kantovski »postliberalizem« Johna Graya. Tisto, kar je skupno obema, je negacija osnovne ideje liberalnih vrednot in principov ter poudarjanje univerzalnih vrednot tistih načel, ki preko svojih praktičnih funkcij podpirajo družbene strukture, ki krepijo človeško blagostanje. Pri tem avtor poudari, da slednja teorija ni samo skladna s konfucijanskimi elementi prve, temveč lahko te tudi obogati.

Ključne besede: Li Zehou, konfucijanska etika, konfucijanska politična filozofija, liberalizem, postliberalizem

Introduction

A central issue in political theory today is whether and how it is possible to construct and guide modern—most often understood as liberal, individualist, egalitarian, and capitalist—social institutions in ways that reflect and are supported

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by the more traditional and particular values of the communities they govern. The demand for such cultural localism or particularization follows from the value of self-determination, collective and personal, often invoked in justification of modern liberal institutions—that people ought to (at least be able to) pursue lives and ways of life that they see as (most) worthwhile. Modern liberal ideology in this sense demands cultural particularity both practically and normatively: the functioning and legitimacy of social and political institutions require (at least a certain degree of) endorsement by those participating in and governed by them, and this can take place only in terms of values these citizens themselves hold.

Yet while the value of self-determination seems to demand cultural particularism, the claims of modern liberal ideology are generally universalist, and the institutional norms they promote—natural human rights, freedoms, and the values of self-determination and equality—construed as objective goods. They are goods in virtue of constituting the very terms on which (fair) self-determination is possible. Thus, particular cultural traditions can and should, or must, be expressed through modern liberal values and institutions, and these values and institutions are not to be breached in their expression. To alter these institutions in the name of particular traditions is then merely to compromise them, and so compromise the very terms of fair self-determination.

Thus, liberalism's promotion of individualist democratic and capitalist institutions is axiologically founded on individual and collective self-determination, yet promoting these institutions and values themselves requires heteronomously altering traditional cultural values and social structures that do not align with, and thus must to some extent be replaced by, democratic and capitalist values. There seems to be tension or conflict, then, internal to the theory and practice of liberal principles and institutions in their claim to promote fair self-determination. This tension is particularly acute in cultures for which the terms of modern liberal institutions and their underlying values are not native, but which in modernizing have formally adopted liberal institutions and norms as well as (partially) absorbed corresponding democratic and capitalist values. Sungmoon Kim, for example, identifies this difficulty in liberal democratic South Korea, whose culture remains substantively Confucian in character, if not in name (Kim 2014, Ch. 9; 2016, Ch. 3 and 4). Liberalism might thus be seen as promoting an ideology and set of institutions that stand opposed to cultural particularity and true self-determination, and which prove hegemonic to particular local cultural systems, traditions, and values.

Liberalism, then, finds itself in a somewhat awkward position. Its defenders claim that it allows for self-determination through universal principles or prescriptions, and sometimes admit that it is itself a culturally particular view and does not aspire to universalism. Its detractors say that it hegemonizes other valuable ways of

life, and sometimes even that in doing so it replaces these with an impoverished ideology, largely empty of values. But whether all, some, or none of these views are correct, the fact remains that many societies now operate—socially, politically, and legally—through liberal democratic and capitalist systems yet retain substantive traditional values at odds with the liberal values on which the functioning of these systems was designed. What to make of this and what is to be done about it are particularly poignant questions for comparative political philosophy, and they have received much attention in contemporary Confucian discourse, wherein the issue is most often posed as: What are traditional Confucian values to do in the face of modernization? As I have attempted to show above, an equally interesting question is: What is liberal theory to do in the face of Confucian values? Our answers depend on how we conceive of liberalism.

Below I review parallel attacks on the ethical basis of liberal principles from within and without that tradition, one the Confucian-Kantian perspective of contemporary philosopher Li Zehou 李澤厚 and the other the non-Kantian "post-liberalism" of John Gray, both of which reject foundational claims regarding the universality of liberal values and principles but which affirm the universal value of those principles *via* their practical function in supporting social structures that foster for human flourishing. Gray's advocacy of post-liberalism is exceptional as a critique of liberal doctrine that is philosophically rather than politically or ideologically motivated, and even largely driven by liberal rather than anti-liberal commitments. As we will see, Gray, like Li, finds the diverse formulations of liberal theory proposed by liberal theorists incoherent or unpersuasive, and ultimately aims to affirm liberal principles on more solid grounds. I point out that his arguments not only align with the Confucian elements of Li Zehou's theory but may even be enriched by them.

What's Wrong with Liberalism?

Liberalism often presents itself as a universal doctrine, espousing objective principles of liberty or justice by which states ought to govern. This is, for example, how J. S. Mill presents his arguments in *On Liberty*. It more dramatically forms the core of Kantian arguments as epitomized, for example, in Kant's various formulations of the categorical imperative, which is carried forward in contemporary successors such as John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* (1999) and especially Ronald Dworkin (2011), who likewise grounds liberal practices in objective ethical, moral, and political principles. These principles are understood as universally applicable to all people: since their normative force is generated by a generic conception of the human being, they have moral grip on each of us simply by virtue of our humanity. As Francis Fukuyama puts it, Kantian-Dworkinian normativity, for contemporary

liberals, "etches a bright red line around the whole of the human race" (Fukuyama 2002, 150). Born from Christian and Kantian notions, modern liberalism affirms principles of government as timeless and universal morals of humanity itself.

Li Zehou denounces this dimension of liberalism, arguing that modern liberal principles and values are better understood as social norms historically particular to modern liberal culture. They are morals or rational imperatives produced by peculiarly modern forms of reason, not derived from "reason" as such: "rational principles or reason itself come from the living existence of humankind and are not *a priori*" (Li 2016, 1077). Li's rejection of Kant's *a priori* or pure reason aligns with a trend in Kantian ethical theory abandoning the transcendental or metaphysical dimensions of Kant's thought, but is distinct from the corresponding tendency to shift from grounding morality in the faculty of *reason* toward a defence of the normative force of moral *reasons* (see, for example, Scanlon 2011). These views replace the universal and absolute faculty of pure reason with an equally ahistorical rational *a priori* moral principle, shifting the grounds of moral objectivity from the faculty of pure reason to a rational capacity to evaluate concrete reasons, governed by some absolute and unchanging moral principle. Li Zehou, in contrast, rejects the possibility of objective moral principle independent of concrete historical conditions altogether.

A particularly important element of this difference between Li Zehou's historicist Kantian theory and these forms of contemporary Kantianism is that while they follow Kant in formulating the *a priori* value of humans as ends as a rational and stateable principle of equality, Li reinterprets the principle of humans as ends as historically contingent, and decidedly not as a universal *a priori* truth (Li 2011, 23–24; 2016, 1131; cf. Carleo 2020). On this basis, Li opposes "individual freedom or ... 'justice' being prioritized as supreme *a priori* or transcendental rational principles" as in Kant and Rawls (Li 2016, 1086). As historical products of concrete culture, the application of these principles should be evaluated in context and adjusted accordingly. They cannot serve as universal moral or political standards for all cultures.

These standards cannot be universal because human psychology and relations are not generic. Moral norms, in Li's view, are not only applied to concrete human situations, they also arise from them. The emotion and reason that constitute moral psychology are products of concrete, situated human experience and learning, and developed historically within human culture. As norms governing concrete human relations through human psychology, moral imperatives thus shift. (As an empirical observation, this is difficult to dispute; normatively, it presents a much-disputed form of moral relativity that is often theoretically formulated in ways that are intuitively and philosophically unsatisfactory. Li rejects such forms of relativism and attempts to formulate a more persuasive view that establishes

an objective basis for moral relativity, which we return to below.) In contrast, the reliance on generic conceptions of rational personhood in Kant, Rawls, Dworkin, and others in attempting to establish normative principles with universal grip, and Mill's reliance on a combination of teleological development of individuality and a notoriously dubious form of welfarism, all rest on axiological assumptions that are not themselves, empirically speaking, universal, but rather came to prevalence historically with the rise of modern liberalism, rationalism, and individualism. Li's position is attractive because it recognizes the historical particularity of that axiology while affirming its normative force for modern societies.

That liberal principles are not universally rationally deducible in the manner that much liberal theory attempts to establish is a criticism Li shares with John Gray:

> In general, it is one of the oldest aspirations of philosophers to formulate criteria or legislate norms of deliberative rationality which will be universal and context-independent in that they reflect the natural necessities of man's life, and which (unlike the rules of inference of formal logic) will impose substantive restrictions on the conduct of practical reasoning. Notoriously, this perennial aspiration is open to the objection that the task of distinguishing between what is generic and what is specific in human life, between what is essential and what is accidental, between nature and convention, is (logically, or as a matter of fact) impossible to bring off. (Gray 1989, 34)

Gray's formulation of the criticism here impugns Rawls's reliance on generic goods, which Rawls calls primary social goods, as the basis for deriving principles of justice. These generic goods rely on a generic conception of human nature—the kind of Aristotelian view that liberals such as Rawls and Dworkin share with critics such as Charles Taylor (Taylor 1985; cf. Kymlicka 1989, 894–96) and Alastair MacIntyre (1984). Gray contends that this view of human nature and correspondingly Rawls's (or any) list of primary social goods are culturally dependent,[1] and argues—as Li Zehou does as well—"that human nature is always entirely constituted by a nexus of historically variant, culturally specific and alterable social relations" (Gray 1989, 35). Since people's ways of life are therefore products of the circumstances and relations, along with the biological character, they are born into, therefore, "no conception of the good life can be privileged over others on the grounds that it is more deeply founded in man's nature" (Gray

1 "Rawls gives the derivation of the principles of justice from the circumstances of the original position an appearance of plausibility only by building into the deliberative rationality of the contractors' normative specifications (such as that embodied in the Aristotelian principle) whose culture-dependency is patent." (Gray 1989, 34)

1989, 35). While this does not quite indict the Rawlsian view—since Rawls argues not that a particular conception of the good life is found in human nature, but that the primary social goods are generic because they are fundamental to the pursuit of any (individual's) conception of the good life—it points toward a more fundamental objection endorsed by Li Zehou's views. Since individual pursuit of the good life is informed and partly determined by the cultural and institutional conditions of society, the conditions for that pursuit will also shift. There are thus no unchangeable or generic primary goods; rather, all primary goods (as the conditions for pursuit of the good life) will be particular to the concrete conditions of actual societies, including economic and political structures, cultural values, and social norms.

Although Gray, like Li, is dissatisfied with the theoretical incoherence of liberal doctrine, and both decry the dogmatic and axiomatic way in which liberal values and principles are often invoked, Gray remains deeply committed to liberal practices. Li likewise celebrates the value of liberal principles and modernization generally in releasing people from more oppressive traditional social structures. He thus rejects the universal and *a priori* nature of the principle of humans as ends, but affirms that same principle as a historically particular value appropriate to contemporary society.

> Especially in terms of ethics, we cannot talk about society without considering the individual, and thus liberalism has made important contributions to this area of human history. (Li 2016, 1123)

> Clearly, many principles of liberalism do not arise from the theoretical suppositions of Kant and Rawls, but rather from social life and the experience of humankind. Kant and others abstract this as the universal certainty of a priori reason, innate human rights, and the atomic individual. Even though such a standpoint is untenable, these ideas hugely elevate the position of humans and encourage people to work hard to realize certain ideals, which has positive effects on history and in actual life. (ibid., 1121)

> [L]iberal individual freedom and value neutrality ... are in fact pressing necessities for many nations in breaking free from the economic and political manifestations of their traditional societies (such as primitive tribalism, slavery, and serfdom, as well as religious and cultural autocracy and privilege). Value neutrality, prioritization of rights, and individual freedom are ... strongly needed for social development by certain countries and regions. (ibid., 1128)

That is, the value or authority of liberal principles is not universal but pragmatic and particular, based in its function within social systems in improving the conditions of individual and collective human life.

> Concepts of justice associated with liberalism are the basic principles of modern social morals. People follow them not because they are the products of a particular thinker, but rather because these notions have the support of economic forces. These economic forces have taken abstractly conceived concepts like 'the atomic individual' and 'natural human rights' and seemingly actualized them, making the independent individual, the social contract, and public reason increasingly part of institutional order, behavioral norms, and moral standards. (Li 2016, 1085)

Li further argues, on the basis of the beneficial function of liberal norms in modern society, that while many communitarian arguments share his dissatisfaction with liberalism's claims to universality (so that, "Theoretically speaking, communitarianism makes a good point"), on a practical level communitarians merely obstruct the helpful, forward-looking nature of the substantive guides for contemporary China that liberalism offers. Because communitarian views are merely critical and theoretical, adopting them "may easily come to serve as a basis for regression, effacing the individual and returning to a previous era" (Li 2011, 28).

Humans as ends, taken on a pragmatic and historicist basis, presents an imperative to develop social and political norms and institutions that foster individual pursuit of interests and prosperity and thereby also associative flourishing. This shifts social norms from a pre-modern orientation in which the individual is seen as serving the group (collective or common interests) to a modern orientation of norms and institutions serving the individual and individual interests (or common interests reconceived as collective interests of disparate individuals, rather than interests of a shared group identity) (ibid., 32). This modern individualism and the norms protecting and promoting it "are important aspects of the future prospects of humankind," and thus, "The theory of self in my own ethics is a form of historicism that sees movement from the 'greater self' (*dawo* 大我) to the 'smaller self' (*xiaowo* 小我)" (Li 2017, §4).

Li here does not merely affirm liberalism on historicist grounds (indeed, this would not differ significantly from later Rawls). He revises (or in his words, "transcends") liberalism to embrace emotions and relations. Liberalism takes individualism too far in attempting to rationally derive normative principles from a conception of transcendental or unencumbered individuals, and Li's ethics in response emphasizes "relationism" (*guanxi zhuyi* 關係主義) and the importance of emotions as feelings of human interconnection (Li 2016, 1080). The moral importance of

emotions and relations are core tenets of Li Zehou's ethical theory, which he derives from classical Confucianism and places in opposition to liberalism's emphasis on reason and individualism. In promoting his ethics, Li is on these issues a trenchant critic of liberal ethical theory. Yet he gives priority to liberal principles because his historical outlook finds them to be necessary, beneficial, or desirable as social and political norms for contemporary Chinese society.

Li thus finds individualism to support human flourishing as it is increasingly embraced across developing societies, as evidenced by the fact that "these new social morals seem to generally win out and continue to break into diverse regions, peoples, and cultures" (Li 2011, 24), and believes a properly redressed individualism, a relationally and emotionally understood valuing of the individual, will better support human flourishing. Li affirms the spread of liberal individualism and its liberating capitalist and democratic institutions, which include human rights, freedoms, and political neutrality, to be a moral imperative for modern society. This makes Li something of a liberal, in his own way:

> The liberalism that I endorse (in which the totality exists for the individual and individual rights have priority) is an aspect of my historicism. That is, it is a requirement or product of historical development of a certain period or stage. In this way liberalism is part of historicism, and history does not end with capitalist society and liberalism. This both emphasizes [liberal] justice as well as takes the "emotional cosmology" of [my] idea that "harmony is higher than justice" as regulative in order to move toward a more ideal future. This transcends liberalism. (Li 2016, 1136)

> This is the form of 'liberalism' that I advocate: promoting modern concepts as the foundation for erecting future human psychology, and through education gradually both preserving and reforming tradition's deep emotio-rational structures. (Li 2018, 224)

So how does he marry his affirmation of liberal principles to his ardent promotion of Confucian morality, and especially its emphasis on relations and emotions, *in opposition* to the emphasis on reason and individualism in liberal moral and ethical theory?

In endorsing the value and authority of liberal principles for Chinese society, Li argues that traditional Chinese morality is necessary to redressing liberalism's theoretical and practical problems, especially in developing the application of liberal principles for Chinese society.

> [L]iberalism such as that of Rawls' notions of "the difference principle" (*A Theory of Justice*), "overlapping consensus" (*Political Liberalism*), and "the priority of the right over the good" is exactly what China needs today. But China should also be careful to avoid being overwhelmed by immensely rational economic and political mechanisms. This is the importance of the corrective value of traditional Chinese notions such as "the way begins in emotions" and guanxi-ist relationality, which can serve as the "regulative and properly constitutive" principle for these rational mechanisms. (Li 2016, 1139)

> The conclusion of repeated disputes over the last century is quite clear: modern Western rule of law must be adopted, and traditional ritual and law's use of ordered relations in place of law, or of interpersonal emotions in place of reason, must be abandoned. ... However, since the gradually formed ideas and customs, and emotio-rational structure, of society cannot be simply and suddenly done away with, conceptions of modern rule of law exhibit certain conflict with the actuality of modern Chinese life ... (Li 2018, 206)

Independent liberal principles and traditional Confucian morals should be seen as distinct but also compatible types of morality.

> Although I do not agree with foundationalist liberal theories, from notions of natural human rights to the veil of ignorance, I nevertheless see great value in the modern morals and laws proposed and advocated by liberalism that take the individual as fundamental. I also emphasize the special importance of establishing these within China's shamanistic historical tradition [See Li Zehou 2018], and therefore argue that we must first differentiate between the two types of morals (traditional religious morals and modern social morals). (Li 2011, 29)

Li offers his own theory as a means of differentiating, and then reconnecting, these two types of morals.

Li Zehou's Theory of Two Morals

Li Zehou's theory of two morals (*liang de lun* 两德論) advocates the distinction of modern social morals (*xiandai shehuixing daode* 现代社會性道德) from traditional religious morals (*chuantong zongjiaoxing daode* 傳統宗教性道德). Li

defines social morals as "the common principles, norms, order, values, and modes of behavior on which the maintenance of modern life relies, and include liberty, equality, human rights, democracy, and so on"; religious morals, in contrast, consist in beliefs and emotions "concerning the individual's ultimate concern and the ideal of placing oneself at ease and establishing one's fate" (Li 2018, 209). The former constitute a normative ethics, whereas the latter have to do with personal virtue. Li advocates modern social morals more or less equivalent to liberal norms—ethical norms that "strive for liberty, equality, and human rights"—and traditional religious morals constituted by Confucian commitments that value relations of "familial compassion, caring, and concern for others" (ibid.).

Li's distinction is largely equivalent to Rawls's differentiation of the principles of justice, as the right (or political norms governing the basic structure of society), from comprehensive doctrines of the good. Li also prioritizes modern social morals in a manner comparable to the priority that Rawls grants to the principles of justice, making them indefeasible by considerations of traditional religious morals. Moreover, "Like Rawls' position, my prioritization of this distinction attempts to avoid the so-called clash of tradition and modernization" (Li 2016, 1133). That is, Li's distinction aims to reconcile the two, to establish a stable relation between liberal principles and traditional values.

Yet while Li's two morals parallel Rawls, the grounds of his distinction and the relation he establishes between them differ from Rawls in important ways. According to Li, originally the former was enveloped within, or determined by, the latter, so that traditional Confucian religious ethics subsumed social morals. Pre-modern Chinese political norms and institutions combined Confucianism with (traditional Chinese) Legalism, resulting in a "tripartite unity of religion, politics, and ethics" that led social morals to be heavily determined by overly hierarchical and often oppressive forms of human relations. Li believes that China has not entirely left this behind, but ought to, and intends his theory of two morals to deconstruct this tripartite unity. In line with his emphasis on historical particularity, Li's argument for prioritizing liberal principles is thus fittingly historical: traditional Chinese norms and institutions were relatively more oppressive due to an over-reliance on existing concrete forms of human relations, so prioritizing rational liberal principles helps liberate subjects from such oppression and promote conditions of human flourishing through rational and individualist rule of law (Li 2018, 210). The corresponding institutions of rights and freedoms are relative goods, and their relative benefits are the grounds for affirming liberal principles in modern society.

Moreover, while modern social morals are distinct from traditional religious morals, they cannot be fully independent of them (Li 2011, 31). Li emphasizes the need for this reconnection (once they are differentiated), since "The complete entanglement of the two kinds of morality penetrates groups and individuals,

which is both necessary and natural" (Li 2011, 32). In terms of the form of this reconnection, he advocates giving traditional religious morals—that is, the deep structures of Confucian morality prevalent in Chinese society—a "regulative and properly constitutive" (*fandao he shidang goujian* 範導與適當構建) function in relation to modern social morals.[2] Whereas Rawls maintains the independence and inviolability of the right in relation to the good, denying comprehensive doctrines any constitutive role in relation to political conceptions of the right, Li proposes substantive connections between them, making religious morals both "properly"—that is, in a limited capacity—constitutive of social morals and also allowing traditional morals to shape the application of liberal principles within society.

These are relatively abstract statements. Li gives a more concrete and illustrative sense of what he means in arguing that China must "absorb modern liberalism as a criterion for contemporary legislation" (Li 2018, 209) while also advocating that legal suit should be a final recourse in China, following more personal forms of mediation, in line with a Confucian emphasis on harmonious personal relations. He cites China's "people's mediation system" (*renmin tiaojie zhidu* 人民調解制度) and local residents committees (*jumin weiyuanhui* 居民委員會) as preliminary models for how this might work (Li 2016, 1110, 1134; 2018, 202–10, 226–27, 249–50; cf. 2008, 46).

Li describes traditional culture's "regulative and properly constitutive" but not determinative role in relation to basic rights as the "permeation, influence, and functioning of substantive justice within formal justice" (Li 2016, 1134), and refers to its practice as "political art" or "the art of government" (*zhengzhi yishu* 政治藝術) (ibid., 1091, 1133). It is equivalent to the art of assessing "proper measure" (*du* 度) in navigating concrete situations, and to the traditional Confucian concept of "flexibility" (*quan* 權), and also involves the skill of "conforming to emotions as well as reason" (*heli heqing* 合理合情) rather than inflexible application of normative principles (Li 2012, 107; 2016, 1091–92, 1119).[3] Here Li emphasizes the integration of emotion with rational judgment:

> To borrow a phrase from Chairman Mao, there is no love or hate without cause or reason. Emotional aspects of human existence can certainly be described and examined through rational analysis. At the same time, through factual description and explanation, emotions can not only affect

2 While Li sometimes denies the constitutive function of religious morals in relation to social morals entirely (i.e. Li 2018, 210; 2011, 32), he seems to mean this as a declaration of the formal independence of the latter from the former, in terms of its priority.

3 "Thus, the art of grasping 'proper measure' in recognizing the complex relationship between these two kinds of morals and in concrete analysis of particular situations is shown clearly to be of special importance." (Li 2011, 32)

> but also even convince people of things. That is to say, emotions have causes or reasons, and "conformance" to them also has a certain rationally understandable pattern. … Confucius talked about ritual throughout his life, and yet while he repeatedly criticized Guan Zhong 管仲 for "not knowing ritual", Confucius nevertheless lauded his overall virtue (*ren* 仁). This is a classic illustration of how we might carry out "flexibility" (not adhering blindly to the established rules of ritual) through "conformance with emotions". Here we find that reason is ... connected with patterns of emotionality, as well. (Li 2016, 1119)

Thus, Li advocates a Confucian sense of morality or virtue that involves not merely the governance of reason over emotions in the sense of following rational rules of conduct, but also responsiveness to emotions in (rational) moral evaluation. The moral guidance of rational principles has to adapt to the particular values and emotional relations that constitute a moral situation.

In this sense, Li establishes a moral need to be responsive to the concrete emotional relations of substantively Confucian societies in applying rational principles of modern social morals (as liberal norms). Li's theory of two morals in this way embraces and promotes the deep structures of Confucianism, which substantively shape the relations of Confucian society, and which can guide proactive social policies exhibiting "concern for the people"; but he also limits their role to directing action on the level of individual decision-making, "which must be differentiated from the 'social morals' (public virtue) to which people are to commonly adhere" (Li 2018, 224; cf. 2011, 26). In this way the personal values and beliefs of traditional religious morals have a regulative function in the application of modern social morals, but are only properly constitutive, that is, not constitutive in a manner able to themselves revise or re-determine the content of modern social morals.

Here we note two roles that Confucianism takes up in Li's theory: firstly, as the deep structures of traditional Chinese values and beliefs that continue to constitute the moral character of Chinese culture, and secondly, as part of his own moral theory, which repurposes Confucian moral teachings to serve as a means of affirming both traditional Chinese culture and modern liberal norms. The historicism identified above as the grounds for affirming liberal principles for modern society itself requires a moral foundation, and Li provides this through the moral theory he develops from classical Confucian teachings. Herein, the ultimate axiological foundation is the continuous extension of human existence (*renlei de shengcun yanxu* 人類的生存延續) (as communities and societies).

Li argues that there is an absolute grounding for substantive moral judgment in the historical process of the "sedimentation" (*jidian* 積澱) of human knowledge,

culture, and reason. Morality and reason are regulated by the conditions of human progress wherein goodness and badness can be objectively determined (Li 2016, 1120–21). Li thus writes, "Ethics is attendant on history" (Li 2011, 6), and denounces relativ*ism*, despite endorsing the relativity of good and evil and right and wrong. The grounds for this absoluteness lie in the concrete needs of humankind—what Li refers to as "the extension of the life of the integrated totality (*zongti* 總體) of humankind past, present, and future" (ibid., 8). While the particular norms of specific societies may differ, morality retains ultimate grounding in the interests of greater humanity. Such grounding allows specific moral principles to be absolute imperatives without requiring the existence of universal and eternally applicable prescriptions or proscriptions.

Li grounds the importance of proper measure in the need to adapt to the constantly changing historical conditions in which humans live, which he describes as the "activity of continuously grasping precisely what is best as it constantly changes" and which "thereby allows the community and the individual to continuously expand their living existence" (Li 2018, 268–69). Li identifies these views and values with the traditional beliefs and values of Chinese culture, and specifically with their embrace of the constant processes of change through which the continuous generativity of the world and humanity—of their production and reproduction (*shengsheng* 生生)—takes place. It is precisely this value on which Li's historicism affirms both traditional and modern social morals. Li writes:

> I am a historicist. I see all of ethics and morals, including justice, as serving the continuous extension of human existence ... (as communities and societies) and understand justice as coming not from rational agreement between individuals but rather from the concrete historical circumstances of communal existence, including shared emotional experience (Li 2016, 1076).

Li argues that Confucianism prioritizes this value of production and reproduction, which occurs through diverse forms of natural and social human interrelation, which in turn produce moral norms and duties (ibid., 1096). These generative, reproductive relations are unequal (in various senses) and emotional. They are also structured by rational norms and are the source of meaning and value in human life (ibid.).

In this way, his ethical theory combines the grounds of traditional Chinese morals and modern liberal morals in his own interpretation of classical Confucian moral theory, which emphasizes morality's complex integration of emotion and reason and the fundamental role of the concrete situatedness of human experience.

> I view the formation or origin of the principles of justice through classical Confucian ideas such as that "rituals are generated from emotionality," "the way begins in emotionality," and "rituals are such due to human emotionality," all of which are found among the Guodian bamboo slips. (Li 2016, 1076)

In my reading of Li's ethics and political philosophy, then, humanity's concrete, continuous production and reproduction is the sole axiological foundation—the single normative assumption and source of normativity. That is to say, Li derives the moral force of his ethics from the value of human flourishing, in its continuously shifting historically relative forms.

Since production and reproduction consist in or occur only through concrete relations, the human values grounded in them are always situated and the substantive norms they generate always situationally particular; correspondingly, since particular human values are grounded in the more fundamental value of life producing life, their relativity takes on an absoluteness within these concrete empirical bounds. Thus, for Li, relativity is not relativism, so to speak. Li creates space for both relativity and objectivity by bounding the absolute value of human production and reproduction in the concrete forms of human relations through which it arises. This grounds liberal principles in a simpler and more stable axiology, with the help of historicism, than the more abstract formulations of, say, Rawlsian constructivism, or even the axiological (quasi-religious) assumptions of, say, Dworkinian human dignity. It also affirms these principles for modern Chinese society without the need to replace deeply embedded traditional values—the substantive moral character of Chinese society—with an imported value system. Li rather allows for Confucian morality to serve as the basis for affirming both traditional religious (comprehensive) morals and modern (liberal) social morals.

Li thus overcomes liberalism's internal contradiction—requiring hegemony in the name of self-determination—in two ways. He manages to endorse liberal principles without relying on foundationalist presumption of the value of liberty or freedom, as individual and collective self-determination, and he achieves a means of endorsing modern liberal social and political institutions in terms of values that Chinese citizens themselves hold. In the former, he avoids certain common but philosophically unstable axiological presumptions. In the latter he achieves a valuable means of connecting modern institutions to traditional values for Chinese societies.

Post-Liberalism

Li Zehou's affirmation of liberal principles, then, is embedded within—and even arrived at through—a deep critique of the liberal moral views through which

these principles arose and on which they continue to rest, however flimsy they may be in those forms. Li presents his own Confucian moral theory, on which he affirms liberal principles for modern society, in opposition to liberal moral theory, rejecting liberalism's overemphasis on reason and individualism and arguing for the more substantive and even foundational role of emotions and concrete interrelation present in classical Confucian morality. The production and reproduction of human flourishing through these relations are the ultimate grounds of this morality.

Concrete production and reproduction of human flourishing is also the basis on which John Gray ultimately affirms a non-foundationalist version of liberalism, which he refers to as "post-liberalism". The post-liberal denies liberal orders' "universal or apodictic authority", in contrast to the foundationalism of most or all liberal political philosophy (Gray 1993, 284). He sees liberal doctrines as futile attempts to establish the universal authority of culturally and historically particular liberal practices (ibid., 246), and although he recognizes that some contemporary liberals merely aim at articulating principles of liberal democratic society and claim no such universalism, including Joel Feinberg, Richard Flathman, and Joseph Raz as well as Rawls in his later work (Gray 1989, 266n35; 1993, 243, 246),[4] Gray rejects even these views as doctrinal, arguing that their failure to provide sound philosophical grounds for liberal principles evidences the impossibility of the task.

Gray identifies and pronounces the doctrinal death of four constitutive elements of liberalism: universalism, individualism, egalitarianism and meliorism (Gray 1993, 284—313), and argues that following this doctrinal death, what remains alive of liberalism "is the historic inheritance ... of a civil society whose institutions protect liberty and permit civil peace" (ibid., 284). Gray then re-affirms all four constitutive features of liberal doctrine, but "in a contextual form" as qualities of civil society (ibid., 319–20). It is civil society, the institutions and principles of which can take various and unfixed forms, that "both history and theory show to be the precondition of prosperity and liberty in the modern world" (ibid., 246). On the value of prosperity and liberty, Gray affirms the value of liberal institutions that serve as their precondition.

Gray, moreover, rejects presumption of—or what he calls "presumptivism" about—the value of liberty, arguing that it constitutes a widespread weakness of liberal theory. Instead, the value of liberty is, like other liberal principles and institutions, derivative of its role as an empirical condition of human flourishing. Gray

4 Gray references specifically Feinberg's *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law* (Oxford University Press, 1984), Flathman's *The Philosophy and Politics of Freedom* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), and Raz's *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

correspondingly rejects definitional or conceptual analysis of freedom *per se*, instead presenting himself as a theorist of concrete and historical practices of liberty.

> Freedom is on this account *constituted* by the practices of civil society, which it is the task of the theorist to illuminate. Any such understanding of the practice of liberty is bound to be an historical understanding—one that conceives of civil society as an historical artefact—but one that, in the context of the condition of late modernity (or early post-modernity) offers the best, if not the only prospect for the reproduction of civilized life. (Gray 1993, 318–19, emphasis in original)

The practice of liberty animates civil society (ibid., 284), and it is *only* through civil society that "a modern civilization can reproduce itself" (ibid., 246). Avoiding axiological (and in his view, axiomatic) reliance on a presumed value of liberty and of liberal principles and institutions as they developed in historically particular Western tradition, Gray rests his endorsement of these on their empirical role as conditions of human flourishing in modern society.

Like Li Zehou, then, Gray rejects liberal theory but then reaffirms liberal principles and institutions on the grounds of their concrete function in promoting continuous human flourishing in modern society. He rejects the *a priori* normative force of these principles, arguing that instead they instead they should be "contextualized and historicized as features of late modern (or early post-modern) societies and polities" (ibid., 284), and correspondingly ridicules the common presumption that political and social institutions as they developed in the West constitute ideal universal models.[5] Yet he finds alternative grounds for the normative force of liberal principles and institutions in their pragmatic effectiveness in producing and reproducing human flourishing. Moreover, since liberal civil society seems to, empirically speaking, possess universal value and even necessity in (best) fostering human flourishing through protecting free and secure personal and associational pursuit of interests, "all, or nearly all forms of government that allow for commodious living will in the foreseeable future be ones that shelter the institutions of civil society" (ibid.). Thus, also in line with Li, Gray affirms (non-doctrinal) universalism and (non-teleological) perfectionism: it is liberal civil society, and not liberal democracy, that will ultimately win over human allegiances across cultures and regimes (ibid., 246).

5 There is no universal ideal form of government, since regimes of many forms may protect the relevant institutions of civil society, as "a society in which most institutions, though protected by law, are independent of the state", with an emphasis on institutions that foster free and secure personal and associational pursuit of interests, such as "private property and contractual liberty under rule of law" (Gray 1993, 246).

Gray's post-liberal affirmation of liberal principles is achieved in slightly different terms than Li Zehou's, resting heavily on empirical pluralism rather than an emphasis on emotions and concrete relations: "a liberal civil society is the best one for cultures, such as all or virtually all contemporary cultures, which harbor a diversity of incommensurable conceptions of the good" (ibid., 284). Yet as seen above, Gray also relies heavily on relationality in affirming this pluralism, as where he writes that "human nature is always entirely constituted by a nexus of historically variant, culturally specific and alterable social relations" and that therefore "the forms of man's life are the creations of his own practice, constrained only by the facts of his constitution and by the circumstances he inherits from his forebears" (Gray 1989, 35).

While Gray, like other liberals, tends to avoid discussion of the moral importance of emotions, this may be implicit to, or at least necessarily implied by, his theory as well. Emotions are important, not only as part of these facts of human constitution and circumstance, but also in being essential to any concrete measurement of human flourishing. This is a point generally emphasized in Confucian teachings but often obscured in the rationalist discourse favoured by many contemporary Anglo-American theorists, who subsume the moral importance of emotions into moral "reasons," which are constituted by factual conditions of human circumstance (including the emotional elements therein), and who describe the affective force of these reasons in accounting for moral motivation as, for example, their (rational) "moral importance" (i.e. Parfit 2002, 310–12; Scanlon 2014, 5–7, 86–90).

The dangers of a purely rationalistic reliance on moral principles, without valuing people's emotions, is a major theme developed from the Confucian classics and emphasized by late-imperial Chinese Confucian thought. Qing-dynasty Confucian scholar Dai Zhen writes, for example, that disregard for human emotions in dealing with affairs leads to harming individuals, and even the state and all under heaven, because those referencing moral principles separate from human emotions and desires then elevate arbitrarily determined, abstract principles above concrete considerations of human suffering. This fails to recognize the importance of that suffering in determining what is right and wrong:

> When they see people crying out from hunger and cold, men and women wailing because of the injustice done to them, and even those on the verge of death still desperately hoping to live, they claim these are no more than human desires, point blankly to a thing [i.e., pseudo moral principle] devoid of feelings and desires, and claim that this is the original state of heavenly principle, preserved in their heart-minds. (Dai 1961, §40; Chin and Freeman 1990, 165)

Dai Zhen advocates an interpretation of classical Confucian teachings that embeds moral principles in the concrete patterns of human interrelation, the emotional dimensions of which must be studied in order to determine right and wrong, which are themselves axiologically grounded in the fundamental value of production and reproduction (*shengsheng* 生生) in human life. This pointed criticism of rationalism not only aligns with Li Zehou's arguments, but also importantly buttresses post-liberalism's anti-foundationalism more generally.

Thus, Li Zehou's rejection of the doctrinal universalism of foundationalist liberal theories accompanies a Confucian affirmation of liberal principles on "post-liberal" and Confucian grounds. Ultimately, post-liberalism—at least in East Asia, but likely beyond—may prove not only aligned with but, in its most philosophically robust form, also largely substantively indistinguishable from such a version of Confucian liberalism. Or viewed in the opposite direction, civil society governed by liberal principles may best allow, at least today, for a prevailing of the Confucian Way.

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OTHER TOPICS

"Yu Jiyuan 余紀元 and Retrofitting 'Metaphysics' for Confucian Philosophy: Human 'Beings' or Human 'Becomings'?"

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Abstract

In past work on Chinese "cosmology", I have resisted using the term "metaphysics" because of the history of this term in classical Greek philosophy. Angus Graham has warned us of the equivocations that arise in eliding the distinction between Greek ontology and classical Chinese cosmology. In this essay, I have been inspired by my dear friend the late Yu Jiyuan's distinction between classical Greek "metaphysics" and "contemporary metaphysics with ambiguous edges" to adapt the term "metaphysics" for use within the classical Confucian corpus. In the language of Confucian "metaphysics", the ultimate goal of our philosophical inquiry is quite literally "to know one's way around things" (*zhidao* 知道) in the broadest possible sense of the term "things". In the application of Confucian metaphysics, "knowing" certainly begins from the cognitive understanding of a situation, but then goes on to include the creative and practical activity of "realizing a world" through *ars contextualis*—the art of contextualizing things. I apply the insight that "metaphysics" so understood in the Confucian context provides a warrant for establishing a useful contrast between a Greek conception of the "human being" and a Confucian conception of "human becomings".

Keywords: Confucian metaphysics, human becomings, Yu Jiyuan, vital relationality

»Yu Jiyuan 余紀元 in obnova ‚metafizike' za konfucijansko filozofijo: človeško ‚bitje' ali nastajanje ‚človeškosti'?«

Izvleček

V svojih preteklih delih, ki so obravnavala kitajsko »kozmologijo«, se je avtor izogibal rabi termina »metafizika«, kajti ta pojem ima v klasični grški filozofiji specifično zgodovino. Že Angus Graham je opozarjal na zmedo, ki lahko nastane, če ne upoštevamo razlik med grško ontologijo in klasično kitajsko kozmologijo. Za pisanje pričujočega članka je avtorja navdihnil njegov dober prijatelj, pokojni kitajski filozof Yu Jiyuan, ki je vzpostavil razliko med klasično grško »metafiziko« in »sodobno metafiziko z nejasnimi robovi«, da

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bi s tem omogočil rabo termina »metafizika« znotraj klasičnega kitajskega korpusa. V jeziku konfucijanske »metafizike« je najvišji cilj filozofskega raziskovanja v »spoznavanju poti, ki vodi k stvarem« (*zhidao* 知道), pri čemer se izraz »stvar« razumeva v najširšem možnem pomenu. V okviru konfucijanske metafizike »spoznanje« izvira predvsem iz kognitivnega razumevanja, a v naslednjih korakih vendarle vključuje tudi ustvarjalno in praktično aktivnost »uresničenja oziroma dojetja sveta« preko ars contextualis, tj. umetnosti kontekstualizacije stvari. Avtor izhaja iz predpostavke, da nam tovrstno razumevanje »metafizike« v kontekstu konfucijanstva omogoča vzpostavitev koristnega kontrasta med grško konceptualizacijo človeka kot »človeškega bitja« in konfucijansko konceptualizacijo človeka v smislu »nenehnega nastajanja človeškosti«.

Ključne besede: konfucijanska metafizika, nastajanje človeškosti, Yu Jiyuan, vitalna relacionalnost

An *Ametaphysic* Metaphysics

One assumption we might all agree upon is that a first step in reading pre-Qin Confucian philosophical texts that are decidedly distant from us in time and place is to try with imagination to locate them within their own interpretive context.[1] We might refer to the uncommon historical and intellectual assumptions that constitute such an interpretive context alternatively as "persistent yet always changing ways of thinking and living", or as "a different worldview", or as "a process cosmology", or as "an early Confucian metaphysics". While the language of "ways of thinking and living" and "worldview" would seem to be philosophically innocent and hence unproblematic, the terms "cosmology" and "metaphysics", given their distinctive and protean histories within our own Western cultural narrative, would certainly require substantial qualification. David Hall and I used "cosmology" as a preferred alternative to "metaphysics" in our earlier work with some considerable trepidation. As a consequence, we invented the rather awkward and decidedly unnatural neologism "acosmotic cosmology" (Hall and Ames 1998, 249).

If we are going to use the term "metaphysics" to discuss early Confucianism, then as with "cosmology" we will have to begin deliberately by distinguishing whatever we might conceive of as Confucian "metaphysics" from the classical Greek definition of this same term. The distinguished scholar of classical Greek philosophy, Yu Jiyuan, appeals to Aristotle to explain the Greek understanding of metaphysics as first and foremost the study of ontology—that is, as the science of "being" *qua* being:

1 A good example of how the interpretive context makes a difference is the recent work by scholars such as David Wong, Chris Fraser, James Behuniak, Dan Robbins, Hui-chieh Loy, Ben Wong, and so on, who have taken on the challenge of reinstating the *Mozi* as integral to the intellectual debates that flourished in the pre-Qin period. The *Zhongyong* can best be interpreted as a Confucian argument against a possible Mohist reading of the relationship between *tian* and the human world.

> The most important question of Greek metaphysics is the problem of being (ontology, which is usually synonymous with general metaphysics, means literally a theory [*logos*] about "*onto*", the participle stem of the Greek verb "to be"). Aristotle has explicitly stated that the problem of being is "indeed the question which, both now and of old, has always (*aei*) been raised, and always (*aei*) been the subject of doubt (*Meta*. 1028b2-4)." (Yu 2011, 144)

If "metaphysics" is understood in this Aristotelian sense as knowledge of the ultimate and unchanging character of being *per se*, Confucian philosophy is resolutely ametaphysical (dare we say "ametaphysic"). But Yu Jiyuan quite rightly insists that we are free to retrofit our philosophical categories, and further allows that "in contemporary philosophy 'metaphysics' becomes a term with ambiguous edges" (Yu 2011, 138). In the same spirit as Yu Jiyuan then, I would argue that perhaps an acceptable alternative and more inclusive understanding of metaphysics in our own time might be something both as simple and as complex as "experience in its broadest perspective". As Wilfrid Sellars has observed about the function of philosophy in general:

> The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term. Under "things in the broadest possible sense" I include such radically different items as not only "cabbages and kings", but numbers and duties, possibilities and finger snaps, aesthetic experience and death. To achieve success in Philosophy would be, to use a contemporary turn of phrase, to "know one's way around" with respect to all these things, not in that unreflective way in which the centipede of the story knew its way around before it faced the question, "how do I walk?", but in that reflective way which means that no intellectual holds are barred. (Sellars 1963, 1)

In this essay, I will first say something briefly about the interpretive context needed for reading pre-Qin Chinese philosophy, and then I want to then try to use Yu Jiyuan's distinction between classical Greek "metaphysics" and "contemporary metaphysics with ambiguous edges" to establish a contrast between a Greek conception of the "human being" and a Confucian conception of "human becomings". As we will find below, in the language of Confucian "metaphysics", the goal of our philosophical inquiry, like Sellars', will be quite literally "to know one's way around things'" (*zhidao* 知道) in the broadest possible sense of the term "things". But with respect to "knowing", the real challenge for us, lies in understanding that in Confucian metaphysics, "knowing" certainly begins from the cognitive

understanding of a situation, but then goes on to include the creative and practical activity of "realizing a world" through *ars contextualis*—the art of contextualizing things. With respect to how we should understand "things" then, the Confucian world constituted of the "myriad things" (*wanwu* 萬物) refers in fact to all of the interdependent, dynamic events that constitute our shared experience, a shared experience in which we ourselves are included as active participants. In this Confucian "metaphysics" then, when we ask the question "What does it mean to be human?" the answer is that human persons are best understood not as "things" but as "events in history", not as something that we "are" but something that we "do", not ontologically as "beings" *per se* but as human "becomings".

Where to Begin Our Inquiry: "Only Becoming Is"

Hegel in the introduction §17 to his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* observes that one of the most difficult problems for a philosophical investigation is the question of where to begin (Hegel 1991, 41). Indeed, early in the Western narrative, thinking about the order of things began with ontological questions such as "What kinds of things are there?" and "What is the nature (*physis*) of things?". One reason for the irrelevance of this kind of ontology for Confucian metaphysics is reflected in the classical Chinese language itself. Since the classical Chinese does not employ a copulative verb that connotes "existence" as essential being *per se*, the Chinese terms usually used to stand in for and translate the alien notions of "being" and "not-being" have been *you* 有 and *wu* 無. But in fact, *you* does not mean that something "is" (*esse* in Latin) in the sense that it exists in some essential way; it means rather "having present-to-hand" or "to be around". On the bronzes, *you* is depicted as the right hand holding sacrificial meat that is to be shared:  . "To be" is thus "to be available", "to be around, and to have to share". Likewise, *wu* does not mean "to not be", but rather means "to not be around, to not be available". The sense of "being" as expressed in the classical Chinese language overlaps with "having", disposing those who would employ the notions of *you* and *wu* to concern themselves with the presence or absence of concrete particular things and the effects of having or not having them at hand. *You* and *wu* thus describe the growth or diminution of eventful relations among things rather than essences that individuate discrete and independent things. In the classical Chinese language with the central importance it invests in analogical and correlative thinking, the correlation of presumed relationships to do the work of the copula has led Chris Fraser to propose the hypothesis that "the concept of similarity or sameness plays a theoretical role for classical Chinese theorists analogous to that of *to be* or the copula in European languages" (Fraser 2012, 13–14). Even in recent centuries, when the translating of Indo-European cultures required the Chinese language to

designate a term to do the work of the copula, the choice was the pronoun *shi* 是, meaning "this", indicating relational proximity and immediate availability rather than "existence" *per se*.

Why would the ultimate mystery of being *per se*—that is, the question of "Why is there something rather than nothing?"—not arise in classical Confucian metaphysics? The answer simply put is because "only becoming is". For Confucian metaphysics, there is no "being" and "not-being" dualism that would allow for the isolating of the determinate and the indeterminate aspects of things made possible by the aseity or self-sufficiency of being *per se*—that is, a notion of existence that originates from and has no source other than itself. Thus, "being" and "not-being" are not available as possibilities that would occur to these early thinkers. Said the another way, because the determinate and indeterminate—*you-wu* 有無—are always mutually entailing correlatives, there is no such thing as "not-being" as a gaping void or an absolute nothingness, and no such thing as "being" as something that is independently permanent and unchanging. *Wu* is a term that describes an emptiness within the bounds of determinate yet changing form captured in "empty" (*zhong* 盅) as in an empty vessel. *Wu* also describes an undulating, inchoate state of indeterminacy reflected in the term "surging" (*chong* 沖): the as-yet unformed penumbra that honeycombs each of the myriad things and that explains the emergence of novel determinacy in the ceaseless process of transformation.[2] *You* then describes a persistent yet always changing determinate pattern within the flux and flow of experience. We might want to describe *you* as the rhythm or cadence of change rather than as any kind of static form.

Indeed, rather than the ontological question of "Why is there something rather than nothing?" we find an alternative question that arises in Confucian metaphysics. As a question that sets the main thesis of cosmological texts such as the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) and *Focusing the Familiar* (*Zhongyong* 中庸), we might formulate it as: If only "becoming" is, how can human beings collaborate most effectively with the Heavens and the Earth to get the most out of our experience and at the same time, produce a flourishing world?[3] This assumption that "only becoming is" would explain the genealogical rather than the "metaphysical" character of classical Chinese cosmogony, a genealogy that has neither an initial beginning nor any anticipated end. Such a dedicated genealogical cosmology provides a warrant for sinologist Gudula Linck to use the seemingly oxymoronic term "continuous cosmogony" (*ununterbrochene Kosmogonie*) in her description of it (Linck 2001).

2 See *Daodejing* 4 in which the textual variants describe *dao* 道 itself in these terms.

3 Dewey's pragmatism embraces a similar process cosmology, leading him to describe this ultimate mystery in these temporal terms: "The mystery of time is thus the existence of real individuals. ... The mystery is that the world is as it is—a mystery that is the source of all joy and all sorrow, of all hope and fear, and the source of development both creative and degenerative." (Dewey 1998, 225)

That is, this notion of cosmogenesis, rather than appealing for explanation to a *creatio ex nihilo* intervention from some independent and external source of order, references a process of "birthing" associated with the female (*shi* 始) that continues unabated without beginning or end. On the bronzes, the character *shi* 始 is written as  indicating the breeding and reproduction of mammals. That is, the sense of "beginning" is *shi* 始—a female conception, a natal, foetal beginning associated with a foetus (*tai* 胎) that inherits a world "bequeathed" (*yi* 詒) to it and "passed on" (*yi* 貽) from progenitors who have come before. The language is pervasively genealogical and ancestral (*zong* 宗), including within this vocabulary rather vague expressions such as "lord" (*di* 帝) and the often anthropomorphic *tian* 天 that seem to straddle the human and the numinous realms—both ancestors and gods.[4]

A distinct difference between a genealogical and a metaphysical cosmogony is that where the latter entails the intervention of some external creative source that establishes a "One-behind-the-Many" idealistic and teleologically driven metaphysics, the genealogical cosmogony always entails two elements in the creative process that must collaborate in conception and procreation. And a second fundamental difference is that whereas metaphysical cosmogonies promise increased illumination as we move back to and understand the ultimate source, a genealogical cosmogony describes a birthing from an inchoate, incipient life-form that presupposes genealogy and progenitors rather than originative principles or divine design, and a pattern of always-situated and cultivated growth in significance rather than the linear actualization of some predetermined potential. Hence, unlike some traditional Western cosmogonies that usher us back to the source of an intelligibility that has deliberately overcome chaos and has established order, Chinese natural cosmogonies direct us back to what, from our present perspective, is a world wherein the further back we go in the birthing canal, the more dark, amorphous, and remote it becomes for us. Further, the cosmogonic narrative takes us back to an earlier set of conditions that, requiring its own terms of understanding, cannot be explained by the application of our present philosophical vocabulary. As the cosmos changes, so must the language of its explanation.

The Primacy of Vital Relationality in Confucian Metaphysics

While the substance ontology of early Greek metaphysics establishes a doctrine of external relations among discrete "things" that each have their essential integrity, the processual "metaphysics" as it is expressed in the "Great Tradition" commentary on the *Book of Changes* and as it is implicit in the early Confucian texts

4 See the distinction between genealogical and metaphysical cosmogony in Ames 2011, 225–31.

treats phenomena as conterminous events that are constituted by their internal relations. In envisioning this relational alternative to the "being" of substance ontology, Peter Hershock looks to a doctrine of intrinsic, constitutive relations that makes "objects" simply the product of a mental abstraction from lived relations. As Hershock observes:

> ... what we take to be objects existing independently of ourselves are, in actuality, simply a function of habitual patterns of relationships. ... This amounts to an ontological gestalt shift from taking independent and dependent actors to be first order realities and relations among them as second order, to seeing relationality as first order (or ultimate) reality and all individual actors as (conventionally) abstracted or derived from them. (Hershock 2006)

What something is, what it does, and what it means for other things, are no more than aspects of its continuing narrative. Things are what they are because of their place and function in respect of the wholeness of experience. As Joseph Needham has observed with respect to early Chinese cosmology:

> Things behaved in particular ways ... because their position in the ever-moving cyclical universe was such ... If they did not behave in those particular ways they would lose their relational position in the whole (which made them what they were), and turn into something other than themselves. They were thus parts in existential dependence upon the whole world-organism. (Needham 1956, 280–81)

Thus it is that Confucian metaphysics begins *in medias res*—that is, from in the middle of things rather than at their causal beginning or teleological end—and it does not presume essential features or antecedent, determining principles as transcendent sources of order. Confucian metaphysics appeals not to some single, necessary, and independent source or goal that "de-realizes" our phenomenal experience, but to the project of "excelling at life" (*de* 德) and thereby "optimizing the experience of everything present-to-hand" (*daode* 道德) within our empirical experience. And it is a metaphysics only in so far as it follows from or further explains concrete human experience with careful observation and description of, and abstraction from, the existential continuum.

Since the categories that we derive from and apply to experience are the result of historical processes, they are always subject to further revision and are provisional rather than necessary, even if we cannot imagine any other way of organizing the content of our lives. Further, these concepts are a mere verbalization and formalization that translate the much richer, more primordial lived experience—our

immediate feelings—and as such, can only ever be explanatory approximations rather than ontological categories. As each thing in our immediate experience is constituted by a particular, dynamic matrix of relations within "everything present-to-hand" (*wanwu* 萬物 or *wanyou* 萬有), the starting point of this Confucian metaphysics, then, is the primacy of felt, vital relationality.

It is because the practical function of Confucian metaphysics is to produce additional significance in the growth of meaningful relations rather than to search for meaning provided by the discovery of origins or ends that the best designation for the most general "science" of order in the Confucian tradition might be the *ars contextualis* described above as "the art of contextualizing". Confucian thinkers sought to understand order as a participatory process requiring the artful coordination and disposition of things. The art of contextualizing seeks to understand and appreciate the manner in which particular things present-to-hand are, or may be, most harmoniously correlated to optimize their creative possibilities in the totality of the lived effect. Classical Confucian thinkers located the energy of this transformative process within a world that is *ziran* 自然—autogenerative, or literally "self-so-ing"—and found the more or less harmonious relations that constitute the particular things around them to be the natural condition of things. Such things require no appeal to an external ordering principle or agency for explanation, and are available to human beings, the most outstanding of whom serve as co-creators within this dynamic cosmos, and who participate fully in the correlating and coordinating of all things to make the most of our lived experience.

With this brief account of the Confucian side of the looking-glass in hand, and encouraged by Yu Jiyuan's distinction between Aristotelian metaphysics and a contemporary understanding of metaphysics "with ambiguous edges", I want to turn in the second part of this paper to a perceived distinction between ontologically determined "human beings" and the cultivation of relationally determined "human becomings". Indeed, the reward for having the courage to use the word "metaphysics" for Confucian philosophy is that it gives us license to be bold in our stride and grand in our conjectures.

Aristotle before Hegel was also concerned about where the philosophical investigation begins. And in looking for this beginning, he took "What is a person?" as his very first question. That is, Aristotle's *Categories* is the first text of the *Organon* in the standard *Corpus Aristotelicum.* And Aristotle's initial project in the *Categories* is to identify the set of questions that must be asked to give a full account of what can be predicated of a subject, with his own concrete example of this subject being "the man in the market-place". In the several different versions of these categories found throughout his corpus, "What is a man?" is not only his first question, but is also his primary one. Its primacy lies in the fact that, in Aristotle's answer to this question, he introduces an ontological disparity by first identifying the necessary

essence or substance of the subject (Gk. *ousia*, L. *substantia*)—"What 'is' a man?" followed then by questions that distinguish this person's various secondary and contingent attributes: "What is 'in' a man?" Aristotle explains this ontological distinction between substance and attribute in the following terms:

> To give a rough idea, examples of substance are man, horse; of quantity: four-foot, five-foot; of qualification: white, grammatical; of a relative: double, half, larger; of where: in the Lyceum, in the market-place; of when: yesterday, last-year; of being-in-a-position: is-lying, is-sitting; of having: has-shoes-on, has-armour-on; of doing: cutting, burning; of being-affected: being-cut, being-burned. (Aristotle 1984, 1a25–2b4)

For Aristotle, the "What?" question has primacy because it provides us with the essential subject: that is, what identifies the underlying substance of what the man *is*. The various other questions that are prompted by the remaining secondary conditions—quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection—seek to provide us with the full complement of attributes that are "in" a subject or can be said "of" a subject as contingent and conditional predicates, none of which can exist without supervening on this subject. In Aristotle's own language:

> All the other things are either said of the primary substances as subjects or in them as subjects. ... So if the primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist. (Aristotle 1984, 2a35–2b5-6)

It is interesting and important to note that Aristotle's set of questions does not include "How?" or "Why?" because his substance ontology has causal and teleological entailments that already answer such questions. Aristotle thus assumes a complete propositional description does not require further explanation, an assumption that we will see is untenable in Chinese process cosmology where the first questions are going to be "Whence?" and "Whither?"—what are the shared narratives of persons and where are they going?

In reflecting on Aristotle's strategy for a complete description and what it reveals about his categories, Graham observes:

> Aristotle's procedure is to isolate one thing from others, treating even transitive verbs ("cuts", "burns") as objectless, and even the relative ("half", "bigger") as not relating two things but said of one with reference to the other (Graham 1990, 380).

We can say of the man in the market-place that "he-burns" or "he-cuts" as a predicate without need of stipulating the object of this action, and we can say "he-is-bigger" as a characteristic of him in reference to a second person rather than describing a relationship between the two.

Graham reflects on the extent to which this substance ontology individuates and decontextualizes the man by locating his potentialities as residing essentially within him:

> Aristotle's thinking is noun-centered; he starts with the substance identified as man, and before introducing any verb but "to be" can already ask "When was he in the market-place?" and "Where was he yesterday?" but not "Whence?" or "Whither?" (Graham 1990, 391)

Aristotle's ontology allows for a notion of simple location and of discrete individuality, and favours the noun form grammatically—the "man" in the marketplace—as the ground for the attributes that can then be ascribed to him. Importantly, the potential of the man's formal essence and his final *telos* as a man makes the explanatory questions of "Whence?" and "Whither?" moot.

In his work on social ontology, David Weissman describes Aristotle as asserting the kind of discrete identity that makes us into individuals and is the basis of external rather than internal relations:

> Things that have matter and form—primary substance—are freestanding. Each is self-sufficient ... Aristotle would have us believe that a thing's relations to other things—including spatial, temporal, and causal relations—are incidental to its identity. He reasoned that identity is established by form, so that relations to other things many only support, somewhat disguise, or threaten the thing. (Weissman 2000, 95)

One of the corollaries of an Aristotelian substance ontology that gives privilege to such an isolated, individual subject is the experience of the world as being populated by discrete things or objects, that "object" to us in standing off independent of us. And a second corollary of this ontology is the doctrine of external relations it assumes: that is, it construes these various independent objects each with its own essential integrity as first-order, discrete things—what they really are—and then any relations that might conjoin them as only second-order, contingent relations that they subsequently contract.

In the Confucian canons, by contrast, "human becomings" is necessarily plural in that if there is only one person, there are no persons. We need each other to become who we will be. And beyond each other, we are also taken to be integral

to and have a reflexive relationship within the creative cosmic process, and cannot extricate ourselves from it. It is the imminent, inchoate, and thus underdetermined penumbra of the emerging cosmic order that provides the opening and opportunity for those cultivated human "becomings" who in the process of becoming exemplary in their own persons collaborate symbiotically with the Heavens and Earth to be co-creators in achieving a flourishing world. Moreover, through the reflexive internalization and consolidation of this virtuosic conduct in their own persons, the entire cosmos becomes implicated in them in the process of them becoming consummately who they are. This is what the *Mencius* means when it says:

> 孟子曰：「萬物皆備於我矣。反身而誠，樂莫大焉。強恕而行，求仁莫近焉。」
>
> Mengzi said, "Is there any enjoyment greater than, with the myriad events of the world all implicated here in me, to turn personally inward and to achieve resolve (*cheng* 誠). Is there any way of seeking to become consummate in my person more immediate than making every effort to put myself in the place of others." (7A4)

In this passage, everything in the world is drawn into, implicated in, and brought into focus as one's habitual dispositions, making one "most intensive" (*zhigang* 至剛) in one's resolve. And these focused habits of conduct then extend outward through putting oneself in the place of other things, making one "most extensive" (*zhida* 至大) in one's reach and influence. Such is the result of nourishing one's "flood-like *qi*" (*haoranzhiqi* 浩然之氣).[5]

Indeed, the capacity of exemplary persons, through personal cultivation and an achieved inner intensity and resolve, to produce increased significance in all of the relations that constitute them and their world is illustrative of the Confucian assumption that creativity is always embedded and situated as *creatio in situ*. Given that Confucian morality is nothing more or less than deliberate growth in relations, these exemplars are thus able to achieve cosmic stature as a continuing source of moral meaning in their increasingly intimate relationship with their world. That is, any sense of the remoteness and externality of the cosmos gives way to an awareness of an increasingly mutual and indeed social coalescence with this world that is supported by feelings of deference, belonging, and trust.[6] It is

5 See also *Mencius* 2A2.

6 It is this sense of the inseparability of the human and the natural worlds that is inspiring the contemporary movement in the social sciences and humanities to herald an Antropocene epoch by challenging the nature/social dualism and embracing nature as a social category (see Gisli Palsson et al. 2013).

only through transforming the *tianren* 天人 correlative relationship into one of sociality and indeed of an evolving religiousness that these exemplary persons can make this profound difference. Such achieved harmony and clear resolution in our relationships is the very root from which the flourishing world order emerges, and contributes to the life force that guides it forward on its proper course. It is the human sense of felt worth and belonging within this dynamic cosmic life force that gives Confucian philosophy its profound religious significance.

I have suggested that metaphysics in the Confucian tradition might be best understood as "experience in broadest perspective", or perhaps more specifically, as "knowing one's way around the myriad things". In any case, it invariably includes both the human perspective and the human aspiration to live a consummate life. And the starting point for a philosophical investigation of this human experience must be the primacy of vital relations. Yu Jiyuan has challenged us to retrofit the term "metaphysics" in a way that will make it relevant to classical Confucian philosophy. I think the distinction between an Aristotelian "human being" and Confucian "human becomings" as a result of this challenge, can serve us well.

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Zhang Junmai's Early Political Philosophy and the Paradoxes of Chinese Modernity

Eric S. NELSON *

Abstract

This article examines the significance of reflexive self-critical modernity in the development of early "New Confucianism" by reconsidering the example of Zhang Junmai in the context of the May Fourth and New Culture Movements. Whereas these movements advocated scientific rationality and thorough Westernization, Zhang's education and research in Germany before and after the First World War led him to a critical perspective on Western modernity informed by its contemporary crisis tendencies and Western philosophical and social-political critics. Zhang adopted elements from German Idealism, life-philosophy, and social democracy to critique the May Fourth and New Culture Movements and reconstruct the "rational core" and ethical sensibility of Confucian philosophy. Zhang's "self-critical modernity" was oriented toward a moral and social-political instead of a scientific and technological vision of Westernization. Zhang's position was condemned by New Culture champions of scientific modernity who construed Zhang's position as reactionary metaphysics beholden to the past without addressing his self-critical interpretation of modernity that adopted early twentieth century Western critiques of the spiritual and capitalist crisis-tendencies of modernity. In response to this complex situation, Zhang articulated a phenomenological interpretation of the social-political, ethical, and cultural lifeworld, drawing on classic and contemporary Chinese and Western sources, which endeavoured to more adequately address the paradoxes of Westernization and modernization, and the crisis of Chinese ethical life.

Keywords: Zhang Junmai, modernity, May Fourth Movement, lifeworld, rationality, democratic socialist politics

Zgodnja politična filozofija Zhang Junmaija in paradoksi kitajske modernosti

Izvleček

Besedilo proučuje pomen reflektivne samokritične modernosti v razvoju zgodnjega »novega konfucianizma«, in sicer na primeru ponovne obravnave Zhang Junmaija v kontekstu gibanja četrtega maja in novih kulturnih gibanj. Medtem ko so se intelektualci

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v gibanjih zavzemali za znanstveno racionalnost in popolno vesternizacijo, je Zhanga izobraževanje in raziskovanje v Nemčiji pred prvo svetovno vojno in po njej usmerilo h kritičnemu pogledu na zahodno modernost, ki sta ga oblikovali sočasni kriza in zahodna filozofska ter družbenopolitična kritika. Zhang je v kritiko gibanja četrtega maja in novih kulturnih gibanj uvedel elemente nemškega idealizma, filozofije življenja in socialne demokracije ter rekonstruiral »racionalno jedro« in etično senzibilnost konfucijanske filozofije. Zhangova »samokritična modernost« je usmerjena k moralnemu in družbenopolitičnemu pogledu in ne k znanstveni in tehnološki viziji vesternizacije. Zagovorniki nove kulture znanstvene modernosti so Zhangovo trditev imeli za nazadnjaško metafiziko, ki je zavezana preteklosti, pri čemer niso upoštevali njegove samokritične interpretacije modernosti, ki je sprejela zahodno kritiko duhovnih in kapitalističnih kriznih tendenc modernosti z začetka 20. stoletja. Kot odziv na te kompleksne razmere je Zhang oblikoval fenomenološko interpretacijo družbenopolitičnega, etičnega in kulturnega življenjskega sveta, ki črpa iz klasičnih in sodobnih kitajskih in zahodnih virov in si prizadeva za bolj enakovredno obravnavo paradoksov vesternizacije in modernizacije ter krize etičnega življenja na Kitajskem.

Ključne besede: Zhang Junmai, moderna, gibanje četrtega maja, življenjski svet, racionalnost, socialnodemokratska politika

Introduction: The May Fourth Movement and the Question of Modernity[1]

The historian Yu Ying-shih 余英時 described in his recent memoir (*Yu Ying-shih huiyi lu* 余英時回憶錄) how slowly the idea of a "May Fourth Movement" (*wusi yundong* 五四運動) was disseminated. Yu narrates an anecdote from the diary of Hu Shi 胡適, dated July 24, 1922, in which Hu expressed his dismayed surprise about how many students, while taking college entrance examinations, had no conception of what the May Fourth Movement was and signified (Yu 2018, 25).

A more radical interpretation might contend that the very idea of the May Fourth Movement is a retrospective historical construction by, initially, the intellectuals of the "New Culture Movement" (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動) in their totalizing polemic against traditional culture, and subsequently by a Chinese communism that constructed its origins from the sprouts of progressive May Fourth ideas.[2] Despite the identification of the iconoclasm of the May Fourth and New Culture

1 I would like to thank Shengqing Wu and Tze-ki Hon for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

2 On the "totalistic antitraditionalism" of the May Fourth era, see Lin 1979. On the historical connections between the May Fourth Movement and communism, see, for instance, the work on Guo Moruo 郭沫若 by Chen 2007.

Movements with the Communist war against tradition as feudalistic, which culminated in the Cultural Revolution (*wenhua dageming* 文化大革命), a theme we will return to below, significant differences remain (see Zhang 1952, 47).

The varied reception of the May Fourth Movement, which has been interpreted as a model for the Communist and Cultural Revolutions as well as the June 4, 1989 and more recent democratic protest movements, over the last hundred years discloses how it has been constructed and reconstructed for a variety of intellectual, cultural, and social-political purposes.[3] An initial problem in considering the idea of May Fourth is its belatedness and reinterpretation according to the imperatives and needs of a plurality of different competing discourses. Edmund S. K. Fung introduced distinctions between traditionalism and modern conservativism in Republican China, further distinguishing between cultural and political forms of conservativism (Fung 2009, 777–813; see also Fung 2010). Yet if the multiplicity of overlapping distinctive trends and tendencies are to be adequately differentiated, the narrative of Westernizing progressive *versus* conservatives and traditionalists is in need of a more fundamental complication and revision (cf. Fang 2019, 106). This first nexus of issues concerns the belatedness, constructed formation, and multiple purposes of "May Fourth". A second concerns the dangers of "Whig History" and the reductive levelling of progressive interpretations.

Wang Fan-sen 王汎森 argued in a recent article that the May Fourth Movement signifies a mixed period (or "confused period") that should be interpreted as a network or sematic field rather than as a transition in a linear progression (Wang 2019, 18–31). We can draw from his discussion how this field of forces concentrated around questions of: (1) Enlightenment and revolution; (2) freedom, equality, and lifeview; and (3) colonialism and capitalism.

The identification of the May Fourth Movement with Western ideas of progress and modernization, and its critics with traditionalism and conservatism, is a prominent feature of both initial proponents and subsequent accounts. Modernity, progress, and Westernization are deeply value-laden and not neutral, objective or scientific expressions. They presuppose the narrative of a necessary progress that relies on problematic teleological (and thus metaphysical) presuppositions about the goal-oriented nature of history and the perfectibility of the human species.

As critical social theorists from Adorno and Horkheimer to Foucault have revealed, naïve progressive histories face the danger of constructing a "Whig history" in which this movement is interpreted as inevitably progressing towards the

3 For extensive discussions of the problems of interpreting the significance of May Fourth, see Chow, Hon, Ip, and Price 2008.

achievement of a specific conception of enlightenment and freedom (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002).[4] The Whig approach to history is not accidental, given the reliance on Victorian conceptions of science and scientific progress among prominent New Culture intellectuals—such as Hu Shi and Ding Wenjiang 丁文江—who appealed to Western advocates of the positivist program of a comprehensive scientization of culture such as W. K. Clifford, T. H. Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, as well as more recent thinkers such as John Dewey and his instrumentalist reinterpretation of the positivist paradigm.[5]

There are consequently two interconnected forms of reductionism to be addressed: the reductive account of modernity and Chinese modernity, and the positivist reduction of culture to science and life to instrumental rationality and technique. Hu could write to an American friend in 1924 and assert in his debate over life-philosophy and scientism that: "We are here living over the days of Huxley and W. K. Clifford" (Hu 2007, 225; Egan and Zhou 2009, 176). According to Hu, the new culture is a struggle of science against religion, superstition, and—following its positivist denigration—metaphysics. Science is understood in terms of Darwinistic pragmatism, according to which progress signifies the increasing instrumental adaptation to and manipulation of the environment. In line with his Victorian and pragmatist sources—and unlike Rudolf Carnap and the emerging logical positivism of the Vienna Circle that was concerned with the question of science's social value and radically demarcated scientific and non-scientific questions[6]—Hu's pragmatist naturalism could not adequately address the normative and interpretive complexity of the social-political and ethical "lifeworld", which would be developed in Zhang's works, and consequently issues such as the naturalistic misconception of deriving norms from facts and the extent to which a "naturalistic" scientific life-attitude and culture concern the question of the value of the sciences rather than scientific truth.

The Complexity of Chinese Modernities

The Whig progressive *versus* conservative narrative is required by its own logic to oversimplify and marginalize the cases of intellectuals who diverge from this

4 A classic account of Whig history is found in Butterfield 1931. On the May Fourth movement and the discourse of Enlightenment, see Schwarcz 1986.

5 On Dewey, Hu, and the modernization of China, see Tan 2003; Tan 2012, 23–44; Wang 2007; Zhang 2010.

6 On the complexity of Carnap's relation to life-philosophy, see Nelson 2018b, 321–46; and Nelson 2013, 151–56.

reductive narrative and who are simultaneously traditional and modern, "conservative" and "progressive" in different respects. Recent historical works have demonstrated the traditionalism of modernizers and the modernity of conservative traditionalists in Republican China.[7] Furthermore, as we will consider here, there are modernizing intellectuals who offer different conceptions of what it means to be modern and of the relation between modernity and the past. There is thus a need to consider the multiplicity and conflict of interpretations over what it signifies to be "modern" in Western as much as in Chinese contexts and discursive formations.

Accordingly, I would like to reconsider an alternative example, or case-study, that throws the prominent homogenizing narratives of modernity and Chinese modernity into question, indicating the potential for a more complex, differentiated, and nuanced account of the May Fourth Movement, its consequences, and its contemporary significance.

The philosopher, political activist, and public intellectual Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (birth name: Zhang Jiasen 張嘉森, 1886–1969), also known as Carsun Chang in the Western world, has had two receptions: one as a moral and cultural conservative follower of Liang Qichao 梁啟超 defending "oriental civilization", and the other as a tenacious advocate of constitutionalism, democracy, and a socialist mixed economy.[8] Zhang's example indicates the problematic status of standard narratives of modern Chinese history. He is typically yet inappropriately—given his progressive politics and modernistic intercultural appropriation of Chinese traditions—categorized in discussions of his Confucianism as a "conservative" or "neoconservative" critic and opponent of the May Fourth Movement who engaged in disputes with significant representatives of the New Culture Movement such as—in the polemical response against his lecture on "lifeview" (*Lebensanschauung*; *rensheng guan* 人生觀) at Tsinghua University (清華大學) on February 14, 1923—Hu Shi, Ding Wenjiang, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, and Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉.[9] Drawing on contemporary European life-philosophical and Neo-Kantian sources that had established a demarcation between science and lifeview, Zhang articulated the difference between lifeviews (which presuppose the affective, ethical, and cultural dimensions of human life) and scientific discourses that were ignored in the positivist and pragmatist enthusiasm of New Culture intellectuals.

7 There is a new wave of reexamination of the complexity of tradition and modernity in modern China, see for instance Wu 2013.

8 For an overview of Zhang's thought and its relationship with German and intercultural philosophy, see chapter two of Nelson 2017.

9 These essays are gathered in two different collections, including one by Zhang (Zhang 1924).

The construction of Zhang as a conservative anti-May Fourth intellectual could only be perceived to be legitimate from a perspective that homogenizes modern Chinese intellectual history. Zhang actively advocated a progressive form of politics, namely, a democratic constitutional socialism, from World War One to his lectures on socialism near the end of his life (*Shehui zhuyi sixiang yundong gaiguan* 社會主義思想運動概觀), and critiqued the proposals associated with the May Fourth and New Culture Movements from a "leftist" socialist perspective as well as the so-called "rightist" perspectives of life-philosophy and Confucian ethical-political thought (Zhang 2015).[10]

Assessments emphasizing Zhang's conservative political sensibility neglect his life-long commitment to democratic socialism. Zhang personally met, corresponded, and learnt from German social democratic intellectuals and politicians—including key figures such as Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky, and Philipp Heinrich Scheidemann—as he described in a 1928 essay on his political impression of traveling and studying in Europe from 1919 to 1921 (Zhang 1928, 21–24). He studied law with the Marxist Karl Korsch (a pioneering figure of "Western Marxism") as well as philosophy with the idealist life-philosopher Rudolf Christoph Eucken in Jena, with whom he co-wrote *Das Lebensproblem in China und Europa* (Zhang 2015, 2; Korsch 2001, 1147; Zhang and Eucken 1922).

In the same period as Zhang engaged in the life and science controversy, in which he articulated a position closer to Wilhelm Dilthey than to his teacher Eucken in defending the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) and the role of freedom in the cultivation of a lifeview (*Lebensanschauung*), he was an exponent of contemporary German social democratic and British labour social-political thought that he helped introduce to China in his 1920 essay on the respective merits of German social democracy *vis-à-vis* Soviet communism (*Zhongguo zhi qiantu: Deguo hu? Eguo hu?* 中國之前途： 德國乎？ 俄國乎?), and his 1922 report on German social democracy (*Xin Deguo shehui minzhu zhengxiang ji* 新德國社會民主政象記) (Zhang 1922b). He engaged with British socialist theory in a 1928 essay on the prominent left-leaning British labour theorist Harold Laski, published in the anti-nationalist and anti-communist alternative socialist magazine *The New Way* (*Xinlu* 新路) that he co-edited and which was suppressed by the Nationalist authorities, and a 1930 translation, under the name Zhang Shilin 張士林, of *A Grammar of Politics* (*Zhengzhi dianfa* 政治典範) (Zhang 1928b, 35–36; Zhang 1930b). Laski would be a key figure for democratic socialism in the developing world (notably, Jawaharlal Nehru in India) and the China Democratic League

10 On Zhang's socialism, see Jeans 1997. On the relation between his conceptions of Confucian ethics and politics of freedom, see Guo 2017.

(*Zhongguo minzhu tongmeng* 中國民主同盟), with his influence seen in members such as the ill-fated advocate of individual rights Chu Anping 儲安平, who had studied with Laski at the London School of Economics (Wong 1993, 457–90).

In this article, I will examine the relevance of Zhang's thinking to an intercultural phenomenology (in the wider sense of this expression) of the lifeworld, rationality, and democratic socialist politics. Zhang's social-political writings from the 1920s to 1940s reveal a noteworthy Chinese and intercultural contribution to a phenomenology of cultural and social-political life. He engaged in debates over the best route to the socialization of the means of production and society, advocating the role of ethical and democratic steering in socialization in contrast to its totalitarian imposition. Zhang offers ways of interculturally contesting and rethinking the social philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Jürgen Habermas, as he oriented the goals of the realization of socialism and democracy in relation to the concrete realities of the Chinese form of historical life, which offers an alternative way of conceptualizing the lifeworld to classical phenomenology, and which he depicted through a life-philosophical and phenomenological interpretation that emphasized its implicit rationality, intercultural openness, and historical transformability.[11] Zhang's commitments to constitutionally guaranteed political and social rights and democratic rule and socialization indicate that a more complex and multifaceted history of Chinese modernity—in which specifically modern radically democratic incarnations of Confucianism are possible—is needed in contrast to homogenous narratives that contend that modernity can have only one (whether constructed according to liberal or communist preconceptions) hegemonic form.

Zhang Junmai in the Wake of May Fourth 1919

Republican China began politically in 1912 with the fall of the Qing Dynasty. Yet it is "May Fourth 1919" that signifies the irrevocable cultural and social breakthrough of the West and modernity into Chinese life. There are multiple interpretations of the events associated with May Fourth, 1919 and its highly contested implications for Chinese modernization. Zhang offers us a multifaceted example to reconsider the question of May Fourth and modernity.

11 Zhang was one of the first authors to discuss Husserl in Chinese, but does not appear directly influenced by him. Nonetheless, his approaches to issues of rationality, historical life, and crisis shares historical sources and affinities with phenomenology as developed in Husserl. For more on Zhang and European thought, cf. chapter two of Nelson 2017. On Husserl, Habermas, and intercultural philosophy, see chapter six.

One way of contextualizing the construction of his image as an anti-May Fourth conservative is to return to the archives and historical records. Zhang's initial comments are developed in "China and the League of Nations" published on Oct 23, 1919 in the Hong Kong based English language newspaper *South China Morning Post* (Zhang 1919). In this short piece balancing the nationalism of the student movement and an international legal and ethical order that would protect the weak (Republican China) from the powerful (Imperial Japan), Zhang endorsed the aims and aspirations of the students, maintaining that the Chinese people had supported the allied cause and the Wilsonian idea of internationalism in World War I and were opposed to the League of Nations due to the unjust settlement that transferred German colonial interests in Shandong to the Japanese.

Zhang's 1919 discussion occurs within the context of Chinese modernity, interpreted as a formation of tensions and contestations instead of as a homogenous unity. They concern building a modern nation-state, as Zhang employed concepts of national self-interest and the realization of a just international political order.[12]

Zhang would remain sympathetic to what he described as the primary significance of the 1919 student movement in contrast to its later reinterpretations and appropriations by the New Culture and Communist movements. It was an expression of the needs and aspirations of the Chinese people for autonomy and respect. In "Modernization of China and Revival of the Philosophy of the Confucian School", a 1965 lecture in South Korea, he noted how its hidden meaning was how the Chinese youth demanded radical transformations for the sake of transforming China into a modern nation state (Zhang 1965, 91).

Zhang's commitment to two fundamental demands of the historic May Fourth Movement, namely, anti-colonial nationalism and the introduction of democracy without the tutelage of one political party, remains operative throughout his political writings and is noticeable in his philosophical works.

O. Brière S. J. remarked in *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy, 1898–1950* that: "Chang Chun-mai was a partisan of state socialism: for him, the nation comes first, and socialism itself is subordinate to it. But his idealistic socialism is aligned more closely with the Communist party than with the Kuomintang" (Briere, 1956, 31). To be more precise, as glimpsed in his 1919 article and as more fully elucidated in his 1930s writings advocating a Chinese form of democratic socialism, nationalism signified both: (1) a pragmatic imperative of realistic international politics to preserve and assert national interests, which China had failed to follow to its near destruction; and (2) a normative model of collective flourishing to critique actually

12 On the context of the idea of nation building, see Hon 2015.

existing conditions and encourage their active transformation through the development of constitutional democracy, socialist planning and steering of the economy that drew on Western and Soviet models, and a renewed Confucian ethos that drew on and dialogically engaged Western sources without merely passively receiving and imitating them.[13] It is important to consider how "Western modernity" is at best a heuristic and more often a myth given the multiplicity of Western modernities that were re-interpreted, negotiated, and transformed in the "non-Western" (an expression that perpetuates the idea of the asymmetrical separation of the "West") colonial and quasi-colonial (such as Republican China) periphery.

Nationalism, Autonomy, and Self-Power in Zhang's Reading of Fichte and Spinoza

The nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 had in his 1924 lecture "Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism", published in *Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義 (*The Three Principles of the People*), defended the anti-colonial nationalism of oppressed peoples against the false universality of colonial cosmopolitanism (Sun 1996). Zhang's nationalism likewise addressed an oppressed and scattered people. This is evident in his writings on the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte published in 1926 and 1932. In the 1926 article "The Patriotic Philosopher: Fichte" (*Aiguo de zhexuejia: Feixid*e 愛國的哲學家: 菲希德), the Germany of 1808 is interpreted as a failed state (it is a multiplicity of conflicting states) suffering from Napoleonic invasion and national crisis (Zhang 1926, 71–77). Zhang begins by drawing parallels between the 1808 German and 1926 Chinese situation, interpreting Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* (*Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808)) as a call for autonomy, on the one hand, and on the other a patriotic popular movement for national rebirth (*zaisheng* 再生, which would become the name of the journal titled *National Renaissance* in English) that could mobilize a semi-colonized, beleaguered, and abject nation (see Mittler 2018, 102–3).

In his 1926 Fichte article, Zhang's argumentation follows the themes of Fichte's *Addresses* and deploys the Kantian language of autonomy, concluding that there is a need for the radical reform of Chinese life in three areas: (1) education, (2) morality, and (3) national spirit (*minzu jingshen* 民族精神) and patriotism (*aiguo yuanli* 愛國原理).

13 Zhang was a leading figure in a number of political parties and movements during the Republican era, including the Chinese State Socialist Party (*Zhongguo guojia shehui dang* 中國國家社會黨), the Chinese Democratic League (*Zhongguo minzhu tongmeng* 中國民主同盟), the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party (*Zhongguo minzhu shehui dang* 中國民主社會黨). On Zhang's socialist politics, see Jeans 1997.

First, education is described in a Kantian language, in particular in Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?" (1784) as requiring the cultivation of autonomy that necessitates a thorough self-examination and self-critique to escape from a self-produced and self-imposed tutelage. Although a process of Enlightenment is not lacking in Chinese history, and Chinese Enlightenment thought was for him one of the sources of the European Enlightenment, the Chinese people lacked autonomy. National education is consequently construed as a political education in individual freedom that was currently lacking in Chinese historical life.

Secondly, moral-reformation counters an internally produced and self-imposed illness and degeneration that has been created by oneself and one's own motivations. Moral reform of a crisis-ridden form of life can occur through a reconstruction of morality and the formation of a "new self" and a new national spirit in which self-respect and self-love can flourish, as well as love for others and a new sense of public community.

Finally, third, self-interested and selfish concerns have led the Chinese people into colonial slavery and tutelage. New motivations of "national spirit" and "patriotism" require overcoming merely personal individual concerns, including the ownership of property, and the development of one's own power and own character. Independence is achieved through a focus on social rather than merely individual fulfilment (Zhang 1926, 71–77).

The concept of the individual and collective development of autonomy and "self-power", gained in engagement with the "activist idealism" of Kant, Fichte, and Eucken and reinterpreted in relation to Neo-Confucian thinkers such as Wang Yangming 王陽明, are key underlying concerns of Zhang's interpretation and appropriation of modern Western philosophy in the 1920s and 1930s. Zhang connected the Kantian notion of autonomy, the defining concept of political liberalism according to John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, during this period with the notion of increasing self-generative power, a concept—as Hannah Arendt has demonstrated—that has significant roles and an interconnected history in republican and fascist political thought (Habermas 1995, 109–31; Arendt 1968). This problematic of "self-determination" (*Selbstbestimmung*) is visible in Fichte's political thought and its reception.[14]

14 Fichte had sympathized with the republicanism of the French Revolution in his *Contribution to the Correction of the Public's Judgments Regarding the French Revolution* (*Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Urteile des Publikums über die französische Revolution* (1793)) and, after his disillusionment with French imperialism, called in the *Addresses* for national mobilization against the occupying French forces. Fichte's *The Closed Commercial State* (*Der geschlossene Handelsstaat* (1800)) proposed the idea of a self-sufficient planned national economy. On the complexity of Fichte's nationalism, see James 2015; Kohn 1949, 319–43.

Zhang was familiar with the contemporary German reception of Fichte in Eucken and Hans Driesch, and appears aware of the contested political dimensions and implications of Fichte's political thought. Zhang's Jena teacher and collaborator Eucken had utilized—like Husserl in his 1917 Lectures on "Fichte's Ideal of Humanity" (*Fichtes Menschheitsideal*)—Fichte's *Addresses* in *The Bearers of German Idealism* (*Die Träger des deutschen Idealismus* (1915)) to defend a nationalist vision of German spirit during the First World War (Husserl 1987, 267–95; Husserl 1995, 111–33). Zhang had accompanied the pacifist and liberal neo-vitalist philosopher Hans Driesch during his 1922 stay in China, collaborating with Qu Shiying 瞿世英 on translating lectures that included one centred on Fichte's *Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge* (*Wissenschaftslehre* (1795)).[15] He also noted the reverential, religious attitude of German National Socialism toward Fichte's *Addresses* in his 1932 forward to his selected translation (Fichte, 1932).[16] The fascist, communist, and social democratic receptions of Fichte emphasized in their own ways his ideas of practical activism, economic planning, and self-determination that likewise are of primary concern in Zhang's interpretation.[17]

The relation of autonomy and power is addressed again in 1932 in relation to Spinoza's political thought. Hu Shi and Zhang Junmai contributed essays to a 1932 collection on Spinoza, *Dem Andenken Spinozas* (*In Remembrance of Spinoza*) that included German and Chinese texts, in honour of the three hundredth anniversary of the philosopher's birth (Hu 1932).[18] Both authors were operating within the confines and pressures of the censorship of the Nationalist regime. Hu's essay compared Spinoza and Zhuangzi as pantheistic philosophers. Hu avoided directly discussing politics, and concluded by interpreting *wuwei* 無爲 as non-interference and keeping to one's own affairs. Similar to Hu's contribution, Zhang played with Daoist language and images in his essay. Unlike Hu, however, he did not focus on quiet withdrawal but on Spinoza's political philosophy, praising his contributions to democratic-republican thought and focusing on the relationship between autonomy and power (*potentia*). *Potentia* signifies, Zhang argued, how the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物) receive power (*quanli* 權力) and movement (*dong* 動) from a self-generative (*ziyin* 自因) god (*shen* 神) and nature (*ziran* 自然) as expressions for one and the same reality.

15 Fichte is discussed in Driesch's eighth lecture in China and was translated by Zhang and Qu (Driesch 1923).

16 Zhang's translation is of Eucken's 1921 edition. On Eucken's activist idealist and nationalist reception of Fichte, see Fulda 2010, 107–50.

17 On Fichte, socialism, and Marxism, see Weber 1900; Rockmore 1982.

18 Compare the illuminating discussion of Hu's and Zhang's Spinoza essays in Gálik 1975, 29–43.

Zhang depicted Spinoza as a thinker of how to unify heart-mind and things (*he xinwu* 合心物). There are two philosophical problems that he draws from this analysis: (1) how are intuition and the concept (or conceptual reasoning) one in intellectual contemplation (*jingguan* 靜觀)? (2) how are right (*quanli* 權利) and power (*quanli* 權力) one and the same in Spinoza's equation of ethics with natural desire (*conatus*) and the ability (*potentia*) to act out of oneself?

First, Zhang's philosophical works increasingly endeavoured to answer the first question emerging from his interpretation of modern Western philosophy by retrieving Chinese philosophical discourses within an explicitly modern perspective. Zhang's conception of modernity, and his underlying phenomenology of the lifeworld and its implicit rationality, is explicitly intercultural. A hermeneutical retrieval of this dimension of his works thus provides a significant alternative to the Eurocentric conceptions of reason and the lifeworld developed by thinkers such as Husserl and Habermas.[19]

Zhang did not externally impose a traditional Confucian paradigm onto the modern philosophical discourse, nor did he appeal to the idea of a special form of Chinese or "Oriental intuition" that has been critiqued in accounts of "New Confucianism" (*xin rujia* 新儒家) as a self-Orientalizing (or "inverted" Orientalist) reaction to Western modernity.[20] Instead, pursuing a strategy akin to Misch and Husserl, Zhang elucidated the rationality (which—as in Husserl and Habermas—is more deeply rooted than logical rules for thinking) inherent in each form of historical life or lifeworld that is made reflective in philosophy.[21] Confucian discourses are not merely expressions of irrational Oriental intuition. They indicate a model of rationality that could encompass the affective, intuitive, and intersubjectively attuned dimensions of human life rather than exclude them as merely subjective and irrational.[22] Zhang is compelled by his interpretation of the Chinese lifeworld, which has its own rationality, to rehabilitate the Neo-Confucian philosophy of the heart-mind that can encompass the contradictions of intuition and rationality, subjectivity and objectivity, and the mediation of heart and things (the "internal" and "external" world).

Secondly, Zhang praised Spinoza as the thinker of the modern freedom of the individual, in which the equivalence of power and right is the basis of the "spiritual

19 I develop this interpretation of the lifeworld and rationality in Husserl and Habermas and the need for its intercultural reinterpretation in chapter six of Nelson 2017.

20 Compare the discussion of "New Confucianism" and "inverse Orientalism" in Ge 2017, 241–85.

21 On Misch and Husserl on lifeworld, breakthrough, and reflection, see chapters five and six of Nelson 2017.

22 On the importance of the affects in ethical life and broader conception of the rational in the Confucian lineage, see Nelson 2018a, 193–204.

freedom" that entails the entire range of freedoms of and rights to thought, speech, and publication suppressed under the Nationalist regime. Spinoza introduced a new conception of the nation in which the individual is not merely subordinated as a part of the whole. Zhang's political writings of this period are shaped by nationalist concerns in conjunction with liberal, republican, and social democratic discourses and their Chinese reception that he helped promote. They are concerned, particularly in the period of the Japanese occupation of China, with the salvation of the Chinese people through the development of its capacity for autonomy and self-power. The former is identified with establishing a liberal constitutional political order guaranteeing fundamental human, political, and social rights, and the latter with the expression and cultivation of the Chinese nation in response to its abject semi-colonial condition.

How is Zhang's interpretation of Spinoza's *potentia*, with its identification of right and power, to be understood? On the one hand, there is the philosophical question of power. In this discussion of self-motivating power in Spinoza, Zhang appears committed to a generally naturalistic and secular life-view as much as Hu Shi, while opposing reductive scientistic naturalism. Both the instrumentalist and life-philosophical variations on naturalism are haunted by the problem of the "naturalistic fallacy" of deriving the normative (the guiding "ought") from the factual (the "is").

On the other hand, power is connected to the ideas of national survival and self-assertion operative in Zhang's political discourse of the 1930s on national revival in *The Academic Foundation for National Revival* (*Minzu fuxing zhi xueshu jichu* 民族復興之學術基礎 (1935)) and the 1934 English language essay "National Renaissance Historically Considered" in which he utilized the identification of right and power in describing the Sino-Japanese conflict and Chinese survival. Dikötter has described how Zhang held a multi-ethnic concept of the Chinese nation, defined by common cultural connections and interests rather than race and blood (Zhang 1935; Zhang 1934, 708–10).[23] The destruction of an interrelated family of languages and cultures (i.e., a social-historical lifeworld) is consequently the destruction of a people. As in the conclusion of his discussion of China's constitutional crisis in 1931, brought about by the Nationalist Party's postponement of democratic reforms, Zhang again described the international arena in social Darwinist language as a "struggle for existence" (*Daseinskampf*) between peoples.[24] As in Sun Yat-sen's image of heaps of "loose sand" (*yipan sansha*

23 Frank Dikötter has examined Zhang's rejection of racial purity and common blood in Dikötter 2015, 182.

24 On the Chinese reception and adaptation of Darwinism, see Jones 2011; Shen 2015, 49–60.

一盘散沙), the Chinese people are depicted as lacking and in desperate need of finding the self-confidence and self-respect that arises through an appropriate relation to their own history and heritage for the sake of future development—and without which they will be scattered by the forces of history (Zhang 1934, 708–10). The construction of a bifurcation and opposition between tradition and modernity, maintained by both traditionalists and their New Culture opponents, is self-defeating, since Chinese modernization cannot appropriately occur without an authentic, living connection with the Chinese past. As he concluded in a German essay on Confucianism published in Richard Wilhelm's journal *Sinica* in 1930, there is a need for a relationship with one's own tradition for the sake of one's present and future condition (Zhang 1930a, 226). Zhang recognized in this analysis how the constructive relationship with tradition (such as Confucianism in China) is a condition of and vehicle for the cultivation of individual autonomy and social solidarity. As Husserl and Habermas have maintained, in their own ways in relation to consciousness and communicative action, the lifeworld is the condition of modernization and reform rather than an impediment to be colonized and eliminated.

The republican idea of popular self-determination offered Zhang in 1934 a primary motivation for his interpretation of historical life and the lifeworld. Preserving contact with and reviving past forms of Chinese intellectual and cultural life would reintegrate the past and the present. Furthermore, at the same time as a reconceptualization of Confucianism indicated a way of responding to the modern philosophical crisis of reason, a theme Zhang adopted from Eucken and shared with the German intellectual tradition of Husserl, his concerns with the social-political crises of colonial modernity led to a transition from the Western discourse of nationalism, as the people's self-expression and self-assertion, to a vision of a progressive reconstruction of Confucian lifeworlds and their ethical and political discourses. This modern intercultural reconstruction would provide the motivational context and bases for modern Chinese society in contrast to the deficits of the Nationalist and Communist parties that determined China's subsequent fate.

A Modern Confucian Critique of Chinese Modernity

Hegel remarked that the Enlightenment is unenlightened about itself (Hegel 1978, §§549–50). From Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* to *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* of Horkheimer and Adorno, modernity is interpreted as demanding its own self-critique (that is, a critique encompassing the modern as well as

the premodern) in contrast to a dogmatically conceived opposition between the old and the new, faith and reason, or tradition and its disruption (Hegel 1978; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002).[25] An early twentieth-century Chinese example of self-critical modernity engaging its dialectic is visible in Zhang's confrontation with notions of Enlightenment, progress, and modernity that contests the dichotomies of tradition/modernity and Occident/Orient presupposed by Chinese traditionalist and Westernizing discourses (evident in Hu Shi's positivistic and scientistic response to Zhang's 1923 lecture on science and lifeview) during the Republican era (Hu 2007, 225; Egan and Zhou 2009, 176).

As noted above, Zhang endorsed the initial national and democratic goals of the May Fourth student movement. He did, however, critique its interpretation and appropriation by the New Culture and communist movements that he judged to undermine Chinese national self-interest and democracy. It was these modern cultural and social-political concerns that led Zhang into conflict with iconoclastic "modernizing" forces (nationalist, technocratic liberal, and communist) for social-political, cultural, and philosophical reasons.

First, one primary criticism concerned totalitarianism and pluralism, the state and civil society. Already in the 1920s, Zhang was concerned with the priority of the state and the emergence of totalitarianism in China. His 1931 German article "The Constitutional Crisis of the Chinese Republic" (*Die staatsrechtliche Krisis der chinesischen Republik*) unfolded a critique of the Chinese constitutional crisis introduced by what he portrayed as the increasing totalitarianism of the nationalist one party state (Zhang 1931a, 316–55). Zhang identified the theory of the one-party state, and its communist and fascist incarnations in Lenin and Mussolini, with the rule of the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Zhongguo Guomindang* 中國國民黨) (ibid.). The tutelage of the one party state cannot provide an appropriate opening to a flourishing multi-party democracy to the extent that it undermines its conditions by failing to guarantee fundamental legal and political rights (*Grundrechte*) and disallowing the long-term habits and practices of civil society that help make a people capable of democracy (ibid., 354).

In this essay, in contrast to the four types of crisis identified in his 1922 essay discussed later in this work, Zhang adopted the notion of "constitutional crisis" from the contemporary German crisis discourse of the waning Weimar Republic (Zhang 1922a, 117–23). His critical analysis of the one-party state relied on German legal theorists who opposed the multi-party democratic state and supported National Socialism. He cited, for instance, two texts by Otto Koellreutter and

25 On the problematic of modernity in Adorno and critical social theory, see Nelson 2020.

three by Carl Schmitt, including in the conclusion concerning the necessity of the national state given the struggle for existence between nations (Zhang 1931a, 338, 244, 355).[26] Whereas the idea of national survival justified the anti-democratic revolution that overturned the Weimar Republic in the works cited by Koellreutter and Schmitt, achieving a democratic constitutional order was a fundamental requirement of national survival in Zhang's argument.

The May Fourth students' demand for the constitutional institutionalization and public practice of democracy was never realized and—in Zhang's harsh assessment that already began to form in the 1920s and which he judged to be confirmed by subsequent events—was betrayed by the Westernizing May Fourth and New Culture intellectuals. In a dire judgment of recent Chinese history, Zhang contended that the constitutional and democratic deficits of the nationalist politics of Sun Yat-sen undermined the legal institutionalization and popular public practice of democracy. This deferral prepared the way for Nationalist dictatorship in 1927. He repeated this negative assessment concerning China's failure to become a democratic constitutional state in his 1952 *The Third Force in China* (Zhang 1952, 53–69). The Chinese lifeworld was being undermined in two ways: while the Nationalist Party created a social vacuum that destroyed the social-political conditions for democratizing China, the New Culture Movement created a spiritual vacuum by destroying its cultural and intellectual (spiritual) conditions (Zhang 1962a, 411). In contrast to the radical bifurcation and opposition of tradition and modernity, which is posited by homogenizing theories of modernity, the realization of modernity requires a more appropriate and flexible relationship with traditions. To utilize Habermas's language of system and lifeworld, there should be a non-colonizing relationship between the forces of instrumental rationalization (promoted by Hu, Ding, and the New Culture Movement) and the complex multi-layered historical lifeworld (Habermas 1984).

Zhang is notorious for his stubborn, almost hopeless opposition to the Nationalist and Communist deferral of fundamental human rights for the Chinese people and his demand for the immediate introduction of democratic rights and institutions that would encourage the governmental separation of powers, a plurality of political parties and forces, and the formation of a flourishing public sphere and civil society that was deeply rooted in the Chinese tradition itself and that he articulated in relation to the political philosophies of Kant and Hegel.[27]

Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1820) preserved a number of the achievements of Enlightenment political thought while seeking to moderate its radical implications.

26 On their roles in the politics of National Socialist Germany, see Caldwell 1994, 399–427.

27 On the complexity of the contemporary Chinese discourse of civil society, see He 1997.

As Herbert Marcuse explored in his classic work *Reason and Revolution*, Hegel's social-political implications were highly contested by adherents and critics on the right and the left (Marcuse 1960). Hegelian political discourse played multifarious roles in Chinese political discourses of the 1930s, as seen in He Lin 賀麟 and the "Zhanguoce School" (戰國策, "Strategies of the Warring States") (see Wong 2018, 616–33; also note Guo 2009 45–69). In his early 1930s lectures on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Zhang did not interpret Hegel merely as an apologist of the priority of state. Hegel is interpreted as a theorist of (1) the mediation of powers in the constitutional state and (2) the mediating spheres of the family and civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, *gongmin shehui* 公民社會). The social function of the family and civil society are also key features of the Confucian reformist tradition and its critique of existing political realities. Civil society encompassed a plurality of forms of association and social-life between the individual and the state. Zhang elucidated the key element of modern democratic political philosophy that stands in opposition to the totalitarian obliteration of civil society to the state. This point is made again in his 1967 Singaporean lectures on democratic socialism, near the end of his life, in which he deployed Hegel's concept of "civil society" to critique capitalism, communism, and fascism as the one-sided reification of respectively self-interest, society, and the state as the highest end of social-political life (Zhang 2015, 15–19).

Second, as we noted in his interpretation of Fichte's *Addresses*, autonomy must be self-motivated rather than externally imposed. Furthermore, Zhang's phenomenology of the lifeworld led him to the conclusion that democratic institutions require a democratic culture and motivations that Zhang thought could be adopted and reconstructed from Chinese traditions.

Zhang prefigures the contemporary idea of intercultural philosophy. He opposed both the complete Westernization of Hu and Ding and the reactive self-Orientalism of Chinese traditionalists, expressing scepticism of the very idea of the superiority of either Eastern or Western civilization in the 1922 essay "The Crisis of European Culture and the Tendency of New Culture in China", in a way that can help resituate Husserl's more limited interpretation of crisis in his writings of the 1920s and 1930s on crisis and renewal. Echoing Kant's account of autonomy in "What is Enlightenment?", Zhang rejected both Chinese traditionalism and New Culture Westernization in this essay, suggesting that emancipation from false prejudices required a critical relation to both Eastern and Western civilization that faced both their limitations and crises. Using the discourses of life-philosophy and socialism, he diagnosed the crisis of modernity as both a spiritual crisis of reason and a social-political crisis of capitalism (Zhang 1922a, 117–23). Zhang succinctly stated his ethos of individuality and the social in his 1923 lecture on lifeviews:

intellectual development should be personal; property distribution should be social ("智識發展，應重個人；財產分配，應均諸社會") (Zhang 1996, 118).

Zhang repeatedly stated from the 1920s to the 1960s—notably, for instance, in the introduction to his most internationally recognized political work *The Third Force in China*—that the New Culture Movement could not prepare the Chinese for autonomy and a flourishing and functional democracy. A modernized Confucian ethos was the route to autonomy and democracy in the Chinese context, such that a destructive relation with the past would eliminate its very conditions. Zhang's analysis reveals his affinities with Western thinkers of the integrity of ethical life (Hegel), historical life (such as Dilthey and Georg Misch), and the lifeworld (Husserl and Habermas). He explicitly connected the iconoclasm of the May Fourth Movement (or, at least, its appropriated form in the New Culture Movement) with communist iconoclasm, contending that the destruction of tradition was preparation for tutelage and totalitarianism (Zhang 1952, 47). Zhang accordingly identified in *The Third Force in China* the literary anti-Confucian revolution as the preliminary preparation for the right-wing totalitarianism of the Nationalist Party, which was hindered by its own corruption and incompetence in Zhang's estimation, and the left-wing totalitarianism of the Communist Party (*Zhongguo Gongchandang* 中國共產黨) (ibid.).

Third, Zhang differentiated in his 1965 Seoul lecture the distinct threads that were subsequently identified with the idea of the May Fourth Movement. Four tendencies in particular that should be distinguished are:

1. Literary and linguistic transformation from classical to vernacular culture.
2. Sexual transformation from sexual restraints and hierarchical gender inequality to free love and gender equality.
3. Democratic transformation from authority to freedom.
4. Scientific transformation from superstition and subjectivity to evidential knowledge (Zhang 1965, 91).

Zhang offered two responses to these four forms of transformation. One argument addresses how modernity and Confucianism are not merely compatible, based on an understanding of the ethos of the lifeworld, but reinforce and mutually establish each other. The reconstruction of the progressive aspects of Confucianism in his works on its history accentuated figures such as Mengzi 孟子 and Wang Yangming, which he interpreted as rational and reformist (Zhang 1957; 1962a; 1962b; 2016). He reinterpreted Confucianism as a guiding ethos and philosophical way of living that can be differentiated and separated from its flawed forms of institutionalization and practice. As an ethos

of universal benevolence and responsiveness to the interests of the people, it is compatible with and can guide and extend the cultural and social-political reform of a way of life.

A second argument concerns the need to recognize the potential deficits and limitations of modernization and Westernization if they are not to become destructive and undermine their own aims. Zhang took up the argumentation of 1923 again in 1965 in Seoul, stressing the plurality and complexity of the modern situation and the necessity of a self-critical rather than a dogmatic conception of modernity. In a pluralistic and multifaceted modernity, the new is critically interconnected with the old, freedom with an order that allows it to flourish, and science with cultural and ethical concerns. Zhang's phenomenological and political analyses indicate ways of rethinking modernity, rationality, and the lifeworld—beyond the Occidentalist oriented paradigms of rationalization in Husserl and Habermas—in the Chinese context and more broadly.

Conclusion: An Intercultural Discourse of Modernity

Zhang and other Chinese intellectuals did not passively accept European philosophical and socialist discourses as Eurocentric theories of modernization assume. In the case of Zhang's discourse, modernization occurs in opposition to complete Westernization. The problematic one-way street model of modernity, globalization, and Westernization encompasses advocates (such as Husserl and Habermas) and critics (such as Heidegger) of modernity, as I argued in my 2017 book. It evades the actuality that modernity has multiple cultural and social-political origins. Modernization is "creolized", both mediated and fractured, by resistances from the subjugated margins rather than being a purely Occidental formation. Revisiting Zhang's works in relation to phenomenology and critical social theory, represented respectively by Husserl and Habermas in this article, indicates a needful intercultural reorientation of both.

The case of Zhang Junmai indicates how a "conservative" "anti-May Fourth" intellectual shared many of its commitments with two conspicuous differences; he was more radically committed to constitutional democracy, which dwindled away into a weak "third force", and rejected its totalizing anti-traditionalism and commitment to naïve one-dimensional positivist-pragmatist ideas of modernity and Westernization. The crisis of the breakdown of the authority of the classical canon and the traditional Confucian paradigm did not entail its end for Zhang, as it did for the New Culture Movement. It was rather another transformation, shaped by internal and external ideas and historical forces, in

its evolving history that would continue to play a significant role in Chinese modernities.[28]

Zhang's growing articulation of a modern "New Confucian" (*xin rujia* 新儒家) philosophy, centring on moral autonomy and critically drawing from and redeploying Chinese classical sources, particularly after the Communist victory and his subsequent exile to the United States, has roots in and altered his earlier conception of nationalism that was conceived in relation to republican (Spinoza, Kant), nationalist (Fichte, Eucken), as well as social democratic (Laski) sources and models.[29] The traditionalist and conservative interpretation of Confucianism led to the suspicion—one shared by contemporary "New Confucian" critics of the earlier generation—that Zhang's approach was more Kantian and indeed Western than genuinely Confucian and Chinese.[30] Zhang's discourse is not purely traditionalist nor neoconservative in any narrow sense, unless one can speak of an intercultural progressive traditionalism. It is also not merely derivative of modern or globalized Western discourses that deny the agency and subjectivity of thought and practice to those outside the West. It is a highly mediated modern intercultural response to the perils and perplexities of Chinese modernity that it failed to overcome.

It is in this context of a critical fused, hybrid, or mixed (that we can retrospectively designate "intercultural" or "creolized") conception of modernity that Zhang should be reinterpreted. This argument includes his rejection of the specious either/or of Chinese tradition and complete Westernization, Sinocentrism and Eurocentrism—as illustrated above in his 1922 essay "The Crisis of European Culture and the Tendency of New Culture in China" (a work that supplements and corrects Husserl's 1936 discourse of crisis in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*) and in his mature conception of a modern intercultural Confucian philosophy (Zhang 1922a, 117–23; Husserl 1970). Zhang's alternative phenomenological and social-political strategies indicate a potential intercultural path that was not taken and judged a historical failure in subsequent hegemonic narratives. However, such a historical judgment of failure itself presupposes a problematic homogenizing teleological of narrative of modernity, including Chinese modernity, and the May Fourth and other historically related movements.

28 Compare his argument concerning the modern role of the Confucian classics after their loss of authority in Zhang 1931b, 106.

29 On the "New Confucian" movement, see Makeham 2003; Rosker 2016; Van den Stock 2016.

30 Compare the discussion after the Seoul lecture in Zhang 1965, 99. On the new generation's conservative suspicions concerning the liberalism of earlier New Confucianism, see Ge 2017, 241–85.

Habermas, as a contemporary theorist and defender of modernity as rationalization, aptly argued in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* that paths not taken remain significant keys for interpreting the paths that were taken and for formulating alternatives for contemporary questions (Habermas 2004). Given its historical finitude and limitations, Zhang's path is still suggestive for interpreting the historical formation of the idea of the May Fourth Movement and its consequences that contests Whig and teleological historical narratives of modernity and involves the recognition of their belatedness, discursive and ideological construction, and functional multiplicity in actual discourses in contrast to their homogenous, idealized form.

Habermas's point about paths not taken in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* can be applied to his own conception of Occidental reason and its history that retains its hegemonic role. First, the Chinese "periphery" reveals aspects of modernity that are invisible in its Western "centre". Second, the complex historical constellation addressed in this article offer hints and clues to disentangling the problematic of modernity itself that a contemporary Western thinker such as Habermas—relying on a reconstruction of Max Weber's Occidentalist narrative of the history of rationality—continue to construe exclusively in Western terms without an adequate conception of "non-Western", intercultural, "creolized", and other alternative modernities.[31]

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31 Note the role of the Occident in his latest work Habermas 2019.

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ASIAN STUDIES IN SLOVENIA

Hozonkai – fenomen ohranjanja ljudske glasbe in uprizoritvenih umetnosti na Japonskem: primer združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* *

Klara HRVATIN **

Izvleček

Članek proučuje fenomen združenj *hozonkai* za ohranjanje ljudskih pesmi oz. ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti, ki si prizadevajo ohraniti in prenašati japonske ljudske pesmi v »avtentični«, nespremenjeni obliki. Kot primer enega takšnih združenj in njegovega ravnanja z ljudskim glasbenim izročilom avtorica obravnava organizacijo in trenutne dejavnosti združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* – ustanovljenega leta 1951 in zadolženega za ohranjanje in prenos plesne pesmi *Kagura mai*.

Ob upoštevanju Hughesovih splošnih značilnosti združenj kot osnove avtorica poudari skupne značilnosti, ki jih *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* deli z večino združenj, hkrati pa osvetli tudi njegove posebnosti. *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* ima močnejši koncept lokalnosti in ni povsem konservativen glede morebitnih sprememb v glasbi *Kagure mai* v prihodnosti. Raziskava o združenju *Kokiriku uta hozonkai* in njegovem »ohranjanju« *Kagure mai* zastavlja tudi vprašanje, ali *hozonkai* resnično prenaša starodavno različico pesmi *Kagura mai*?

Ključne besede: združenje za ohranjanje ljudske glasbe, *hozonkai*, *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*, *Kagura Mai*, *Kokiriko*, nesnovna kulturna dediščina

Hozonkai – The Phenomenon of Preserving Folk Music and Performing Arts in Japan: The Case of *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* Association

Abstract

The article closely examines the phenomenon of preservation societies or *hozonkai*, which strives to preserve Japanese folk songs and other folk performing arts in an authentic form or intact without change. As an example of hozonkai's treatment of the folk song, it takes a closer look into organization and current activities of *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*; a *hozonkai*

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formed in 1951 and in charge of preservation and transmission of song accompanied by dance *Kagura mai*.

Taking into consideration Hughes' general characteristics of *hozonkai* as a base, the author points out the commonly shared characteristics which *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* shares with most preservation societies, but at the same time also shows its particularities. *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* has a stronger concept of locality and it is not absolutely conservative with respect to possible changes to *Kagura mai* in the future. Moreover, the research on *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* and its treatment of *Kagura mai* raises questions to what extent *hozonkai* really transmitts the ancient revived *Kagura mai*?

Keywords: preservation society, *hozonkai*, *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*, *Kagura mai*, *Kokiriko*, intangible cultural asset

Predstavitev združenj *hozonkai* in njihove zgodovine

Hozonkai (保存会) ali združenja za ohranitev ljudskih pesmi so Japoncem morda samoumevna, za tujca oziroma zunanjega opazovalca pa je lahko vpogled v delovanje teh organizacij naravnost osupljiv. Z opredeljevanjem združenja *hozonkai* so se ukvarjali predvsem strokovnjaki z zahoda. V Malmovi knjigi *Japonska glasba in glasbeni inštrumenti* (*Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, prva izdaja l. 1959) lahko o njih preberemo nekaj vrstic. Opisuje jih kot združenja, »posvečena ‚pravilni' izvedbi točno določene pesmi« (Malm 2000, 262). Nettl v svoji knjigi *Zahodni vpliv na svetovno glasbo* (*The Western Impact on World Music*) *hozonkai* obravnava na dva različna načina. V prvi vrsti kot odziv na prihod zahodne glasbe, ko se je pojavila potreba po tem, da se starejšo glasbo loči od slednje in se jo na ta način ohrani (Nettl 1985, 125). Avtor poudari, da *hozonkai* glasbe ne poskuša le ohraniti, pač pa tudi obdržati v nespremenjeni obliki. Poleg tega Nettl tovrstne skupine vidi kot odraz posebnosti glasbene zgodovine Japoncev. Pri njih se namreč glasbene zvrsti med sabo ne mešajo, temveč se »novi materiali (…) pridružijo starim in z njimi soobstajajo, pri čemer stari ostanejo nespremenjeni« (ibid.).

Širšo in podrobnejšo razlago združenj *hozonkai* podaja David W. Hughes v svojem delu *Tradicionalna ljudska pesem v sodobni Japonski* (*Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan*), kjer razišče in primerja različna združenja *hozonkai* in na koncu opredeli skupne značilnosti večine: gre za lokalne, neprofesionalne, nepridobitne organizacije, ki so v splošnem precej konservativne in jih sestavljajo pretežno starejši ljudje (Hughes 2008a, 222–23).

Združenja *hozonkai* so se začela pojavljati na začetku 20. stoletja oziroma v poznem obdobju Meiji (1968–1911). Beseda *hozon* (保存, ほぞん), ki pomeni »ohraniti«, se je sprva nanašala na ohranjanje snovnih predmetov, kot so kipi in stavbe. Leta 1897 je – kot prvi zakon, namenjen varstvu umetniških dragocenosti – začel

veljati Zakon o ohranjanju starih svetišč in templjev, ki je pozneje začel veljati tudi za uprizoritvene umetnosti (Hughes 2008a, 212–14). Uresničevanje/udejanjanje slednjega je podpirala vlada, pri združenjih pa je bila situacija precej drugačna. Specifične literature, ki bi obravnavala *hozonkai* kot celoto, še ni, zato je treba proučiti vsako združenje posebej. Hughes je prva takšna združenja zasledil v letu 1911, in sicer v mestu Yasugi v prefekturi Shimane (združenje *Yasugi-bushi hozonkai*), pa tudi na Hokaidu (združenje *Oiwake-bushi hozonkai*). Namen ustanavljanja teh združenj je bil ohranjanje in širitev pravilnega načina izvajanja lokalnih pesmi, obenem pa tudi reševanje pesmi pred »vulgarnostjo« (Hughes 2008a, 214) gejš.[1] Enak odnos so imela tudi poznejša združenja, na primer združenje *Iso-bushi hozonkai* iz leta 1947 in združenje *Kaigara-bushi hozonkai* iz let 1932/1933. Vendar pa v predvojnem obdobju združenj *hozonkai* ni bilo veliko. Finančna kriza Showa (昭和金融恐慌 Shōwa Kin'yū Kyōkō) in posledična recesija med letoma 1927–1931 ter vzpon militarizma so negativno vplivali na uprizoritvene umetnosti; številne so v tem času izginile (ibid., 215) oziroma so bile potisnjene v ozadje. Med drugim, ljudske pesmi takrat niso veljale za primerne, ker naj bi vojake spominjale na domači kraj in ljubezen. Nov val ustanavljanja združenj *hozonkai* se je začel po vojni, z ohranitvijo ljudske pesmi *Esashi oiwake* v 1957 ter ljudske pesmi in plesa *Yasugi-bushi* v 1977 (ibid.).

Hughes poudarja (2008a, 214–22), da je pri razvoju združenj *hozonkai* zanimiv njihov model poučevanja, ki se zgleduje po sistemu *iemoto*. Zdi se, da so imeli številni začetniki združenj *hozonkai* izkušnje s študijem tradicionalnih japonskih glasbenih/umetnostnih zvrsti in so zato predvidevali, da bodo z uporabo takšnega sistematičnega prenosa znanja dosegli, da bo enakega prestiža deležna tudi njihova lokalna pesem. Ustanavljanje združenj *hozonkai* se je širilo tudi zaradi intenzivnega proučevanja ljudskih pesmi. V petdesetih letih 20. stoletja se je z njimi ukvarjal zlasti Machida Kashō (1888–1981), ki je tudi sam spodbujal ljudi k oblikovanju združenj *hozonkai*. Pred njegovimi zgodnjimi raziskavami in zasebnimi gramofonskimi posnetki iz leta 1934 ljudske pesmi pravzaprav sploh niso bile deležne znanstvene obravnave. Svoj zbrani material je pozneje izročil japonski televizijski hiši NHK (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*), ki je izdala *Antologijo japonskih ljudskih pesmi* (日本民謡大鑑, *Nihon Min'yō taikan*, 1944–1988).[2]

1 Gejše naj bi izvajale ljudske pesmi na »svoj« način, s spremljavo shamisena, s čimer naj bi jim dale drugačen značaj glede načina izvajanja (barve glasu), kot tudi samih besedil pesmi; to pa je bilo v nasprotju s preferencami puristov, ki se niso strinjali z odstopanji od ustaljenih oblik ter izvedb teh pesmi.

2 *Antologija japonskih ljudskih pesmi* v devetih delih (1944–88), ponovno izdana v letih 1992–94 z 90 zgoščenkami terenskih posnetkov, velja za najpomembnejši vir japonskih ljudskih pesmi. Pesmi so razvrščene glede na svojo funkcijo in vsaka je izčrpno opisana, vključno z družbenim kontekstom, v katerem so jo izvajali.

Združenja hozonkai in povojni fenomen ohranjanja ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti

Na povojno stremljenje k ohranjanju tako ljudskih kot tudi tradicionalnih umetnosti,[3] v katero kot kategorija spada tudi ljudska glasba, je mogoče gledati širše. Ne samo organizacija združenja *hozonkai* na prefekturnem nivoju – tudi druga vladna ravnanja imajo pomembno vlogo v tem »fenomenu ohranjanja«. Kot lahko vidimo v spodnji razpredelnici, ki v časovnem zaporedju prikazuje razvoj na področju ohranjanja ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti, je bil v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja sprejet nov Zakon o varstvu kulturne dediščine. S tem zakonom so se nekatere od ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti začele vpisovati v register Pomembne nesnovne kulturne dediščine (Jūyō mukei bunkazai hojisha 重要無形文化財保持者), kar je pomenilo, da je vlada začela določenim posameznikom ali skupinam, ki so bili nosilci ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti, podeljevati naslov živega nacionalnega zaklada. S tem naslovom je oseba ali skupina postala upravičena do posebne zaščite in podpore. V opredelitvi nesnovne kulturne dediščine lahko prebe-remo, da ta vključuje »folkloro in legende, tradicionalno glasbo, gledališče in ples, svečanosti in festivale, povezane z življenjskim ciklom, tradicionalno zdravilstvo, npr. terapijo z zelišči, pa tudi tradicionalno rokodelstvo, kot npr. rezbarstvo, lončarstvo, barvanje tkanin in tkalstvo« (Kobinata 2007). V nasprotju s snovno kulturno dediščino, kamor spadajo zgodovinski spomeniki ali arheološke najdbe, so pri nesnovni kulturni dediščini »nosilci človeška telesa in duše, preko katerih se ta prenaša« (ibid.). V tem kontekstu je zanimivo tudi poimenovanje »živi nacionalni zaklad« (*ningen kokuhō* 人間国宝), ki ga vlada podeli določenim posameznikom, pa naj bodo to mojstri predstav *bunraku*, *kabuki* ali festivalov *matsuri* – na primer mojster shakuhachija, Gorō Yamaguchi (1933–1999), ali mojster bobna *taiko*, šintoistične glasbe in plesa *kagura* in drugih zvrsti, ki so del slavnosti festivalov (*matsuri* 祭り), Matsumoto Gennosuke (1924–), ali pa mojstri obrti (lesorez, izdelovanje papirja, lončarstvo). Ta naziv jim nalaga dolžnost ohranjati svoje veščine, tehnike in umetniški izraz nedotaknjene, nespremenjene in brez vplivov z zahoda.

Dve leti po uvedbi Zakona o varstvu kulturne dediščine je bil ustanovljen Tokijski nacionalni raziskovalni inštitut za kulturno dediščino. Imel je zelo pomembno vlogo pri izvajanju raziskav, katerih namen je bil zbirati informacije o ohranjanju

3 Japonske ljudske upodabljajoče umetnosti (*minzoku geinō*) so del širše skupine upodabljajočih umetnosti oziroma t. i. tradicionalnih upodabljajočih umetnosti (*dento geinō*). Izvajajo se na številnih ritualnih in sekularnih prireditvah po Japonski. Po klasifikaciji, ki jo je uvedel Yasuji Honda, in jo uporablja tudi Agencija za kulturne zadeve pri vpisovanju upodabljajočih umetnosti v register Pomembne nesnovne kulturne dediščine, jih v grobem delimo na glasbo, posvečeno bogovom (*kagura*), glasbo, povezano s poljedelskimi ciklusi (*dengaku*), glasbo oz. plese, značilne za (spektakularne) procesije (*furyū*), narativne oblike in prireditve ob praznovanjih (*katarimono/shukufukugei*) ter oblike, izpeljane iz zahodnih odrskih prireditev. Za podrobnejšo razdelitev glej Lancashire 2011, 6–8.

umetniških del in zvrsti in s tem pomagati pri njihovem ohranjanju in promociji. Pozneje, leta 1968, je bila ustanovljena tudi Agencija za kulturne zadeve (*Bunkachō* 文化庁) kot edina agencija, ki je za ohranjanje in promocijo ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti skrbela na nacionalnem nivoju (ibid.).

Ob sprejetju zakona leta 1950 so bile vpeljane naslednje kategorije zaščitenih vsebin: snovna kulturna dediščina (dela s področja likovne umetnosti, stavbe in drugi objekti), spomeniki, vključno z zgodovinskimi znamenitostmi, kraji s slikovitimi naravnimi znamenitostmi in pa na novo vpeljani koncept nesnovne kulturne dediščine, kot jo predstavljajo odrske umetnosti in glasba (Kakiuchi 2014, 4). Od takrat je bil zakon deležen več sprememb. Zdaj vključuje: 1) snovno kulturno dediščino, 2) nesnovno kulturno dediščino, 3) ljudsko kulturno dediščino, 4) spomenike, 5) kulturne krajine in 6) skupine stavb zgodovinskega pomena. Treba je omeniti, da poleg omenjenih zakon zdaj vključuje tudi poglavje *Tradicionalne tehnike za ohranjanje kulturne dediščine*, ki so bistvene za ohranjanje in konzerviranje omenjene kulturne dediščine, ter poglavje *Zakopana kulturna dediščina.*[4]

Združenja *hozonkai* v obliki nevladnih organizacij segajo v čas po drugi svetovni vojni, ko so ta združenja izvajala ljudske umetniške oblike in s tem skrbela za njihovo ohranjanje in promocijo. To, da so *hozonkai* nevladne organizacije, v pravnem smislu pomeni, da so jih ustanovili zasebniki ali organizacije brez podpore ali zastopanja s strani vlade.

Tabela 1: Kratka zgodovina prizadevanj za ohranitev ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti in ustanovitev združenj hozonkai[5]

Leto	Dejavnosti za ohranitev ljudske uprizoritvene umetnosti
pred obdobjem Meiji	Uprizoritvene umetnosti cvetijo.
1879	Ustanovitev Oddelka za proučevanje glasbe (*Ongaku torishirabe gakari*) v okviru Ministrstva za izobraževanje.
	Začetki uvoza zahodne glasbe.
1887	*Ongaku torishirabe gakari* se preimenuje v *Tokyo ongaku gakko* (Narodna univerza likovne umetnosti in glasbe; od leta 1949 Fakulteta za glasbo). • Prevzame glavno vlogo pri promoviranju zahodne glasbe na Japonskem. • Tradicionalne/ljudske uprizoritvene umetnosti se zanemarja.

4 Od zgoraj omenjene kulturne dediščine se v nesnovno kulturno dediščino uvrščajo naslednje kategorije: 1. nesnovna kulturna dediščina, 2. nesnovna ljudska kulturna dediščina in 3. tradicionalne konservatorske tehnike. Več o tem v naslednjih virih: Agency for Cultural Affairs 2015, 2–3; Kakiuchi 2014, 7.

5 Zgodovinska razpredelnica je sestavljena iz povzetkov oz. skupkov različnih virov, kot so Kobinata 2007, Kakiuchi 2014, Agency for Cultural Affairs 2015.

Leto	Dejavnosti za ohranitev ljudske uprizoritvene umetnosti
po 2. svetovni vojni **1950, sprejetje *Zakona o varstvu kulturne dediščine***	• Ponovno se začne razmišljati o ohranjanju in promociji ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti. • Vlada lahko podeli status nosilca tradicije. • Lokalne oblasti lahko izvajajo javne predstave. Nekatere ljudske uprizoritvene umetnosti so razglašene za *pomembno nesnovno kulturno dediščino* in *živi nacionalni zaklad.*
1951	**Začne se ustanavljanje združenj *hozonkai* na nivoju prefektur** (oz. nevladnih organizacij za ohranjanje in promocijo ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti).
1952	Tokijski nacionalni raziskovalni inštitut za kulturno dediščino; • proučevanje številnih vidikov uprizoritvenih umetnosti.
***Zakon o varstvu kulturne dediščine*, amandma iz leta 1954**	Razširitev sistema na kategorijo Ljudski materiali; • ustanovitev sistema za označevanje *pomembnih snovnih ljudskih materialov*, ločeno od *snovne kulturne dediščine*.
***Zakon o varstvu kulturne dediščine*, amandma iz leta 1968**	Oblikuje se *Bunkachō* – Agencija za kulturne zadeve; je edina agencija za ohranjanje in promocijo tradicionalnih/ljudskih uprizoritvenih umetnosti, ki deluje na državnem nivoju.
***Zakon o varstvu kulturne dediščine*, amandma iz leta 1975**	Kategorija *Ljudska kulturna dediščina – ljudski materiali* je preimenovana v *Ljudska kulturna dediščina;* • vzpostavitev sistema za označevanje *pomembne snovne ljudske kulturne dediščine* in *pomembne nesnovne ljudske kulturne dediščine*.
2001	Temeljni zakon za promocijo kulture in umetnosti; • promocija kulture in umetnosti.
***Zakon o varstvu kulturne dediščine*, amandma iz leta 2004**	Širitev kategorije *Ljudska kulturna dediščina*; • dodajo ji ljudske tehnike.

Združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* in njegova vloga pri ohranjanju pesmi *Kagura mai*

Združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*

Združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* je zadolženo za ohranjanje plesne pesmi ob spremstvu inštrumenta *sasara* z imenom *Kokiriko uta* (筑子歌) in šintoistične obredne plesne pesmi *Kagura mai* (神楽舞). *Kokiriko* pomeni dobesedno »poljski ples«, ki so ga plesali v 13. in 14. stoletju v času sejanja in žetja riža ter ob drugih poljedelskih slavnostih, *uta* pa pomeni »pesem«. Kot že rečeno, se ljudje pridružijo plesu in petju pesmi *Kokiriko* ob glasnem spremstvu *sasare*, glasbenega inštrumenta iz bambusa (glej sliko 1), ki naj bi ga za izvajanje te pesmi uporabljali že v preteklosti. *Kagura mai* pa je pesem religioznih festivalov in obredov (glej sliko 12)[6], ki so jo včasih peli tudi v obliki ljudske pesmi *Maimai*, in sicer ob določenih priložnostih, ko so fantje in dekleta, držeč se za roke,

6 *Kagura* je splošen izraz za šintoistično glasbo in plese, ki so ključni za ritualno versko prakso šintoizma. Dobesedno bi lahko izraz *kagura* prevedli kot »glasba bogov«. Lahko jo razdelimo na *mikaguro* (*kagura*, ki se izvaja na cesarskem dvoru), *okaguro* (*kagura* v državnih šintoističnih svetiščih) in *satokaguro* (*kagura* za dogodke v lokalnih šintoističnih svetiščih). Ne glede na različne zvrsti se navadno uporablja le ime *kagura*. V našem primeru spada *kagura* v okvir lokalnega festivala (*matsuri*), ki je značilen za kmetijske družbe pri obredih rodovitnosti, v katerih se letni časi praznujejo s

drug za drugim plesali v krogu; na ta način so nekateri dobili priložnost, da si izberejo partnerja in se poročijo.[7] Danes se je religiozna vloga pesmi prepletla oz. nadgradila s folklornimi in turističnimi dogodki (glej sliko 4–5).

Obe pesmi, *Kokiriko* in *Kagura mai*, pa tudi, kot bomo videli, samo združenje, ki ju ohranja, izvirajo iz majhne vasi Kaminashi (上梨) v Gokayami (五箇山)[8], v jugovzhodnem delu prefekture Toyama. Zlasti med lokalnimi festivali pesmi izvajajo v svetišču Hakusangū. Regija Gokayama je poznana po hišah v slogu *gasshō–zukuri* (合掌造り, dobesedno slogu »sklenjenih rok«, ki je razviden iz same strukture streh teh hiš v obliki visokih trikotnikov), še pomembnejši pa je njen sloves zakladnice ljudskih pesmi in plesov. Ena od zanimivih legend o tem kraju pravi, da so se v 12. stoletju na tem območju naselili pobegli bojevniki klana Taira, ki naj bi tja prinesli najstarejšo ljudsko pesem na Japonskem – zgoraj omenjeno pesem *Kokiriko uta* oziroma *Kokiriko-bushi* (筑子節).

Kokiriko uta hozonkai ali *Ecchū Gokayama kokiriko hozonkai* je leta 1951 (v 26. letu obdobja Shōwa) ustanovila skupina ljudi iz Kaminashija pod vodstvom g. Takachika Takakuwe. Je tudi del združenja petih združenj *hozonkai* v Gokayami, tako imenovanega Združenja združenj za ohranjanje pesmi in plesov za področje Echū Gokayame (Echū Gokayama Min'yō minbu hozondan rengōkai 越中五箇山民謡民舞保存団連合会). Eno leto po ustanovitvi združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* (1952) je radijski oddelek NHK po naročilu Komisije za varstvo kulturne dediščine posnel pesmi *Kokiriko* in *Kagura mai*. Od leta 1965 je *Kokiriko* ena od ljudskih pesmi, ki jih učijo v tretjem in četrtem razredu osnovne šole. Nazadnje je bila leta 1973 *Kokiriko* s pripadajočim plesom ter skupaj s *Kaguro mai* razglašena za nesnovno kulturno dediščino. Leta 1974 je Agencija za kulturne zadeve posnela zbirko dokumentarnih posnetkov *Kiroku eizōshū* (記録映像集), kjer lahko najdemo tudi prvi videoposnetek izvedbe pesmi *Kokiriko uta* in *Kagura mai*. Temu je sledila uvrstitev teh ljudskih pesmi na zgoščenke, kot je na primer *Ljudske pesmi iz Gokayame* (Gokayama no Min'yō 2002) idr. Vse različice na zgoraj omenjenih medijih je izvedlo združenje (glej sliko 12) *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*, katerega ime je sestavljeno iz osrednje pesmi *Kokiriko uta*, ki jo ohranja. V članku se bomo posvetili predvsem ohranjanju pesmi *Kagura mai*, obe pesmi, ki imata naziv nesnovne kulturne dediščine, pa navadno v »paru« izvajajo tudi na prireditvah.

praznovanjem rodovitnosti, blagoslavljanja ali prečiščevanja.

7 Izvor takšnih dogodkov je najverjetneje povezan s staro japonsko tradicijo, imenovano *utagaki*, ko so se mladi zbirali, peli, plesali in se spogledovali do jutranjega svita med glavnimi festivali (Nihon minyō taikan, 226–29).

8 Z imenom Gokayama (五箇山) so prvotno poimenovali regijo petih dolin; Kaminashidan (上梨谷), Shimonashidan (下梨谷), Odan (小谷), Togadan (利賀谷) in Akaodan (赤尾谷). Od obdobja Meiji naprej je to skupen izraz za tri vasi, in sicer vasi Taira mura (平村), Kamitaira mura (上平村) in Toga mura (利賀村), ki administrativno spadajo v okrožje Higashitonami-gun (東砺波郡) prefekture Toyama (Misumi 1992, 2–3).

Kagura mai: klasifikacija in glasbene značilnosti[9]

Kagura mai je znana tudi pod imenom *Maimai* (まいまい). Sodeč po virih, ki omenjajo pesem *Maimai*, po informacijah o pesmi *Maimai* v *Antologiji japonskih ljudskih pesmi* in po izjavah ljudi iz Gokayame, se za isto pesem včasih uporablja ime *Kagura mai*, včasih pa *Maimai*; nič ne kaže na to, da bi bilo treba med tema dvema imenoma razlikovati. Ustno izročilo kaže, da je *Kagura mai* prvotno obstajala predvsem kot del *Maimai*, pozneje pa se je osamosvojila v obliki *kagure*, kot jo poznamo danes; ni sicer jasno, kdaj točno se je to zgodilo (*Nihon min'yō taikan* 226–29).

Po najbolj razširjeni klasifikaciji ljudskih pesmi *min'yō* (民謡)[10] lahko *Kaguro mai* štejemo za plesno pesem, ki spremlja *kaguro*. Nadalje, po Mamiyevi etnološki klasifikaciji, *Japonske ljudske pesmi – etnološka klasifikacija* (Mamiya 1998), je *Kagura mai* klasificirana kot pesem verskih festivalov in ceremonij, natančneje šintoistična obredna pesem. Glede na elemente kot so ples, rekviziti[11], kostumi[12] in religiozni podtoni, jo lahko klasificiramo tudi kot eno od zvrsti ljudske uprizoritvene umetnosti (*minzoku geinō* 民俗芸能).

Njene poglavitne glasbene značilnosti so glasbena lestvica oz. modus *ritsu*, tridelna oblika (A-B-A'), strofična oblika, kar pomeni da imajo vsi verzi besedila enako melodijo in glasbeno podlago, ter dvodobni takt. Vsi verzi besedila imajo enako število zlogov (sedem). Besedilo orisuje štiri letne čase. Rime, ki bi nas vodila od začetka do konca pesmi, ni. Vsak letni čas je predstavljen s simbolom oziroma elementom, ki se s tem letnim časom povezuje. V tretjem verzu pesmi *Kagura Mai* se, na primer, pojavi princesa jeseni, Tatsuta, pa tudi rdeče listje in jeleni – vse to so prispodobe jeseni:

9 Klasifikacija in glasbene značilnosti pesmi *Kagura mai* so povzete iz Hrvatin 2010, 112–14.

10 *Min'yō* (民謡) lahko prevedemo kot »ljudsko pesem«. Gre za neposredni japonski prevod iz nemškega izraza za ljudsko pesem *Volkslied*, ki se je začel uporabljati konec 19. stoletja, v času, ko se je začela Japonska zgledovati po zahodu. Japonci so pred tem navadno uporabljali različne izraze, med katerimi je bil najpreprostejši tisti, ki je zaobjemal širši spekter vokalne glasbe, med drugimi izraz *uta* ali pesem. *Min'yō* se navezujejo na določena kmečka opravila oziroma obrti in so se navadno pele ob opravljanju le-teh, nekatere so imele vlogo razvedrila, spremljave k plesu ali pa so bile vključene v verske običaje. Za natančnejšo razlago glej Hughes 2008, 14–19.

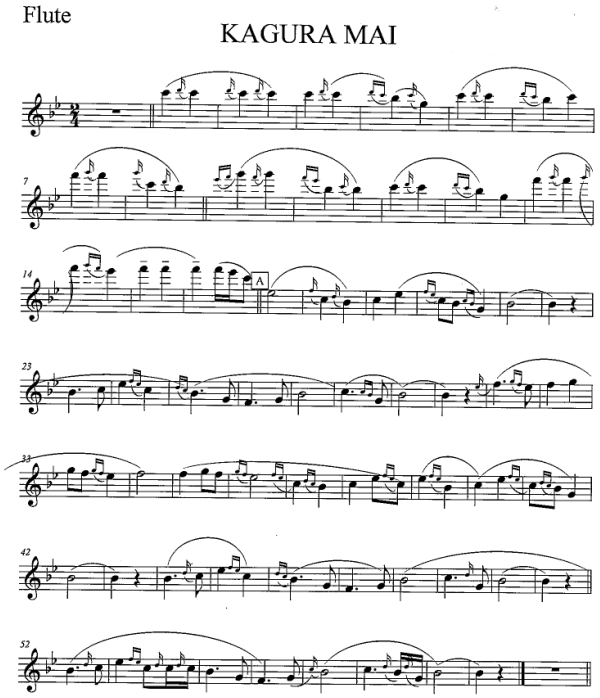
11 Pri plesu v rokah držijo pahljačo iz ciprese, pri čemer več pozornosti posvečajo »postankom in gibom, kot pa pretiranemu premikanju nog« (Ono, 45; Ecchū Gokayama no dentō). Prvotno je ples izvajala *miko-san* (巫女さん, šamanka oz. pomočnica v šintoističnem svetišču) (ibid.).

12 Kostum sestavljajo *nagaeboshi* (長烏帽子, visok klobuk iz svile in japonskega papirja), *suikan* (水干, zgornji bel kimono) in *hibakama* (緋袴, živordeče deljeno krilo). Obleka je podobna dvornim oblačilom iz obdobja Heian (794–1185). Lasje plesalke visijo zadaj izpod klobuka in so povezani z živordečim trakom. V svetišču nosijo nogavice *tabi* (足袋, bele, ločene pri palcu, ki se jih navadno uporablja tako pri ljudskih kot tudi tradicionalnih uprizoritvenih umetnostih), ki se običajno uporabljajo tudi pri ceremonijah.

秋は龍田姫峰山越えて候ばへ、
山の紅葉も、鹿も啼き向ふ候ばへ

Aki wa Tatsuta hime (na),
mine yama koete (sōrabae),
yama no kōyō mo (na),
shika mo naki mukafu (sōrabae).

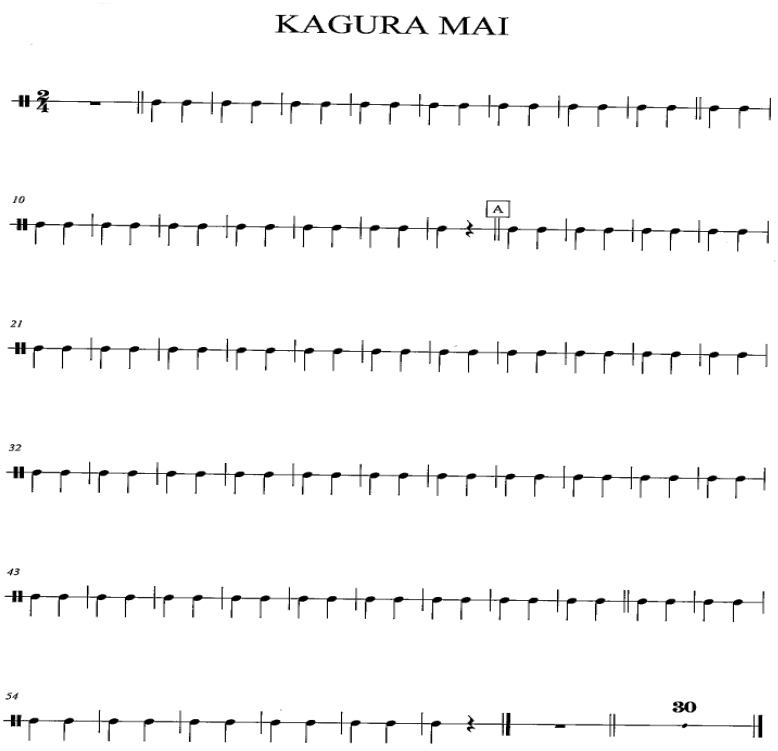
Jeseni
je princesa Tatsuta odšla
čez vrh gore.
V rdečem jesenskem listju na gori
se oglašajo jeleni.



Transkripcija pesmi Kagura Mai, del za flavto shinobue[13]

13 Transkripcija je zapisana po 1. zvočnem zapisu pesmi iz leta 1952. Spisana je bila v študiju skladatelja (in vodje pihalnih orkestrov) Josipa Grgasoviča. Inštrumenti, uporabljeni v *kaguri*, so približani zahodnim inštrumentom, in sicer japonska flavta *shinobue* njeni zahodni različici ter bambusove paličice *kokiriko no take* paličkam.

Glasbo, ki spremlja to pesem, izvaja majhna skupina glasbenikov *hayashi*, ki običajno igrajo na naslednja glasbila: boben *taiko* ali *hiradaiko* (太鼓 ali 平太鼓; boben, po katerem se bobna s palico), flavta *fue* (笛) ali *shinobue* (篠笛), par majhnih bakrenih činel *dōbyōshi* (銅拍子) in strgalo *bōzasara* (棒ザサラ), imenovano tudi *surizasara* (摺りザサラ). V izvedbi *Kagure mai*, posneti leta 1951, je slišati tudi tako imenovani *kokiriko no take* (筑子の竹). To je bil običajno inštrument uličnih glasbenikov, izdelan iz dveh bambusovih vršičkov (velikosti 22,5 x 1–1,5 cm), igra pa se ga s konicami prstov, tako da se vršička obrača in udarja drug ob drugega na njunih koncih.



Transkripcija pesmi Kagura Mai, del za bambusove palčke kokiriko no take[14]

14 Glej opombo 13.

Hughesova karakterizacija združenj *hozonkai* in združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*

Na podlagi proučevanja različnih združenj *hozonkai* je Hughes formuliral splošno »podobo« teh organizacij; če na kratko povzamemo, so večini združenj *hozonkai* skupne naslednje značilnosti:

1. So lokalne organizacije, namenjene ohranjanju lokalnih pesmi. Običajno se identificirajo z določeno vasjo, krajem ali delom mesta.
2. So amaterske skupine, ki niso osredotočene na materialne koristi. Resda včasih obstajajo tudi izjeme.
3. Nagnjene so h konservativizmu in se upirajo spremembam v glasbi, besedilu, plesu, kostumih itn., čeprav so izjeme tudi na tem področju. Ko dejansko pride do sprememb, želijo imeti nad njimi nadzor. Na tej točki utegne priti do konflikta med združenji *hozonkai* in profesionalnimi urbanimi izvajalci.
4. Člani so pogosto zelo stari. Številna združenja *hozonkai* so bila osnovana v petdesetih in šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja z namenom obujanja vaške tradicije, ki je zamrla v tridesetih in štiridesetih letih 20. stoletja. Učitelji so zato običajno precej stari. Kot je bilo že omenjeno, […] je mlajše generacije težko navdušiti nad lokalnimi ljudskimi pesmimi. Veliko lažje jih je privabiti, če je zraven še živahen ples.
5. Člani pogosto upajo, da bo njihova priljubljena pesem (ali več pesmi) dosegla vidnost na nacionalni ravni. […] Hkrati pa se velikokrat pritožujejo nad tem, kako neizogibno je, da profesionalni izvajalci njihove pesmi na takšen ali drugačen način spremenijo (Hughes 2008a, 222–23).

Z vidika zgoraj omenjenih skupnih značilnosti združenj *hozonkai* bo predstavljena organizacija *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*.

Gre za lokalne organizacije, namenjene ohranjanju lokalnih pesmi. Običajno se identificirajo z določeno vasjo, krajem ali delom mesta.

Z vidika prve značilnosti združenj po Hughesu je *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* lokalna organizacija, ki si prizadeva za ohranjanje lokalnih pesmi in plesov. Lokalno v tem primeru pomeni, da vsi njeni člani pripadajo približno sto prebivalcem vasi Kaminashi Tairamura; med seboj se poznajo, živijo drug poleg drugega in imajo staro in lepo navado sovaščane obiskovati osebno, namesto da bi uporabili telefon ali druge posredne načine komunikacije. Srečanja članov *hozonkai* se odvijajo običajno v hiši katerega od članov. Njihovo organizacijo in dejavnosti sponzorirajo pretežno člani sami in vaščani.

Sliki 1 in 2: Festival *Kokiriko* prirejajo 25. in 26. septembra. Obiskovalci se preizkusijo v plesu z inštrumentom *sasara*. (Vir: Klara Hrvatin)

Slike 3, 4 in 5: *Kagura mai* se med festivalom *Kokiriko* izvaja dvakrat: ob daritvi v svetišču Hakusangu in na odru med večerno predstavo. (Vir: Klara Hrvatin)

Slike 6–12: Pomladanski festival: po koncu levjega plesa *shishi mai* in procesije, s katero se daritev prinese v svetišče Hakusangu, se *Kaguro mai* izvede v svetišču; občinstvo sestavljajo lokalni ljudje. (Vir: Klara Hrvatin)

Slika 13: Upoštevajoč legendo, po kateri so rojstni kraj *Kagure mai* poselili pobegli bojevniki klana Taira, je združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* privzelo kostume v slogu 12. stoletja. Na fotografiji zgoraj (slika 12) lahko vidimo običajni razpored glasbil, od leve proti desni: *taiko*, *shinobue*, pevec, nato pa sledita *bōzasara* in *dōbyōshi*. Na fotografiji je izvajalec na glasbilu *bōzasara* ali *surizasara*. (Vir: Klara Hrvatin)

Pojem »lokalnosti« ima v tej regiji še en poseben vidik. Kraj, obkrožen s strmimi gorskimi pobočji, pozimi pa pokrit z globoko snežno odejo, je dolgo slovel kot nekakšna skrita oziroma neraziskana vas. Te okoliščine so se začele spreminjati leta 1930, ko se je začela gradnja cest in jezov ter električne napeljave. Šele razmeroma pozno, v času od izgradnje tunela leta 1984 in nazadnje z gradnjo avtocestne povezave leta 2001 (五箇山インターチェンジ), so kraj povezali s soseščino in mesti, kot so Toyama, Kanazawa in druga (Misumi 1992, 2–3). Prav tako je k prepoznavnosti pripomogla razglasitev nekaj krajev v regiji za kulturno dediščino v letu 1995. Na ta način se je regija počasi odprla v svet in se povezala s preostalim delom države. To je tudi eden od pomembnejših razlogov, zakaj se tukajšnje ljudske pesmi še naprej prenašajo znotraj vasi in zakaj so ostale na nek način nedotaknjene od zunanjih vplivov (*Sasara wa mado* 2008). Združenje se torej izrazito identificira s svojo lokacijo.

Ga. Yamazaki, katere družina ima pomembno vlogo pri ohranjanju ljudskih pesmi in drugih živečih tradicij v regiji in ki je poleg tega tudi zaposlena v turističnem informacijskem centru v Gokayami ter ima o ljudskih pesmih Gokayame veliko neprecenljivega znanja, pove, da so se v preteklosti prebivalci vasi Kaminashi pozimi znašli v objemu s snegom pobeljenih gora in tako preživeli zimo kot »medvedje med svojim zimskim spanjem v brlogih« (Yamazaki, osebno sporočilo avtorici 31. julija 2007). Takrat ni bilo slavnosti ali plesov; dneve so preživljali v hišah, pokritih s snegom. Ko se je ta končno stalil, so lahko ponovno obiskali sosede, včasih so koga našli tudi mrtvega, saj je nekaterim čez zimo zmanjkalo hrane. Obenem so se številni ljudje, ki so delali v oddaljenih krajih, spomladi vrnili domov (ibid.). Te zgodbe so med ljudmi še vedno prisotne in na njih temelji pomen spomladanskega festivala *Haru matsuri* (glej slike 6–12), ki poteka od 26. do 27. aprila in je posebnega pomena za prebivalce Kaminashija. V nasprotju s festivalom *Kokiriko* je ta slavnost lokalne in ne turistične narave.

Kot regija, ki je dobro znana po hišah v slogu *gasshō-zukuri*, h katerimi privabljajo turiste, poskušajo prebivalci teh krajev opozoriti nase in obuditi tudi ljudske običaje. Ti dve posebnosti se lepo dopolnjujeta in sta glavna turistična atrakcija; odražata kraj, iz katerega izvirata, in kažeta na izrazito krajevno pripadnost.

Skupine so amaterske in niso osredotočene na materialne koristi. Čeprav včasih obstajajo tudi izjeme.

Vsi člani so samouki, ki namenijo veliko prostega časa aktivnostim združenja *hozonkai*. Ne posvečajo se mu z namenom koristi ali dobička, ampak je bolj pomemben namen, da bi bil *hozonkai* čim bolj prepoznaven in spoštovan s strani obiskovalcev oziroma da bi imel boljši ugled v regiji. Če sploh, *hozonkai* lahko pridobi nekaj financ iz naslednjih virov:

1. Aktivnosti, posvečene privabljanju turistov (kot turistična atrakcija): za jesenski festival *Kokiriko* združenje *hozonkai* širši publiki predstavi pesmi *Kokiriko uta* in *Kagura mai* (glej slike 3–5). Na festivalu najprej predstavijo pesem *Kagura mai*. Ta se kot sakralni ples odpleše potem, ko se darovanje bogovom v svetišču zaključi. Plesalka skupaj z glasbo nastopi obrnjena proti oltarju, pred slovesno pripravljeno in blagoslovnljeno hrano, ki je položena na mala lesena stojala. Isti dan zvečer lahko pesem *Kagura mai* ponovno slišimo. Tokrat ne v povezavi s sakralno vlogo same pesmi in plesa, kot smo jo lahko videli v svetišču, ampak odrske izvedbe v obliki skrbno organiziranega kulturnega dogodka. Ta, drugi del festivala je usmerjen bolj k privabljanju tako gostov iz sosednjih bližnjih regij kot tudi turistov od daleč. Ker je tu *Kagura mai* predstavljena bolj spektakularno, jo izvede več nastopajočih kot v svetišču: še ena plesalka in še en pevec (glej sliko 4).[15]
2. Nastopi združenj *hozonkai* po Japonski in v tujini – *hozonkai* je večkrat povabljen na gostovanja v različne kraje na Japonskem in v tujini (Amerika, Honolulu, Koreja, Rusija itn.) – sicer prinesejo nekaj prihodka organizaciji, vendar si v večini primerov krijejo stroške potovanja in druge izdatke kar sami.
3. Izdelovanje instrumentov (aktivnost »izdelovanja instrumentov«je bila znana tako v preteklosti kot sedanjosti) je eden glavnih poklicev v vasi Kaminashi in sosednji vasi Tamukae. Vse pogostejše so tudi delavnice izdelovanja inštrumenta *sasara*, ki se jih obiskovalci lahko udeležijo, prav tako pa se je v zadnjem času povečalo število video vsebin z napotki za izdelavo oz. igranje nanje.

Nagnjene so h konservativizmu in se upirajo spremembam v glasbi, besedilu, plesu, kostumih itn., čeprav so izjeme tudi na tem področju. Ko dejansko pride do sprememb, želijo imeti nad njimi nadzor. Na tej točki utegne priti do konflikta med združenji hozonkai in profesionalnimi urbanimi izvajalci.

Tabela 2 prikazuje vire *Kagure mai* v obdobju več kot šestdesetih let, od njene prve izvedbe leta 1952 do sedanjih posnetkov. Razvidno je, da je vse oblike ohranjanja pesmi in plesa *Kagura mai* izvedlo združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*. Iz analize zbranih podatkov o pesmi *Kagura mai*[16] lahko zaključimo, da se je skozi leta pesem standardizirala – bodisi glede glasbil, oblike ali ritma. Kar se tiče same funkcije pesmi, so po drugi strani vidne spremembe v njeni uporabi; njena funkcija ljudske upodabljajoče umetnosti se prepleta s turističnimi in

15 Poleg *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* se je na odru predstavilo še pet združenj (od tega štiri ohranjajo ljudske pesmi iz regije Gokayama), vse s svojimi lokalnimi pesmimi in plesi. To so *Osayobushiya hozonkai* (小谷麦屋節保存会), *Ecchū Gokayama Mugiya-busi hozonkai* (越中五箇山麦屋節保存会), *Ecchū Gokayama min'yō hozonkai* (越中五箇山民謡保存会), *Ecchū Yaoowara hozonkai* (越中八尾おわら保存会), *Ecchū Gokayama Kokiriko uta hozonkai* (越中五箇山こきりこ唄保存会).

16 O sami analizi več v Hrvatin 2010.

folklornimi dogodki. Postala je del odrskega nastopa ali tako imenovane odrske ljudske pesmi (*sutēji min'yō*).

Tabela 2: Primerjava dokumentacije o načinu ohranjanja Kagure mai od 1952 leta do danes

Predstavniki virov	Namen	Pevci in glasbila	Ples	Prostor	Način ohranitve
Antologija japonskih ljudskih pesmi (1952) (日本民謡大鑑) *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*	zbiranje ljudskega blaga s strani NHK	pevec, flavti (2), male bakrene činele, boben *taiko*, bambusove palčke *kokiriko no take* (1. verz)	/	Gokayama	transkripcija ✧ avdio (CD) opisni vir
***Ecchū Gokayama Min'yō minbu hozondan rengōkai* (1974)** (越中五箇山民謡民舞保存団連合会) *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*	30. obletnica združenja	pevca (2), flavti (2), male bakrene činele, boben *taiko*, strgalo *bōzasara* (3. in 4. verz)	dve plesalki	Gokayama	✧ DVD
***Ljudske pesmi iz Gokayame* (2002)** (五箇山の民謡, Gokayama no min'yō) *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*		pevec, flavta, male bakrene činele, boben *taiko*, strgalo *bōzasara* (1. in 2. verz)			✧ avdio (CD)
***Kokiriko* matsuri (2007)** *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*	a) del festivala b) turistična atrakcija	pevec (1), flavta (1), male bakrene činele, boben *taiko*, strgalo *bōzasara* (1. in 3. verz) pevec (2), flavta (2), male bakrene činele, boben *taiko*, strgalo *bōzasara* (1. in 3. verz)	ena plesalka tri plesalke	Gokayama	✧ video posnetek
***Kokiriko uta hozonkai* (*Haru* matsuri) (2008)** *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*	del festivala	pevec (1), flavta (1), male bakrene činele, boben *taiko*, strgalo *bōzasara* (1. in 2. verz)	ena plesalka	Gokayama	✧ video posnetek

Na začetku delovanja je *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* določil, katero pesem, besedilo, ples in izvedbeni kostum bo ohranjal. Pravila združenja *hozonkai* določajo, da mora

ohranjati pesmi v takšni obliki, kot so bile prenesene od prednikov izvajalcev. Vaščani se zavedajo, da mora biti pesem ohranjena v avtentični obliki ali »zaprto brez sprememb« (kar avtorica tega članka imenuje koncept »zaprte škatle«[17]), čeprav je težko oz. skoraj nemogoče peti pesem na enak način, kot so se je naučili od svojih predhodnikov. Vodja urada združenja Iwasaki Kihei pravi, da je to v protislovju s samim ohranjanjem pesmi, saj »omejuje oz. ubije pesem« (Iwasaki Kihei, v pogovoru z avtorico, april 2008). Zelo rad bi, da bi se pravila združenja spremenila, tako da ne bi izvajali pesmi »le na določen način« (ibid.). Poudaril je tudi, da je pesem v vsakem primeru, če želijo ali ne, izpostavljena določenim spremembam.[18]

Člani so pogosto zelo stari.

Številna združenja *hozonkai* so bila osnovana v petdesetih in šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja z namenom obuditi vaško tradicijo, ki je zamrla v tridesetih in štiridesetih letih 20. stoletja. Učitelji so zato običajno precej stari. Mlajše generacije je težko navdušiti nad lokalnimi ljudskimi pesmimi. Veliko lažje jih je privabiti, če je zraven še živahen ples.

Člani združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* so starejši. Če se ozremo v zgodovino njegovih predsednikov (Mr. Takakuwa je bil leta 1951 imenovan kot prvi predsednik) kot tudi članov upravnega odbora, so vsi starejši in skoraj v vseh primerih nastopijo funkcijo predsednika v poznejših letih. Čeprav po besedah Kunitake Ōseija, ki je nedavno postal novi predsednik združenja, mladi prav tako zavzeto delujejo in pomagajo v okviru združenja (*Sasara wa mado* 2008). Preseneča tudi dejstvo, da populacija v vasici Kaminashi po besedah vaščanov v zadnjih časih narašča, kar pomeni, da se bo tradicija združenja *hozonkai* lahko nadaljevala tudi z mlajšimi generacijami.

Združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* je bilo ustanovljeno, da bi obudilo tradicijo vasice, ki je poniknila v preteklosti. V viru *Kokiriko: Njegov izvor in zgodovina* (*Kokiriko* 2002), ki natančno opisuje začetke in delovanje združenja, je zapisano, da naj bi pesem in ples *Kokiriko* obstajala že 1400 let. Ko naj bi že skoraj poniknila v pozabo, naj bi pesnik Saijō Jaso (西条八十, 1892–1970) po naročilu časopisne družbe Ōsaka Mainichi leta 1930 obiskal Gokayamo in spraševal po pesmi. Zanjo naj bi slišal iz dela *Skrivnostne zgodbe severnih dežel* (奇談北国巡杖記, *Kidan hōkoku junjōki*) Yanagite Kunia, začetnika japonske etnologije (*Kokiriko* 2002). Ker pesmi nihče ni poznal, se je poslovil brez kakršnihkoli informacij. Pozneje je ugotovil, da veliko ljudi pozna to pesem, vendar ne pod imenom *Kokiriko*. Čez nekaj časa je eden od vaščanov iz vasi Kaminashi,

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18 Intervju je bil opravljen na njegovem domu (vasica Kaminashi Tairamura, 27. aprila 2008). Tam ima poleg male trgovine s tōfujem in sakejem malo pisarno, kjer hrani dokumente o združenju *hozonkai*.

Takakuwa Takachika (高桑敬親), slišal zgodbo in začel raziskovati pesem *Kokiriko*. Imel naj bi zelo pomembno vlogo pri obujanju plesa in pesmi *Kokiriko* (*Kokiriko* 2002, 14–16). Zanimivo je tudi dejstvo, da je bil Takakuwa Takachika prvi predsednik združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* ob njegovi ustanovitvi leta 1951 in mu je predsedoval prvih enaindvajset let.

Tudi *Kagura mai* ima nejasno zgodovino. V *Antologiji japonskih ljudskih pesmi* je zelo skromno opisana, izvajali naj bi jo pod imenom *Maimai*. Glede na pričevanja tako ljudi kot tudi odgovornih za *hozonkai*, obstaja o samem prenosu pesmi *Kagura mai* premalo informacij. Gospa Yamazaki razloži, da *Maimai* izvajajo med festivali in slavnostmi (na primer na zabavi, ki sledi poroki: stari in mladi, moški in ženske se vsi vrtijo v krogu), vendar je znana kot pesem *Osayo-bushi*. Natančneje: po drugi svetovni vojni naj bi ljudje začeli peti besedilo *Osayo-bushi* z melodijo *Maimai*. Ljudje, ki poznajo besedilo *Maimai*, so zdaj že izjemno redki. Sprva naj bi ga poznalo 40–50 ljudi, danes pa kvečjemu 10–20. Poleg tega se na *Maimai* z melodijo *Kagure mai* skoraj več ne pleše (Yamazaki, e-pošta avtorici, 31. julija 2007).

Zanimivi so tudi komentarji Iwasakija, ki zatrjuje oz. odkriva, da je *Maimai* postala *Osayo-bushi*, za katero skrbi drugo združenje, medtem ko naj bi pesem *Kagura mai* preprosto ustvaril Takakuwa, zanjo priredil besedilo (vse razen prve kitice) in ji dodal tudi glasbila, ki naj jih v osnovi ne bi bilo. Kot takšna naj ne bi imela več nobenih podobnostih ali povezav z *Maimai*, tako da jo kot član združenja zelo nerad izvaja (v pogovoru z avtorico, april 2008).

Verjetno ni vse tako preprosto, kot se sliši. Iwasaki je mnenja (ibid.), da nekaj v tej zgodbi manjka oziroma bi terjalo nadaljnje raziskave. Predvsem ostaja nejasno, kako se je stara tradicija (ljudska pesem *Kokiriko* in *Kagura mai* kot tudi njeni prevzeti kostumi) prenesla v sedanjost. To vprašanje je povezano z verjetnostjo, da *hozonkai* do neke mere ne prenaša starodavno oživljene pesmi *Kagura mai* in *Kokiriko uta*, ampak namesto te kaže na možnost primera »izumljene tradicije«.[19]

Člani pogosto upajo, da bo njihova priljubljena pesem (ali več pesmi) dosegla vidnost na nacionalni ravni. Hkrati pa se člani velikokrat pritožujejo nad tem, kako neizogibno je, da profesionalni izvajalci njihove pesmi na takšen ali drugačen način spremenijo.

Člani stremijo k slovesu svoje pesmi in tekmujejo s prepoznavnostjo združenj *hozonkai* v svoji okolici. Tako kot na svoje nastope na Japonskem (kjer

19 Tu se avtorica sklicuje na pojem »izmišljene tradicije« (Hobsbawm 1983, 1) iz dela *Invented traditions*, v katerem je pojasnjeno, da se za večino starih tradicij (ali tistih, ki se imajo za stare) pogosto izkaže, da so po svojem izvoru mlajše in lahko tudi izumljen konstrukt.

nastopajo na dogodkih, kot so državna srečanja ljudskih pesmi in plesov, ki jih producira NHK, Festival domačih pesmi (*Furusato no uta matsuri*) ali Venček ljudskih pesmi (*Min'yō baraetī*), Festival ljudskih pesmi in plesov iz Gokayame itn.), so ponosni tudi na nastope na drugih celinah. Predvsem leta 1974 so se pogosto udeležili mednarodnih prireditev v Ameriki (Philadelphia, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco) in na Havajih ter v naslednjih letih tudi v Koreji in Rusiji (Kokiriko 2002, 14–16), kar tudi potrjuje slednjo značilnost Hughesove opredelitve.

Gospod Iwasaki ni bil navdušen nad priredbo pesmi *Kagura mai* (priredbi za klavir in glas skladatelja Mamiye Michia[20]) in je trdil, da je izvedba, ki jo izvaja *hozonkai*, veliko boljša. Prav tako ga je zanimalo, ali je v zbirki še kakšna pesem, ki jo prav tako izvaja katero od združenj *hozonkai* (Iwasaki Kihei, v pogovoru z avtorico, april 2008).

Posebnosti združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*

Združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* ustreza sliki značilnosti združenj *hozonkai*, kot jih opredeli Hughes, kaže pa tudi na posebnosti. Z drugimi besedami, združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* je resnično »lokalna organizacija z maloštevilnimi člani, ki niso profesionalci ali materialno usmerjeni in imajo v splošnem precej konservativen odnos do glasbe, ki jo ohranjajo« (Hughes 2008a), vseeno pa so vidna odstopanja v tem združenju, po katerih se razlikuje od generične slike opredelitve združenj, kot jih je podal Hughes. Odstopanja so:

1. Izrazit koncept lokalnosti: Seveda je ena od značilnosti združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* pripadnost lokalnosti oz. domačemu kraju (t. i. koncept »*furusato*«), kot je to v primeru večine združenj *hozonkai*. Kar je pri tem treba poudariti, je dejstvo, da je glede na dolgo zgodovino izolacije vasice Kaminashi iz Tairamure zaradi njene geografske lege koncept lokalno osnovanega združenja močnejši kot v drugih združenjih *hozonkai*.

2. Prizadevanje za spremembe: Čeprav združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* spoštuje direktivo zakona o varstvu kulturne dediščine, v svojih pogledih ni popolnoma konservativen. Pravzaprav člani združenja želijo, da se zakon v prihodnosti revidira tako, da bo dovoljeval več kot samo ohranjanje same pesmi.

Prav tako zanimivo oz. kontradiktorno je dejstvo, da se v okviru standardizacije (bodisi oblike, ritma, teksta, njenih instrumentov itn.), s katero se glede na zakon združenje trudi ohranjati pesmi *Kokiriko* in *Kagura mai*, pesem še vedno prenaša ustno. Nikakor ni smiselno vztrajati, da mora biti ljudska pesem, ki se prenaša

20 Za podrobnosti glej Hrvatin in Ito 2009.

ustno, zapeta v »fiksirani« obliki. Poleg tega lahko pesem *Kagura Mai* izvaja (ter ohranja) samo združenje *Kokiriko uta hozonkai* in ne sme biti peta na drugačen način, kot ga določa samo združenje.

3. Vprašljivo »prenašanje kulture«: Ta točka ni neposredno povezana s Hughesovimi značilnostmi združenj, ampak kaže na nove poteze združenja *Kokiriko uta hozonkai*. Povezana je z mislijo, da združenje *Kokirko uta hozonkai* ne prenaša starodavne oživitve pesmi *Kagura mai* (in *Kokiriko uta*), ampak namesto te kaže na možnost prenašanja t. i. »izumljene tradicije«. Do osvetlitev tega vprašanja prenosa starodavne tradicije je prišlo v intervjuju z vodjo urada združenja Iwasakijem, sledimo pa mu lahko tako v zgodovinskih zapisih kot tudi v študijah o združenjih *hozonkai*.

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Šest budističnih simbolov: analiza poetične podobe Budovega razsvetljenja iz dinastije Song

Jan VRHOVSKI *

Izvleček

V članku se osredotočam na šest med seboj povezanih budističnih simbolov, ki se pojavljajo v poeziji Su Shija, uradnika in pesnika iz dinastije Song. Skozi analizo ozadja posameznih ikonografskih motivov in budističnih simbolov, ki se navezujejo na ikonografsko podobo Budovega razsvetljenja, se nam razodevajo njihove povezave z delom budističnega kanonskega izročila, ki se v fragmentih navezuje tako na prvotno izročilo kakor tudi na avtohtone elemente iz kitajske tradicije. Obravnava nastanka in rabe budističnih simbolov pa nam lahko posledično obelodani tudi način, s katerim so budistični simboli skozi stoletja postopoma vstopali v domeno splošno rabljenega pesniškega izrazja in tako sooblikovali izraznosti podob pesnikovega notranjega sveta.

Ključne besede: budizem, simbolika, poezija, umetnost, dinastija Song, Su Shi

Six Buddhist Symbols: An Analysis of a Poetical Image of Buddha's Enlightenment from the Song Dynasty

Abstract

In the present article, I focus on six mutually interrelated Buddhist symbols, that occur in a poem written by Su Shi, a renowned Chinese official and poet from the Song dynasty. By developing an analysis of the background of individual iconographic motives and Buddhist symbols, all of which pertain to the iconography of the Buddha's enlightenment, the article aims at revealing their inherent connections to certain segments of Chinese Buddhism, which were originally related both to the original (non-Chinese) Buddhist tradition as well as to Chinese native tradition. Consequently, in the subsequent discussion of the emergence and use of Buddhist symbolism in China, the article tries to shed some light on the particular manner in which, throughout many successive centuries, the Buddhist symbolism related to internal and external aspects of enlightenment were gradually entering into the domain of common poetic vocabulary, and hereby co-shaped the symbolic expressiveness of images used by the Chinese poet while disclosing the content of his inner world.

Keywords: Buddhism, symbolism, Chinese poetry, Song dynasty, Su Shi

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Uvod

V članku bomo obravnavali rabo budistične simbolike v pesniškem jeziku dinastije Song. Pri tem nam bo za osnovo, iz katere bo izhajala naša analiza, služila ena izmed Su Shijevih (苏轼, psevdonim Dongpo 东坡, 1037–1101) zgodnjih pesmi z naslovom »Zapisano ob opazovanju Wu Daozijeve slike Budove nirvane v templju Kaiyuan«[1]. Dejstvo, da se pesem že v osnovi navezuje na konkreten motiv v budistični umetnosti, namreč podobo Budovega razsvetljenja, bo naši razpravi dodalo določeno težo, saj bomo tako lahko potrdili predpostavko, da so v pesmi uporabljeni simboli resnično rabljeni v povezavi z budizmom. Naša nadaljnja naloga bo podrobneje razložiti pomen uporabljenih simbolov in ga tudi povezati z ustreznim ozadjem, bodisi v tradicionalni kitajski misli ali budističnih spisih in sutrah. V članku bomo obravnavali naslednje simbole ali simbolne pare:

- Sedem zakladov in štiri drevesa
- Veliki lev
- Vrba in topol
- Lotos
- Budove oči
- Mesec-led ter sonce-plamen

Su Shijeva pesem, katere budistično vsebino bomo vzeli pod drobnogled, je nastala v času Sujevega pogostega srečevanja s slikami Wu Daozija (吴道子) in Wang Weija (王维) v templju Kaiyuan (开元), kamor je pesnik zahajal od svojih ranih let, še posebej pa v šestdesetih letih 11. stol. n. št., ko je tudi nastala pričujoča pesem. Poleg tega pa ima tudi ime tega templja prav poseben pomen, saj se je namreč imenoval po zlatem obdobju dinastije Tang (唐), v izrazju dinastije Song pa se je posledično uporabljal kot metafora za popolno stanje v državi, ko so v slogi cvetele poezija, umetnost in filozofija (Murck 2000, 89–90).

Omenjena pesem povzema predvsem slikarsko delo prvega izmed zgoraj naštetih slikarjev, Wu Daozija, vsebinsko pa slika predvsem podobo Budovega razsvetljenja. Poglejmo si izvirnik in njegov prevod (SSSJ 1, 170–72):

(1) 西方真人谁所见, 衣被七宝从雙狻
(2) 当时修道颇辛苦，柳生两肘鸟巢肩
(3) 初如濛濛隐山玉，渐如濯濯出水莲
(4) 道成一旦就空灭，奔会四海悲人天
(5) 翔禽哀响动林谷，獸鬼躑躅淚迸泉

1 SSSJ 1, 170–2. »Ji suojian Kaiyuan si Wu Daozi hua Fo miedu« 记所见开元寺吴道子画佛滅度.

(6) 庞眉深目彼谁子，绕牀[2]弹指性自圆
(7) 隐如寒月墮清晝，空有孤光留故躔
(8) 春遊古寺拂塵壁，遗像久此霾香烟
(9) 畫师不复写名姓，皆云道子口所传
(10) 纵横固已蔑孙鄧，有如巨鳄吞小鲜
(11) 来诗所誇 孰与此，安得攜掛其旁观

(1) Kdo je videl resničnega človeka z zahoda?
Odet v sedem zakladov v spremstvu dveh mogočnih levov.
(2) Nekoč se je [tudi on] vztrajno in s trudom uril v poti (*dao*),
s komolcev so mu pognale vrbe in ptice so začele gnezditi na njegovih ramenih.
(3) Na začetku meglen in neviden kot žad skrit nekje v gorah,
potem jasen in čist kot lotos, ki požene iz vode.
(4) Ko je izpolnil pot (*dao*),
je vstopil v stanje praznine in prenehanja,
in z vseh strani so zbrali se ljudje,
nebo in zemlja pa sta v žalost se povila.
(5) Otožni klici ptic, ki krožijo po nebu,
so doneli po gozdovih in kotlinah,
zveri in duhovi so jokaje postopali naokoli
in s solzami polnili potoke.
(6) Ta človek globokih oči in belih obrvi,
čigav otrok je?
Ki se ozrl je naokoli in v tlesku prsta dosegel
izpopolnitev lastne narave.
(7) Izginil je kot ledeni mesec pada v jasnem svitu
in kot v praznini neba na starodavnih nebeških poteh ostaja samoten žarek.
(8) Spomladi odpotujem v ta starodavni tempelj,
da bi se otresel posvetnega prahu;
to posmrtno podobo (Bude) že dolgo prekajam z dimom kadila.
(9) Mojster slike ni zapisal svojega imena.
Ljudje pravijo, da je bil to Wu Dao.
(10) Poteze ravne in navpične, ki prekašajo tiste od Suna in Denga,
so kot velikanski krokodili, ki goltajo majhne ribe.
(11) Kar pa se tiče slik, ki jih poveličuješ v svojih pesmih,
obesiti bi jih morali drugo ob drugo, da bi jih lahko primerjal.[3]

2 Prvotno 绕林.

3 Prevod zadnjih dveh verzov je vsebinsko interpretativno povzet po prevodu Beate Grant (1994, 50–51). Preostalo je avtorjev prevod.

Vsebina pričujoče pesmi je v mnogih ozirih hkrati preprosta in zapletena. Preprosta je v svoji pripovedi, ki je osnovana na pesnikovem srečanju s slikarskim delom Wu Daozija in ki jo ta snuje s pomočjo aluzij in simboličnosti osrednjih podob iz Budovega življenja. Po drugi strani pa je v okviru tangovske in songške poezije osrednjih simbolov, s katerimi pesnik uprizarja zunanjo in notranjo podobo Bude, vsekakor ne moremo razumeti kot izključno budistične, daoistične ali konfucijanske. Dodati je treba tudi to, da je za zgodovinski razvoj izrazja in simbolizma laične budistične miselnosti na Kitajskem značilno nenehno stapljanje gradnikov iz raznih struj izvornega budizma na eni strani in kitajskih avtohtonih idej na drugi. To pa ne velja zgolj za zgodnje obdobje budizma na Kitajskem, ampak tudi za poznejša obdobja kitajskega budizma. Omenjenega spajanja pa ni mogoče zaslediti samo v hermetičnih, doktrinalnih delih ali notranjih razpravah budističnih šol, kjer se razvoj in mešanje odvijata na poseben način, ampak, morda najpomembneje, tudi pri laikih (učenjakih) – tako pri tistih, ki so v ospredje svojega duhovnega življenja postavljali budistični nauk, kakor tudi pri tistih, ki so skozi vrata budizma stopali zgolj bežno in se v iskanju znotraj njega niso zadrževali prav dolgo. Dva izmed najpomembnejših predstavnikov t. i. zgodnje kitajske pesniške srenje v dinastiji Tang, ki zaradi svojega močno konfucijansko obarvanega delovanja in družbenopolitičnega prizadevanja še močneje nakazujeta na prepletanje domnevnih ideoloških nasprotij v kitajski tradiciji, sta prav gotovo Du Fu (杜甫) in Han Yu (韩愈). Ukvarjanju s temami, ki se tičejo vprašanj o doktrini in hermenevtični naravnanosti do glavnih referenčnih virov kitajske tradicije, tesno za petami sledi stvarjenje enotnega jezika (aluzivno in metaforično kot neposredno izrazno), katerega obronke nameravamo obelodaniti tudi v tej kratki razpravi.

Sedem zakladov in štiri drevesa Budovega razsvetljenja

V prenesenem pomenu je v mahajanski literaturi podoba sedmih zakladov predstavljala vrednote tostranosti, ki naj bi tvorile enega glavnih stebrov iluzije bivanja, ki jih je na poti do razsvetljenja in spoznanja končne resničnosti sveta treba premostiti. Sedem zakladov posvetne oblasti, ki v budističnem dojemanju človeške narave predstavljajo cilje prizadevanj zaslepljenega človeka, pa ne predstavljajo nekega strogega nasprotja z najvišjim spoznanjem ali razsvetljenjem, ampak nek osnovni del človekove duševne podstati, iz katere sestoji njegovo življenje in preko katere lahko, enako kot iz vseh ostalih ravni stvarnosti, črpa spoznanje o sebi in svetu. Na spoznavni in moralni ravni sicer razumevanje t. i. »resnične« narave sedmih zakladov sledi spoznanju temeljne narave materialnega sveta oz. njegovi iluzornosti.[4]

4 Primer tega lahko vidimo na primer v besedilu *Vajracchedike* . Glej na primer Hsing 2001; Mu 2000.

V pesmih in slikarski umetnosti iz dinastij Tang in Song pa so se na starejši budistični pojem sedmih zakladov naplastile še druge pomenske nianse, ki jih je v svet podob in izrazja budizma prispevala kitajska kultura. Znotraj novega pomena, ki ga je omenjeni pojem dobil z umestitvijo v kitajsko kulturno okolje, sta se razširila tako vloga kot tudi značaj njegove podobe in se napolnila s svojevrstno magičnostjo (Kieschnik 2003, 67–69). Posledično je lahko pojem sedmih zakladov znotraj širših okvirov budistične ikonografije predstavljal tudi pozitivne lastnosti razsvetljenega človeka; dragulj je tako na primer ponazarjal njegovo čisto naravo, njegov dragoceni um ali dobro sevajočo notranjost. Čeprav se je budistična ikonografija znotraj posameznih šol razvijala drugače, pa je sorazmerno enotna v opisu življenja prvotnega Bude. Ta enotnost se odraža tudi v močno ikonoklastičnem budizmu *Chan* (禅, jap. *zen*, stind. *dhyāna*) (Brinker, Kanazawa in Leisinger 1996, 132). V delu *Genealogija šole Chan* (宗派图 *Zongpaitu*) je Buda Śākyamuni upodobljen v bližču razsvetljenja, sedeč v meditaciji na lotosovem prestolu, s cvetom v desni roki in značilnimi znamenji duhovnega razsvetljenja: z *ūrṇo*[5] na čelu in *uṣṇīṣo*[6] na glavi. Večina komentatorjev te podobe ne razlaga metafizično, kot nek ideal, ki obstaja onkraj tega sveta, ampak kot konkretno doktrinalno »rodovno« vez med vznikom budističnega nauka in linijo chanskih patriarhov in učiteljev (ibid.).

Podobno simboliko lahko najdemo tudi v daoizmu, kjer bi lahko pojem osem zakladov (八宝 *babao*) prepoznali v sosledju sedmih stopenj, ki sestavljajo pot do človekove izpopolnitve in ki jih prav tako predstavlja sedem zakladov. Iskano število osem pa se doseže v zadnji stopnji celostne izpopolnitve, ki jo simbolizira žad, simbol moralne izpolnjenosti ali krepostnosti (*de* 德).[7]

V omenjenem simbolu osmih zakladov, ki se pojavlja v tangovski in songški budistični poeziji, lahko tako zelo verjetno prepoznamo *plemenito osemčleno pot* do razsvetljenja, ki jo je učil Buda Śākyamuni (stind. *ārya-aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*) in si jo v osnovi, vsaj kar zadeva zgodovinske elemente doktrine, delijo vse šole budizma (Notz 2007, 32–33). V okviru imenovanih osmih stopenj lahko prepoznamo tudi ustrezno sosledje *štirih resnic* (stind. *catvāri āryasatyāni*), ki se navezujejo na omenjene stopnje in jih v osnovi lahko predstavlja tudi simbolna zveza *štirih strani* gaja, ki se v mahajanski literaturi omenja kot kraj, kjer je Buda dosegel razsvetljenje. Omenjene štiri resnice so v mahajanski budistični

5 Staroindijska beseda *ūrṇa*, ki se v kitajščino prevaja kot *baihao* 白毫, je znamenje v obliki kroga, ki se običajno upodablja na čelih »svetih« osebnosti v budistični umetnosti. Kot takšno simbolizira »duhovno oko« razsvetljene osebe, ki le tej omogoča uvid v transcendentalne ravni bivanja. V mahajanski literaturi se *ūrṇa* omenja kot 31. telesno znamenje Bude.

6 Staroindijsko *uṣṇīṣa* so v figo povezani lasje na vrhu Budove glave.

7 Običajno je govora o žadu, ki se skriva zakopan globoko pod goro ali pa v notranjosti nebrušenega kamna.

ikonografiji nadalje predstavljene kot štiri ali štirje pari dreves *sāla*,[8] ki obdajajo sedečega Budo. Štirje pari svetih dreves, ki v gaju obdajajo razsvetljenega Budo, tako predstavljajo štiri stebre njegovega prebujenja k resnici (FGDC, 1135):

> Kot je zapisano v večini suter, je Buda dosegel razsvetljenje (nirvāṇa), ko je bival na obrobju mesta Kuśinagara. Na vsaki od štirih strani prostora, kjer je sede meditiral, je stal par sāla dreves, ki je poganjal iz skupne korenine. Med dvema debloma dreves, ki so se nahajala na štirih straneh Budovega sedišča, je eno od žalosti prebledelo in se obarvalo belo. Njegovo listje, veje, cvetovi, sadovi in lubje so popokali in se posušili ter na koncu odpadli, tako da je drevo začelo postopoma veneti. Medtem pa je drugo drevo obstalo [in še dalje uspevalo v rasti]. Zaradi tega te pare dreves imenujemo tudi štiri ovenela in štiri rastoča drevesa ali pa ne veneča in ne rastoča drevesa. Temu [poimenovanju] sledi še metaforično poimenovanje »trajnost in minljivost« za vzhodni par dreves, potem »sebstvo in brezosebnost« za par na zahodu, »sreča in nesreča« na jugu in »čistost in nečistost« na severu.[9]

Kot lahko vidimo zgoraj, se v osrednji podobi Budovega razsvetljenja in posledičnega raztelešenja obelodani pot spoznanja kot srednja pot (中道 *zhongdao*). Omenjena podoba na ta način lepo ponazori misel, ki je prisotna tudi v doktrini *madhyamaka* (»srednja pot«) budističnega filozofa Nāgārjune, ki tesno prepleta večino poznejših razvojnih smernic v mahajanski doktrini, še posebej *Prajñāpāramitā* tradicijo, ki je močno zaznamovala eno od osrednjih vej *Chana* (禅) (Kalupahana 1992, 228–36).

Simbol velikega leva

Enotno podobo, ki jo orisuje drugi verz, zaključi in dopolni naslednji simbol, ki ima svoje korenine v osrčju indijske kulture, namreč simbol leva. Lev je prvotno predstavljal simbol vladarske moči in zaščite, v zgodnjem budizmu pa se je uporabljal za označevanje neke vrste vladarske narave Bude Śākyamunija, ki je v skladu s tem simbolnim vzdevkom imenovan tudi *Śākyasiṃha* (tib. *Sakya seng-ge*), »lev plemena Šakja«. V mahajanski budistični doktrini se razmeroma zgodaj pojavi tudi simbol prestola, ki ga podpira osem levov, osem stebrov budistične skupnosti,

8 *Shorea robusta*, slov. salovec.

9 /.../据诸经之记载，释尊于拘尸那揭罗城外将入涅槃时，其卧床四边各有同根娑罗树一双，其树每边一双中之一株，因悲伤而惨然变白，枝叶、花果、皮干皆爆裂堕落，逐渐枯萎，另一株则尚存，故此双树亦称四枯四荣树，或非枯非荣树。以故，遂有东方双树为'常与无常'，西方双树为'我与无我'，南方为'乐与无乐'，北方为'净与不净'等之譬喻/.../ Vsi prevodi, uporabljeni v tem članku, so avtorjevi.

dharme in Budove narave. Prav tako pa je že v zgodnjem mahajanskem obdobju osem levov predstavljalo osmero *bodhisattev*, ki skupaj z Budo predstavljajo izvorno simbolično *saṅgho* ali skupnost. Lev je tako v najzgodnejšem simboličnem smislu metafora za velike *bodhisattve*, še posebej pa se pojavlja v povezavi z *bodhisattvama Avalokiteshvaro* in *Mañjuśrijem* (Beer 2003, 63).

Podoba leva, ki se je skupaj z budizmom prenesla na Kitajsko, je doživela dodatno pomensko razširitev in je tako lahko označevala tudi budistično skupnost nasploh ali pa budistični nauk. Za časa dinastij, ki so bile naklonjene budizmu, so tako pred glavni stopniščni vhod v budistične samostane ali stavbe posvetne veljave pogosto postavili kipa levov, ki sta poleg zgoraj opisane simbolne vrednosti imela tudi vlogo nekakšnih spiritualnih stražarjev (Williams 1974, 251).

V našem kontekstu je dovolj, če v podobi dveh levov, ki sledita Budi, prepoznamo simbol dveh velikih *bodhisattev* ali morda dveh plati budistične *dharme*, vendar moramo pri tem dodati, da obstaja še nadaljnji aspekt podobe levjega para, razprava o njem pa bi na tem mestu zahtevala preveč časa in prostora.[10] Naš poskus umestitve tega simbola naj zato služi kot igla v kompasu, ki nas vztrajno usmerja proti severu in jugu, ne da bi ju bili zmožni tudi dejansko ugledati. Pri tem je ključnega pomena tudi dejstvo, da podobe leva ne srečamo v osrednjem kanonu mahajanskih suter (*Lankavatara sutri*, *Nirvana sutri* ali *Surangama sutri*), ampak skoraj izključno v *Lotosovi sutri*.[11]

Vrbe in topoli

V naslednjem verzu pesnik prestopi prag upodobljenega in povzame življenje *Śākyamunija*, ki se je postopoma izpopolnjeval v učenju in trpel vse težave počasnega napredka proti razsvetljujoči modrosti. V urjenju duha in iskanju poti skozi globoko kontemplacijo se je okolica pričela spajati z njegovim telesom: »/…/na njegovih ramenih so pričele gnezditi ptice in iz njegovih komolcev so pognale vrbe/…/«. Tukaj uporabljeno prispodobo (柳生两肘鸟巢肩 *liu sheng liang zhou niao chao jian*) za globoko predanost poti in intenzivno urjenje duha v meditaciji lahko srečamo na mnogih mestih, vsaj omembo izluščenega bistva omenjene fraze, kot na primer simbole vrbe ali nekega drugega drevesa in ptičjega gnezda. Najpomembnejša je omemba v *Zhuangziju* (poglavje »Zhi le«) (Zhuangzi 1995, 306):

> Kmalu je iz njegovega levega komolca pognala vrba.[12]

10 Glej npr. Eberhard 1990, 164.

11 T. 9.262-5.11: 今見釋師子. 其後當作佛, 號名曰彌勒. *»(Danes) vidimo leva iz plemena Śakya, ki bo zatem (po svoji smrti, v prihodnosti) postal Buda po imenu Maytreya.«*

12 俄而柳生其左肘

Ta interpretacija je po mnenju komentatorjev Su Shijevih del v prevajanju besede 柳 (*liu*) s pomenom »vrba« popolnoma relevantna (SSQJ I, 170), medtem ko v nekaterih komentarjih, ki običajno spremljajo prevode *Zhuangzija* v sodobno kitajščino, zasledimo tudi interpretacijo, ki pravi, da bi morali isto besedo prevajati s pomenom »bula« (Zhuangzi 1995, 306). Skoraj identično formulacijo drugega dela fraze pa najdemo v napisu, ki ga je tangški pesnik Wang Wei (王维) posvetil življenju šestega patriarha šole *Chan*, mojstru Huinengu (慧能) (QTW 327, 2):

> /…/pet vrst pojavnosti (*skandha*) je v osnovi praznih in šest svetov ne obstaja. Ljudje narobe predvidevajo in ne razumejo pravilnega dojema (*shou* 受). Lotosovi cvetovi [so ti] pognali pod nogami in topolovi vršički iz komolcev/…/[13]

Ista aluzija se pojavi tudi v Bai Juyijevi pesnitvi z naslovom »Dve pesmi o razumnosti« (達理二首 *Dali er shou*) (BJYJ 1, 146):

> Morda bodo vrbe pognale iz komolcev in morda se bodo nekateri možje spremenili v ženske.[14]

V svoji interpretaciji omenjenega simbola Beata Grant (1994, 51) ni uspela najti pravega vira omenjene aluzije na Wang Weija in zato tudi ni bila zmožna natančneje pojasniti, v kakšni meri ali na kakšen način je Su Shi povzemal omenjeno vsebino. Omenjena pomanjkljivost izhaja iz napake v navedku v *Zbranih pesmih Su Shija* (苏轼诗集 *Su Shi shiji*), kjer sta zabeležena napačen naslov Wang Weijevega spisa in napačen vir imenovanega dela, saj v nasprotju z omenjeno navedbo ne gre za pesnitev, ampak za delo, ki je obravnavano kot prozno delo in je bilo zaradi tega v dinastiji Qing (清) tudi uvrščeno v delo *Vsa proza dinastije Tang* (全唐文 *Quan Tang wen*). Zaradi te napake omenjena avtorica tudi ne more dokončno utemeljiti, da gre v Su Shijevem primeru za aluzijo na Wang Weijevo budistično obarvano izrazje. Če želimo izključiti tovrstno enosmerno razumevanje rabe simbolizma, moramo vsaj za hip natančneje pogledati na izsek izrazja Wang Weija in morda tudi kakšnega drugega zgodnejšega avtorja, ki je v svoji literarni misli kakor tudi v svojem miselnem življenju tako ali drugače posegal po sredstvih, ki bi jih morda lahko uvrstili v idejni svet ali izrazje budizma. Iz izbora Wang Weijevih pesmi, ki jih v zbirki *Zbrane pesmi dinastije Tang* (全唐诗 *Quan Tang shi*) najdemo v zvezkih z zaporednimi številkami od sto petindvajset do sto osemindvajset, lahko ugotovimo, da simbolov vrbe (柳 *liu*), topola (杨 *yang*) in lotosovih cvetov (莲花 *lianhua*) v tangški poeziji ne srečamo prav pogosto. Poleg tega pa se ti skoraj vedno pojavljajo v parih, zaradi česar lahko posledično skoraj z gotovostjo sklepamo na obstoj

13 /…/五蘊本空，六塵非有。眾生倒計，不知正受。蓮花承足，楊枝生肘/…/

14 /…/或柳生肘間，或男變為女/…/

medsebojnega metaforičnega ali morda celo aluzivnega dopolnjevanja navedenih simbolov. Kot primer lahko služi odlomek iz pesmi z naslovom »V zahvalo učenjaku[15] Xiju – spisano v Xizhovu« (酬黎居士淅川作): (QTS 125, 4: 1239)

lotosovi cvetovi
vsepovsod
v odsotnosti razuma
spreminjajo se vrbe in topoli[16]

V Wang Weijevi pesmi z naslovom »V pogledu za odhajajočim« (觀別者) pa lahko zasledimo primer omembe samostalniške zveze 楊柳 *yangliu* (QTS 124, 5: 1245):

Siva je pot, ki vodi med vrbe[17]
na poti človek v odhodu …[18]

K temu lahko navedemo še primer iz »Pesmi brez srečanja« (不遇詠) (QTS 124, 5: 1245):

Nihče ne prosi pomladnega vetra, naj zaziblje vrbe in topole …[19]

Zgornji primeri, preko katerih lahko dobimo boljši vpogled v rabo obravnavanega simbolizma pri Wang Weiju,[20] do neke mere potrjujejo verjetnost, da sta se imeni za obravnavani drevesi oz. drevesi sami praviloma pojavljali v zvezi, kjer sta označevali neko družino dreves, ki so jih nekoč pojmovali kot podobne po obliki ali enake po simbolni vrednosti. Novejše raziskave razkrivajo prav to enotnost (Williams 2006, 402). V simbolizmu kitajske budistične poezije sta topol in vrba v nekem smislu tako enoznačna. Ta istopomenskost pa nas pri interpretaciji povezave med Su Shijevim verzom in predpostavljenim referenčnim

15 Izraz 居士 *jushi* pomeni 'laični budistični učenjak'.

16 /…/著處是蓮花，無心變楊柳/…/

17 Prevod ni nujno takšen. Različica razlage pomena, ki jo tukaj uporabljamo, sledi predpostavljenemu vzorcu besedne stave: Adj. (V) + Adj. + S. Toda številni primeri iz drugih pesmi, kjer sovpada omemba pridevnika (ali prislova)青青 *qingqing* 'zelen, moder, siv' in samostalniške zveze楊柳 *yangliu* 'vrbe (in topoli)', kjer nimamo drugega verjetnega osebka, ki bi bil lahko v neposredni zvezi z zgornjim pridevnikom/prislovom, nam govorijo o veliki verjetnosti drugačnega pojmovanja in prevajanja obravnavanega odlomka. Omenjene primere lahko najdemo na primer v QTS 128, 4: 1307. Druga različica prevoda bi se tako lahko glasila npr.: *pot med zelene vrbe* ali *pot zelenih vrb*.

18 青青楊柳陌，陌上別離人/…/

19 /…/莫問春風動楊柳/…/

20 Če preverimo prisotnost imenovane samostalniške zveze tudi širše v kanonu pesnikov dinastije Tang, ugotovimo isto (npr. pri Bai Juyiju 白居易(QTS 424, 14: 4661; 455, 14; 5156)).

gradivom prav gotovo ne sme skrbeti. Tudi kadar se besedi 楊 *yang* in 柳 *liu* pojavljata ločeno, posamično, namreč na nek način predstavljata isto simbolno ozadje, ki ga seveda predstavljata tudi, ko se pojavljata skupaj. Mnogokrat se simbola pojavita tudi v pripovedih o slovesu ali odhodu bližnjega na pot. Povezava simbola vrbe ali topola s slovesom ali odhodom na pot pa izhaja iz navade, po kateri so odhajajoči osebi ob slovesu podarili vrbovo vejico, ki naj bi jo obvarovala vseh slabih vplivov na poti.

V Bai Juyijevih (白居易) pesmih, kjer je pomen slovesa izražen na zelo neposreden način, lahko tako zasledimo primere, kot sta »/…/不愛楊柳枝/…/« (»… ne mara vrbovih vejic ...«) (QTS 424, 13: 4661) in »/…/紅乾杏花死，綠凍楊枝折/…/« (»… pod rdečim nebom venejo breskovi cvetovi, zaledenele pokajo zelene veje vrb …«) (ibid.: 4662). Že v zgodnjem obdobju kitajske zgodovine so vrbove vejice predstavljale simbol slovesa, saj so jih pomladni ali poletni popotniki prejemali, ko so šli na pot kot talisman, ki naj bi odganjal vse slabe vplive in jih obvaroval nesreče. Vrbovim vejam pa so pripisovali čarobno in očiščevalno moč tudi v ritualih in običajih, povezanih s čaščenjem prednikov (Williams 2006, 402). Po drugi strani pa so rastoče veje na drevesu, ki je prestavljalo prispodobo za pomlad in nežnost, označevale stanje kreativne energije v stvarstvu ali državi. Ta pomenska niansa pa brez dvoma služi našemu razumevanju drugega primera. Poleg čistosti in pomladne življenjske moči je vrba predstavljala tudi budistični simbol umirjenosti in nežnosti (ibid.) in prav to dejstvo se lahko nanaša na pripoved Su Shijeve pesmi. Nežnost, umirjenost in blagodejnost za okolico, ki jih je Buda dosegel v svoji globoki kontemplaciji, so privlačile enako delujoča načela naravne okolice. V umirjenosti se znotraj enovitosti vesolja njegovo telo spoji z vrbami in vrbe poženejo zaradi njegovega utelešenja principa, s katerim se uspe povezati njegov duh.

Primeri pesmi, ki smo jih navedli zgoraj, so nas vsaj za hip oddaljili od uveljavljenega branja pismenke s pomenom »vrba« kot »bula«. Velikokrat so to primeri, ko prevajalec ali bralec ne uspe najti druge rdeče niti pripovedi in zato običajni ideografski pomen nadomesti s sekundarnim leksikalnim pomenom »bula, tumor«, ki se je uveljavil v branju *Zhuangzija*. Ali onkraj omenjene aluzivne rabe vendarle obstajajo tudi indici, ki bi dopuščali to drugo pomensko možnost kot ustaljeno leksikalno varianto, lahko preverimo v slovarju *Shuowen jiezi* (说文解字) in morda tudi v glosarju *Er ya* (尔雅). V prvem v okviru sedmega zvezka in odseka z radikalom 木 *mu* (»drevo«) najdemo definicijo, kot je:

> 楊：木也。从木昜聲
> *Yang*: [Vrsta] drevesa. [Pismenka je] sestavljena iz delov 木 in 昜.

Omembo vrbe najdemo samo v podajanjih pomenov drugih pismenk, na primer:

> 檉：河柳也
> *Cheng* (tamarisk) je rečna vrba.

Er ya priča popolnoma enako (podpoglavje 釋木 »Shi mu«). V luči teh podatkov je ustvarjanje neposredne povezave med Zhuangzijem in Su Shijevo pesmijo vsaj delno utemeljeno, tudi če v obeh primerih predpostavljamo pomen »vrba«. Kljub temu moramo v zagovor prvi različici pojmovanja besede 柳 *liu*, ki v njej prepoznava medicinski termin oz. metaforo za bule ali izrastke na telesu, postaviti vsaj en primer, ki bi to mnenje lahko potrdil. To je Bai Juyijeva pesem »Bolan, z zamegljenim pogledom« (病花眼 *Bing huayan*) (BJYJ 2, 643):

> Meglice pred očmi še vedno medejo noge,
> in ti izrastki na komolcih morajo izginiti.[21]

Ob prebiranju novejših besedil, ki se ukvarjajo predvsem s slikarsko umetnostjo budizma *Chan*, lahko zasledimo tudi omembo podobe bodisatve *Guanyin* (观音), ki naj bi jo praviloma upodabljali z vrbovo vejo v eni roki in stoječo na lotosovem cvetu (Brinker, Kanazawa in Leisinger 1996, 126). Ta podoba odpira vrata v nadaljnje razsežnosti simbola vrbe v budistični umetnosti, ki pa bi lahko imel neko posebno vrednost, če bi ga lahko vključili v razlago ikonografije razsvetljenja Bude Šākyamunija. Pojavnost in vloga vrbe kot simbola v osrednjih delih kitajskega budističnega kanona kaže na to, da se je čarobna, očiščevalna in zdravilna moč, ki so jo vrbi pripisovali v kitajski tradiciji, postopoma prenesla tudi v budistični miselni svet. *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* sutra (佛說陀羅尼集經 *Fo shuo tuoluoni ji jing*)[22] na primer že vsebuje čarobne formule ali navodila za magično ali zdravilsko uporabo vrbovih vej (T 18 (901): 842). Zato je povsem verjetno, da je pojav zgoraj omenjenega ikonografskega elementa pri uprizarjanju bodisatve Guanyin v osnovi prav tako posledica prenosa teh istih verovanj.

V obravnavani pesmi dalje beremo, da poleg tega, da mu iz komolcev požene vrbove veje, Budi na glavi ptice spletejo gnezdo. Simbolika gnezda kot »zemeljskega« sedeža ptic, ki so v kitajski tradiciji od nekdaj veljale za nebeška bitja z zmožnostjo povzpeti se do neba in, ko deželo zapusti ustvarjalni *yang* (阳), slediti tisočim spremembam vesolja in sledijo soncu na drugi konec sveta, je tema, ki je prav toliko enostavna kot, po drugi strani, zapletena. Ptice so že v

21 花發眼中猶足怪，柳生肘上亦須休

22 Staroindijsko *dhāraṇīh* so kratka magična besedila, formule ali mantre.

najzgodnejših konfucijanskih klasikih ter daoističnih spisih eden od osrednjih znanilcev harmonije v naravi in posledično tudi v državi. Kot skupina so znanilke volje neba in skladnosti moralnega delovanja dežele pod nebom. V *Knjigi obredov* (禮記 *Liji*) lahko beremo, kako naj bi se modreci iz davnine trudili doseči obredno skladje in doseganje moralnih principov tudi z ustanavljanjem predpisov, ki so govorili o tem, da se morajo zaščititi gnezdišča ptic.[23] V budističnem izrazju pomen gnezda ne izstopa prav posebej, ampak se več pomembnosti pripisuje raznim vrstam ptic, ki v njih gnezdijo. V poznejšem razvoju izrazja in simbolov *chanske* umetnosti so dobile ptice neko prav posebno mesto. Tam se praviloma pojavljajo bodisi v trojicah ali parih.

Z vidika zgoraj opisanega simbolnega pomena tako ptic kot njihovega gnezdišča v različnih simbolističnih tradicijah bi lahko morda zaključili, da je bila podoba gnezda na ramenih Bude, ki jo opisuje Su Shi, morda mišljena kot znak njegovega skladja z naravnim tokom stvari v vesolju ali morda neko subtilnejšo resnico, ki se udejanja v življenju ptic, ki bivajo v stiku z nebom in zemljo. Če pri tem predpostavljamo, da so bile ptice, v prenesenem pomenu, tudi prenašalke nebeškega principa na zemljo, kjer so gnezdile, potem bi morda lahko znotraj obravnavanega konteksta simboliko gnezda tolmačili tudi kot Budov notranji stik s to naravno povezavo med nebom in zemljo, ki naj bi jo predstavljale ptice.

Lotos

Podoba gore in žada, ki iz nje vznikne, se v Su Shijevi pesmi nadaljuje s simbolično dopolnjujočim se parom:

> /…/ potem jasen in čist kot lotos, ki iz vode vznikne /…/[24]

Lotos je simbol čistosti in nepokvarljivosti narave Bude, ki poganja sredi umazanije ali, v kitajskem budističnem izrazju, prahu (*chen* 尘) tostranstva, okoli katerega se pretaka blatna voda, skaljena z neresničnimi idejami, iluzijami bivanja. Istoimenska *Lotosova sutra* ali *Sutra lotosa resnične dharme* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sutra*) predstavlja vrsto budistične epistemologije, ki bi jo pod določenimi pogoji lahko razlagali kot vrsto idealizma, čigar posledica so bile tudi konkretne razprave v budistični filozofiji, v okviru katerih se je ponovno premišljevalo o temeljih nauka, o sredstvih in ciljih metode doseganja razsvetljenja. V teh razpravah

23 Poglavji 王制 *Wang zhi* in 用令 *Yong ling*.

24 渐如濯濯出水莲

pa se je posledično tudi oblikoval simbol lotosa kot prispodobe ene od razlag o tem, kako je mogoče doseči najvišji ideal razsvetljenja in kakšno naravo ima razsvetljenje v t. i. svetu iluzij. Stopnje poti to razsvetljenja, ki ga ponazarja lotos, so postavljene v strogo hierarhijo, v kateri ima dokončno razsvetljevalno moč »narava Bude«, ki obstaja kot ločen ideal, zaradi katerega je človekovo postopno deziluzioniranje sploh mogoče. Ta stalna prisotnost Budove narave – kot vedno dostopnega ideala tako v budistični meditativni praksi kot tudi v budističnem pojmovanju pojma razsvetljenja nasploh – se v budističnem izrazju običajno primerja s podobo luči ali žarka, ki od zunaj vstopa v človekovo temno notranjost. Z drugimi besedami: V svetu budističnih simbolov predstavlja luč kot takšna odnos med duševnostjo posameznika in virom razsvetljujočega spoznanja, ki izhaja iz učenja Bude. Omenjena metafora je morda na videz podobna Platonovi prispodobi o votlini, vendar je pri tem treba poudariti, da se filozofija za budističnim simbolom luči v osnovi bistveno razlikuje od slednje. Na vprašanje, kakšna je ta filozofija, bi lahko odgovorili s podrobno poglobitvijo v besedila sutre, kar pa zagotovo ni preprosta naloga in bi zahtevala samostojno poglobljeno študijo. Interpretativno bi se v tem trenutku lahko zadovoljili s podajanjem razlage o tem, kakšen učinek se v zgornjem kontekstu pripisuje tej svetlobi, ki razsvetljuje človeško notranjost z resničnim spoznanjem. V tem kontekstu *Lotosova sutra* z metaforo človeka, ki biva zaprt v svojih sobanah, palači ali votlini, opisuje stanje popolnoma nerazsvetljenega uma človeka. Prav zato ima lahko odpiranje vrat in oken, kadar se pojavi v spremljavi drugih ustreznih in sliko dopolnjujočih simbolov, ki govorijo o človekovem notranjem razvoju ali odnosu med resnico in iluzijo, pomen procesa razsvetljevanja s pomočjo Budovega nauka. V teh primerih je Buda svetloba ali luč, ki pronica skozi reže v stenah, odprta okna ali vrata iz zunanjega »gaja« v človekov um. V *Śūraṅgama sutri* (大佛顶首楞严经 *Da foding shoulengyan jing*)[25] lahko tako zasledimo naslednjo prispodobo (FXJH, 1193):

> Buda je rekel Ānandi: »Kot praviš, je tvoje telo v dvorani, katere okna in vrata so na široko odprta in skozi katera lahko gledaš oddaljene vrtove in obdajajoči gozd. V tej dvorani se prav tako nahajajo ostala živa bitja, ki ne vidijo Bude znotraj dvorane, ampak samo njeno zunanjost.« Ānanda je odvrnil: »Ne videti Bude v dvorani in gledati gozdove ter izvire v zunanjosti, to ni mogoče.« Buda je rekel: »Tudi ti si takšen, Ānanda.«[26]

25 Sutra ima tudi dejanski, daljši naslov v kitajščini: 大佛顶如来密因修证了义诸菩萨万行首楞严经 (*Da foding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhu pusa wanxing shoulengyan jing*).

26 佛告阿難如汝所言身在講堂. 戶牖開豁遠矚林園. 亦有眾生在此堂中. 不見如來見堂外者. 阿難答言世尊在堂. 不見如來能見林泉. 無有是處。阿難汝亦如是.

Nato v nadaljevanju beremo Ānandovo spoznanje Budovega sporočila (FXJH, 1193):

> Ānanda se je priklonil Budi in rekel: »Zdaj ko sem slišal glas dharme, ki prihaja od Bude, razumem, da je moj um v resnici zunaj mojega telesa. Svetilka, na primer, bi morala najprej razsvetliti notranjost sobe in šele potem skozi odprta vrata osvetliti tudi dvorišče. Če ne vidim vsega, kar je v mojem telesu, ampak samo stvari, ki so zunaj njega, je to kot svetilka, ki postavljena pred sobo ne more v celoti razsvetliti tistega, kar je v sobi.«[27]

Čeprav *Śūraṅgama sutra* v marsikaterem oziru predstavlja neke vrste diametralen odgovor na doktrino *Lotosove sutre*, pa simboli za nekatere pojme ali elemente ostajajo isti. Luč, ki naj bi razsvetljevala človeštvo, je v primeru *Lotosa resnične dharme* utelešena v metafori sonca ali meseca. Pri tem pa domene simbolov sonce in meseca v kitajski literaturi in filozofiji ni mogoče omejiti izključno na budizem, saj se oba – predvsem mesec – pojavljata v podobnem pomenu skoraj v vseh tokovih kitajske tradicionalne misli.

V zvezi z določenostjo izraznosti simbolov meseca in sonca v budističnih tradicijah na Kitajskem bi bilo mogoče reči, da v okviru budističnega filozofskega idealizma, kakršen je prisoten v *Lotosu resnične dharme*, oba simbola predstavljata absolutno in imanentno idejo Bude. V nasprotju s tem pa se v budizmu *Chan* in seveda tudi v budizmu *Tiantai* (天台) verjelo, da je ta luč, ki jo je običajno simboliziral mesec, inherentna naravi posameznika (Gregory in Getz 1999, 409). V zadnjem primeru je simbol sonca prav tako prispodoba inherentnega potenciala samorazsvetljenja ali razsvetljenja kot posledice stika z zunanjim itn., življenje prvega Bude in njegova *dharma* pa predstavljata izvorni vzor, sonce, ki razsvetljuje njegove učence. Razlika med simbolom meseca in sonca je v tem, da se podoba meseca navezuje na posameznikovo notranjo kontemplacijo, v kateri, na gladini njegovega nemirnega uma, ki valovi kot gladina jezera, nepremično sije luč mesečine, kot kal in pot do razsvetljenja, o katerem je učil Buda. Znotraj te iste prispodobe se nadalje dopolnjujeta daoistična in konfucijanska raba obravnavanega simbola, kjer je opazovanje mesečine prav tako povezano z intimno samoto človeka, ko je njegov pogled uprt v lastno notranjost. V primeru nekoga, ki strogo sledi konfucijanskemu nauku, je ta notranja kontemplacija na predvsem neko izkopavanje moralnega sebstva, kjer je na prvem mestu vedno skrb ali dolžnost do sočloveka. Tako, na primer, tangovski pesnik Du Fu s prispodobo meseca na večernem nebu velikokrat izraža skrb za svoje bližnje

27 阿難稽首而白佛言. 我聞如來如是法音. 悟知我心實居身外. 所以者何. 譬如燈光然於室中. 是燈必能先照室內.從其室門後及庭際.一切眾生不見身中獨見身外.亦如燈光居在室外不能照室.

itn. Prav zaradi tega v kitajski tradicionalni poeziji simbol meseca predstavlja neko združitev človekove osamljenosti s hrepenenjem, poželenjem, zanosom ali kakršnimkoli stanjem zavesti, ki mnogokrat nastopi v mislih o prijatelju ali ljubljenem.[28]

Če se poglobimo v budistično filozofijo, lahko obravnavano prispodobo, po kateri je Buda sonce ali mesec, ki s svojo svetlobo razsvetljuje ljudi, potem je mogoče žarke njegove *dharme* razlagati kot modrost (*prajñā*), ki preko sočutja (*karuṇā*) razsvetljuje vsa bitja (Kalupahana 1992, 173). Če je v pripovedi omenjenih dveh suter intersubjektivnost med Budo in njegovim učencem natančno utemeljena, pa v obravnavani pesmi ta vidik ni do konca razvit. Iz poteka pripovedi, ki jo z nizom podob tke pesnik, je razvidno, da je njegovo notranje oko bolj osredotočeno na podobo samega Bude. Kar nas v ikonografskem in pomenskem smislu še posebej zanima, je razmerje med podobo in idejnim svetom njenega simbolizma, ki ga skriva za seboj. V obravnavanem paru dveh verzov je mogoče med vrsticami razbrati misel, v kateri je vidna narava Bude, ki jo vsem dostopna ponazarja luč, postavljena v nasprotje s krepostnostjo, ki je zakopana globoko v človekovo notranjost in jo simbolizira žad. Ta skrita kal človekove moralne ali duhovne plemenitosti se ponovno razodene v obliki lotosa, ki požene iz blata in predstavlja hkrati srž večne in neokrnjene narave Bude, pa tudi njeno končno manifestacijo, razsvetljenje. Pri tem pa je, v kontekstu budističnega izrazja dinastij Tang in Song, simbol žada, ki izvira iz konfucijanskih in daoističnih klasikov, simbol za Budovo plemenito naravo, seme nravnosti, iz katerega se je razvila njegova razsvetljena narava. Ta ideja pa je globlje razvita v *chanski* in *tiantajski* filozofiji.

Podobno kot številni drugi simboli, se v klasični kitajski poeziji simbola žada in lotosa pojavljata v paru, kjer se tudi pomensko dopolnjujeta. Za ponazoritev te rabe lahko naštejemo nekaj primerov iz tangovske poezije. Kot prvi tak primer naj omenimo pesem Li Shangyina (李商隐) z naslovom »Brokatne citre« (锦瑟) (*Jinse*) (TSJS 1983, 1126):

> Kar zgodi se,
> in brokatne citre
> nosijo že petdeset strun.
> Z vsako struno
> in vsakim mostičkom
> mi misli zbežijo k letom mladosti.
> V jutranjem snu je Zhuangzi izgubil metulja
> in cesar Wang povil je kukavico v dlan.

28 Glej Vrhovski 2015.

Ko mesec se jasni nad gladino sivega morja,
biseri padajo s solzami.
Ko sonce greje sinja polja,
iz žada se valijo meglice.
V čakanju
lahko občutja preidejo v spomine,
a takrat je človek že potrt.[29]

Owen (2006, 394) je v svoji obširni študiji o tangovski poeziji izrazil mnenje, po katerem naj bi bila zgornja pesem ena izmed t. i. hermetičnih pesmi Li Shangyina, katerih subtilni pomen naj bi ostal popolnoma zabrisan za koprenami metafore, ki jo prepleta tanka pripovedna nit, ki teče med verzi in jih spleta v zaključen vzorec. Kakšen ključ nosijo vrata do njenega bistva? Na tem mestu bi nam največ prinesel dostop do tretjega para verzov, ki nosita podobe meseca, biserov, sonca in žada. Poseben par, ki dopolnjuje žad in bisere, predstavljajo *solze* in *megla*. Kot smo že omenili, lahko podoba meseca na nebu običajno izraža samotno premišljevanje, vendar je mesec na vodni gladini skoraj vedno simbol notranjega spoznanja, samorefleksije, ki se odvija na srebrni površini ogledala naše zavesti. V Lijevi lirični pripovedi pa je tako tudi razburkana voda znanilka človekovega duševnega nemira, njena kalnost pa prepojena z žalostjo, ki ob osamljenosti polne lune v solzah morskih dečkov rojeva bisere (ibid.). Mitična bitja, ki žive pod gladino zavesti, rojevajo dragulje žalosti. Naslednja verza predstavljata soočenje z resničnostjo, ki jo ima pesnik pred očmi v vsakdanjem življenju. Sonce razsvetljuje polja dejanskosti in žad, kamen resnice, predmetno resničnost ovija v meglo, ki običajno simbolizira slepoto ali nevidnost dejanskosti, ki izgleda kot puhteča iluzija. Owen (ibid.) se v tem verzu nanaša na prispodobo, ki se je rodila v besedah pesnika Dai Shuluna (戴叔伦), kjer pesnik pravi, da je podoba modrih polj, ki jih greje sonce, in žada, ki tvori meglice, takšna, da je ni mogoče popolnoma ugledati. V naslednjih verzih, kjer se v skladu s pravili urejenega verza pesnik obrne k sebi in zaključi slikovno celoto, ki jo spleta pred našimi očmi, pa izvemo, da gre predvsem za občutja. Čeprav Owen (ibid.) zatrjuje, da natančen pomen pesmi do zdaj sicer še ni bil razvozlan, pa ob svoji razlagi pomena naslova in prvih dveh verzov pozabi omeniti mnogokrat spregledano simbolno vrednost glasbila, kot so citre, ki bi lahko znatno osvetlil pomen nekaterih verzov. Velikokrat – od tega v številnih Bai Juyijevih pesmih – predstavljajo citre ali votli instrumenti, ki imajo na svoje telo pripete strune, prispodobo za telo oz. zgornji del trupa starega človeka.[30]

29 锦瑟无端五十弦，一弦一柱思华年 庄生晓梦迷蝴蝶，望帝春心托杜鹃 沧海月明珠有泪，蓝田日暖玉生烟 此情可待成追忆？只是当时已惘然

30 Glej npr. Gulik 1939, 81.

Če izhajamo iz te interpretacije simbolike citer, se nam pred očmi izriše podoba človeka, ki v svoji notranjosti nosi petdeset različnih strun in, kadar jih prebira drugo za drugo, na dan privrejo spomini na mladost, leta cvetenja, ki jih predstavljajo strune. Pesnik tukaj opisuje, kako je v mladosti, opit od prebujajočega se vpliva pomladnega *yanga* (阳), spontano in lahkotno (*xuxuran* 栩栩然), kot metulj v *Zhuangziju* (poglavje »Qiwu lun« 齐物论), letel skozi življenje, ko pa so ga leta na koncu vendarle prebudila v togotnost (*jujuran* 遽遽然) življenja, je izgubil svojega veselega metulja. Ko se je znašel v ljubezni z ženo nekoga drugega, se je tako predramil in zbudil v resničnosti.[31]

Poezija dinastije Tang na mnogih mestih izpričuje simbolično dopolnjevanje v reguliranem ali pomenskem ujemanju med dvema zaporednima verzoma. Takšno ujemanje lahko vidimo na primer pri Li Shangyinu (QTS 504, 65):

> Iz lotosa na gori Hua poganjajo manjši [lotosovi cvetovi] in barve rezljanega žada iz Jinga so medle.[32]

Poleg tega nekoliko konfucijansko obarvanega primera lahko navedemo še nekoliko bolj kontemplativen primer (QTS 504, 174):

> V zalivu žada tri tisoč let ni lovil nihče,
> nevidna v temi so lotosova semena,
> žalost zmajev.[33]

V prispodobi, ki se nanaša na podobe iz *Sutre lotosa resnične dharme*, lahko najdemo tudi različico simbolnega paralelizma lotosa in bisera, ki je bližja budistični misli. Primer iz Bai Juyijeve pesmi govori tako (BJYJ 4, 1512):

> V novem krogu biser vznika iz obleke,
> v mislih lotos najprej med plameni raste.[34]

31 Kukavica se v sodobni kitajščini imenuje tudi 望帝 (*wangdi*). Pripoved pravi, da je cesar Wang poslal svojega služabnika Bie Linga 鱉靈 v nadzor popravil sistema jezov. V njegovi odsotnosti se je zapletel v razmerje z njegovo ženo. Cesar se je tega prestopka tako sramoval, da je v opravičilo Bieju prepustil svoj položaj. Po neki drugi legendi naj bi se Wang po svoji smrti spremenil v kukavico, ki vedno otožno poje in joče krvave solze (Owen 2006, 394).

32 華蓮開菡萏，荊玉刻孱顏

33 玉灣不釣三千年，蓮房暗被蛟龍惜

34 新戒珠從衣裡得，初心蓮向火中生

Če se vrnemo k Su Shijevi pesmi, lahko zasledimo, da se pripoved nadaljuje z Budovim končnim spoznanjem resnice, njegovo izpopolnitvijo v *poti*. Beseda *kongmie* 空灭 (dobesedno »praznina in prenehanje«) po eni strani predstavlja stanje zavesti, ko se prenehajo vse neresnične misli in občutja in človekov razum zgolj odseva resnico kot takšno, po drugi strani pa se navezuje na popolno prenehanje bivanja, na prekinitev večnega kroga samsare kot rezultat Budovega razsvetljenja. Zato se, v skladu z ikonografijo, pripoved nadaljuje z zborom vseh živih bitij, ki prihitijo na prizorišče Budovega popolnega razsvetljenja in dokončne osvoboditve od bivanja. Ta velika avdienca, ki se v mahajanski literaturi omenja kot zadnje Budovo dejanje na svetu, je najobširneje opisana v *Veliki sutri Budovega vstopa v nirvano* (大般涅槃經 *Dapanniepan jing*). Zbor vseh živih bitij pred Budo oznanja kozmološko vrednost dogodka, ko se Budova *dharma* skozi portal njegovega telesa in luči vzora kot žarek razkropi po tostranskem, *zaprašenem svetu*. Podobe, povezane z dogajanjem tik pred Budovo smrtjo, so imele v mahajanskem in kitajskem budizmu izredno ikonografsko vrednost in se pojavljajo v osrednjem kanonu,[35] zato jih lahko razlagamo tako ikonografsko kot metaforično.

Podoba Budovih oči

Verz z opisom Bude (庞眉深目彼谁子), ki ga lahko dobesedno prevajamo kot: »Čigav otrok je ta človek z velikimi obrvmi in globokim pogledom?«, se navezuje na obširno ukvarjanje s podobo Bude v zgodnjem mahajanskem budizmu in posledično tudi nekaterih vejah kitajskega budizma. Med poglavitnimi nameni upodabljanja Bude je bilo razodeti njegovo popolno podobo, kateri se je pripisovalo posebno, morda celo magično učinkovanje. Podobno se je v poznejšem budizmu pojavilo tudi nekakšno čaščenje domnevnih Budovih posmrtnih ostankov, ki so v nekaterih šolah budizma predstavljali tudi eno od sredstev osredotočenja na Budovo *dharmo*. Budova podoba je vsekakor obravnavana brez vsakršne magičnosti v *Chan* budizmu in v nekaterih filozofskih strujah mahajane, kjer podobe *bodhisattev* in samega Bude niso predmet čaščenja ali čudežni predmeti. Kieschnik (2003, 53) meni, da se je verovanje v magično učinkovanje ikon na Kitajsko preneslo iz Indije. V okviru ikonografskega izročila v povezavi s prvim, zgodovinskim Budo, ki se je preko mahajanskega budizma preneslo na Kitajsko, se je v kitajskem budizmu oblikovalo izročilo o podobi Bude, ki se je prenašalo skozi rodove, ki pa skoraj gotovo ni temeljilo na avtentičnem izročilu o resnični podobi Bude.

V kontekstu mahajanske ikonografije naj bi Budova podoba črpala svojo nadnaravno učinkovanje skozi pojem *dharmakāye* ali *dharma-telesa*, ki se nanaša na najvišjo obliko utelešenja razsvetljenega duha, na najvišjo obliko »budovstva«, ki je

35 Npr. *Lotosova sutra*, pogl. 3.

osvobojena vseh pojmovnih okvirov in je še posebej značilna za mahajanski nauk *Trikāya*. V globljem pomenu je po tem nauku bitje Bude pojmovano kot *dharma*, ki jo v dotičnem primeru lahko prenaša tudi njegova podoba in jo je mogoče povzeti z dvaintridesetimi glavnimi lastnostmi.

Na podoben način se je tudi samemu postopku slikanja Budove podobe pripisovalo neko posebno ritualno vrednost. Običajno se je omenjeni postopek, ki je moral slediti strogo predpisanim navodilom, zaključil s slikanjem oči, ki so ikoni vdihnile življenje. To dejstvo je bilo skoraj gotovo povezano z indijskimi ritualnimi praksami, v katerih so v upodobitve božanstev želeli priklicati ustrezne nadnaravne sile. Od tod tudi izvira staroindijski izraz *pratiṣṭhā*, ki se nanaša na omenjeni proces in ga na tem mestu lahko prevedemo kot »vzpostavitev«. V budističnih praksah je omenjena posvetitev ikone povezana s podobami *bodhisattev* in Bude, ki jih uprizarjajo z odprtimi očmi.

Kot vidimo, so imele Budove oči tako v postopku slikanja kot tudi samem čaščenju njegove podobe prav posebno vlogo. Tudi ko je slikarski mojster na koncu postopka s konico čopiča previdno zarisal vsebino Budovih oči, ob tem svojih potez ni opazoval neposredno, ampak v zrcalu. Ritual oz. postopek tovrstne posvetitve s posebnim poudarkom na pomembnosti slikanja oči se na Kitajskem prvič omenja okoli leta 524 n. št., ko je Du Wenqing 杜文庆 ta postopek imenoval tudi stopnja »odpiranja pogleda« podobe ali *kaiguang* 开光. V šestem stoletju našega štetja naj bi bil omenjeni obred na Kitajskem že precej razširjen (ibid.), v nekaterih primerih pa se je uveljavila tudi praksa, da se je v tovrstne podobe dodajalo oz. na kakršenkoli način vstavilo posmrtne ostanke čaščenega meniha ali učitelja, ki so ga upodobili v obliki kipa ali ikone, s čimer naj bi se na umetniško delo prenesel tudi kanček njihove razsvetljene narave (ibid.).

Razreševanje doktrinalnega vprašanja o vplivu in vlogi podobe Budovih oči v budističnem spoznavnem procesu je izredno zapleteno. Eden od razlogov za to je splošno pomanjkanje razprav o problemu intersubjektivnosti v zgodnji budistični literaturi, kakor tudi v poznejšem mahajanskem kanonu. Pri tem je treba omeniti, da ima zgodnji *Abhidharma* budizem precej atomistični in empirični pristop do problema drugega v epistemološkem procesu osvobajanja (Ziporyn 1999, 442). V indijskem mahajana budizmu pa obstaja tudi pojem dvojne negacije same utemeljitve obstoja drugega – vsaj v odnosu do končne resničnosti bivanja ali nebivanja. Ta izhaja iz dveh temeljnih predpostavk: 1. vsota vseh umov je manifestacija ene same esence (*tathāgatagarbha* ali takšnost) in 2. dejstvo drugega spada v domeno iluzij tega sveta in posledično ne izraža ultimativne resničnosti. Kljub temu pa utilitaristično vrednost dojema o obstoju drugega v samem procesu ne zanika nobena od omenjenih smeri. Posebno vlogo ima pojem intersubjektivnosti v razpravah *Tiantai* (天台) šole. Za enega najpomembnejših snovalcev filozofije te šole na Kitajskem v dinastijah Tang in Song je veljal menih Zhili (知礼, 960–1028), ki v svojem nauku poudarja

inherentno medsebojno prepletenost vsega obstoječega. Čeprav vprašanje vloge medosebnih odnosov izvira iz filozofije ustanovitelja obravnavane šole na Kitajskem, meniha Zhiyija (智顗, 538–597), pa je nek konkretnejši odgovor podal šele Zhili (Feng II 1998, 628). Osrednji tezi o medsebojni prepletenosti vseh stvari, ki sta se razvili v zgoraj omenjenih šolah, predpostavljata ontološko prepletenost vseh stvari, iz česar je mogoče izpeljati tudi predpostavko o neki kontinuiteti med jazom in drugim. V tem pogledu je spoznanje o lastnem bivanju povezano s poučevanjem drugih in obratno (Ziporyn 1999, 445). Posledično so lahko Budovi zgodovinski sledovi in njegov nauk na neki ravni enaki njegovemu sebstvu. Edina razlika, ki loči idejo njegovega sebstva od budistične *dharme*, je v njuni pojavni obliki. Ta predpostavka je imela tudi nadaljnje implikacije, ki so doživele svoj razcvet v obdobju notranjih doktrinalnih razkolov znotraj šole *Tiantai* v dinastiji Song. V teh songških razpravah se Budova narava enači z naravo vseh bitij. Z drugimi besedami: Vsako bitje naj bi vsebovalo »Buda naravo« oziroma inherentni potencial za doseganje razsvetljenja. Ta ideja temelji na isti osnovi kot ideja uresničitve »tri tisoč svetov v eni misli« (*yi nian sanqian* 一念三千). Če upoštevamo dejstvo, da je *Lotosova sutra* predstavljala enega izmed osnovnih virov *Tiantai* budizma, lahko v obravnavani doktrini prepoznamo razširitev »absolutizma lotosa« na subtilnejše ontološke predpostavke.

Na pomen Budovih oči v budistični ikonografiji lahko gledamo še z naslednjega zornega kota: vid kot človeški čut, ki je povezan s kategorijo forme. Kitajski budistični izraz za »formo«, *se* 色 (pismenka pomeni tudi »barva; (vidna) podoba«), je motiviran po sanskrtski ustreznici *rūpa*, terminu, ki pojem »forma« definira kot nekaj, kar je mogoče zaznati s čutom vida in ga je mogoče na določenih mestih prevajati tudi kot »barva«. V tradicionalnem kitajskem simbolizmu je omenjeni pojem forme (*se*) povezan s pojmom zrcala in kot takšen vsebuje tudi prostorske konotacije (Beer 2003, 29). V kitajski budistični terminologiji ima pismenka *se* še druge simbolne vrednosti, ki se navezujejo na človekov razum kot sredstvo zaznave, in je posledično povezana tudi s spoznavno metodo, preko katere človekov razum spoznava resnično naravo stvarnosti, ki se skriva onkraj forme. Kot eno od sredstev človekovega nazora, simbol zrcala v budistični filozofiji v samem bistvu implicira tudi pojem praznine, ki jo je mogoče razumeti kot odsotnost »absolutne« substance za formo vseh pojavov in stvari. V nekaterih kitajskih budističnih šolah, kot na primer budizmu *Chan*, je zrcalo predstavljalo pomembno sredstvo ali metaforo človekove samorefleksije.

Lahko bi dejali, da se je, morda po analogiji s simboli kot je zrcalo, ali izhajajoč iz epistemoloških pojmov, kot je »forma«, v budistični ikonografiji pomen Budovega pogleda močno približal tistemu, ki ga je imelo zrcalo kot sredstvo človekove samorefleksije. V ikonografskem smislu bi lahko simbol njegovih oči razlagali kot vir spoznanja, žarišče Budove narave. Same po sebi tako simbolizirajo Budovo videnje vseh stvari oz. njegov nazor, ki v vseh stvareh prepoznava

praznino. Sočasno pa njegov pogled predstavlja tudi nekakšen portal v Budovo notranjo praznino. Če se lahko izrazimo s prispodobo: Tako kot žejni v puščavi ve, da prividi oddaljenih vodnih gladin nikoli ne potešijo njegove žeje, tako se popotnik skozi puščavo *dharme* ne more nadejati ustalitve na vidnih entitetah. Poleg izključno filozofskih vrednosti pojma Budovih oči pa so te imele še svojo mistično vrednost, ki se je odražala v verovanju, da imajo upodobitve Bude raznovrstne čudodelne učinke. Podobna aspekta je mogoče prepoznati tudi v staroindijskem pojmu *divyacakṣus* oziroma »božanskega očesa« Bude, ki prav tako označuje Budov uvid v naravo življenja (obstoj *samsare*, *karme* itn.). V izročilih nekaterih budističnih šol je zapisano, da naj bi Buda omenjeni božanski vid pridobil šele v drugi noči svojega razsvetljenja (Notz 2007, 62). V tem kontekstu bi lahko pomen Budovih oči v budističnih religioznih praksah interpretirali kot predmet kontemplacije, preko katerega so se verniki osredotočali in ponotranjali idejo Budovega razsvetljenega »vida« oz. pogleda na vesolje.

Poleg Budovih oči imajo v budistični ikonografiji posebno vlogo tudi njegove obrvi, ki jih pesnik omeni še v istem paru verzov. V zavedanju, da med aluzijo in simbolizmom obrvi obstaja neke vrste pomensko razhajanje, Beata Grant (1994, 51) drugi del omenjenega verza prevaja kot »z belimi obrvmi«, medtem ko besedna zveza *pang mei* 庞眉, ki jo uporabi pesnik, v osnovi pomeni »košate obrvi, v katerih se prepletata bela in črna barva«. Njena interpretacija se sicer sklada s pomensko različico, ki jo običajno zasledimo v budističnih spisih, v katerih ima bela barva njegovih obrvi in las prav posebno vlogo. Kot primer lahko navedemo naslednji odlomek iz *Lotosove sutre* (T 9 (262), 2b):

> Takrat je okoli naglavne fige Bude Śākyamunija, telesnega znaka velikega človeka, posijal svetli žarek in iz znaka iz belih las sredi njegovih obrvi je zasvetilo, da je luč obsijala vse dežele na vzhodu, katerih število je bilo enako številu zrn peska v reki Ganges.[36]

Na drugem mestu pa *Lotosova sutra* primerja prostor med njegovimi belimi obrvmi z žadastim mesecem (ibid., 60c):

> Lasje med obrvmi so beli kot mesec iz žada.[37]

Čeprav v dobesednem pomenu Budove oči in obrvi predstavljajo telesne lastnosti Bude, pa imajo v nekaterih filozofskih strujah mahajana budizma, kot na primer v *Prajñāpāramitā* tradiciji (npr. *Diamantna sutra,* staroindijsko *Vajracchedikā*

36 爾時釋迦牟尼佛放大人相肉髻光明，及放眉間白毫相光，遍照東方百八萬億那由他恒河沙等諸佛世界.

37 眉間毫相白如珂月.

Prajñāpāramitā, 金剛般若波羅蜜多經 *Jingang boreboluomiduo jing*),[38] izrazito metaforično vrednost in predstavljajo zgolj nek pojavni element, ki ga je treba analizirati z metodo »diamantnega rezila« (staroindijsko *vajracchedikā*). V tej tradiciji, iz katere delno črpa tudi poznejši kitajski budizem *Chan*, Budovo »telo ni niti telo niti ne-telo; prav zaradi tega pa ga tudi **imenujemo** telo« (T 9 (262), 60c). V budistični poeziji dinastij Tang in Song je tako mogoče pričakovati, da lahko, pod vplivom omenjenih med seboj prepletajočih se tradiciji, simbola Budovih oči in obrvi nenehno prestopata določene pomenske okvire in obsegata tako nabožno vrednost kot metafizični pomen ter tudi označujeta nek določen ikonografski element.

Mesec in led, sonce in plamen

V naslednji podobi se pesnik osredotoča na nenadnost izpopolnitve Budove narave, s čimer se na nek način opredeli do filozofskega vprašanja o naravi razsvetljenja, zaradi katerega se je v zgodnjem obdobju dinastije Tang kitajska šola *dhyāna* budizma razdelila na dve veji, pri čemer je ustanovni patriarh južne šole, Huineng, zagovarjal pojem nenadnega razsvetljenja, idejni oče severne šole, Shenxiu, pa pojem postopnega razsvetljenja. Vendar pa, čeprav Su Shi navidezno premišljuje predvsem o nenadnem razsvetljenju, je v obravnavani pesmi mogoče zaslediti elemente obeh načinov razsvetljenja, v čemer bi lahko prepoznali dejstvo, da je v tem obdobju na Kitajskem obstajal velik razkorak med laičnim budizmom in stanjem v posameznih monastičnih skupnostih ali šolah. Pri tem moramo omeniti tudi to, da so se te šole budizma velikokrat razlikovale predvsem po izboru suter, na katerih so osnovale svoje religiozne prakse in filozofske temelje. Nujno je namreč razumeti, da so v tistem času razhajanja med šolami in ločinami nastopila predvsem zaradi eksegez posameznih učiteljev ali patriarhov, ki so svoje razlage osrednih budističnih pojmov črpali iz različnih suter. Osrednji doktrinalni spor, ki je razklal kitajski budizem *Chan* na dva dela, ni vključeval samo vprašanja razsvetljenja, ampak je bil tesno povezan s tedanjimi spori okoli tega nasledstva prejšnjega patriarha. V osnovi je tako ta razkol sprožila nasledstvena bitka patriarhove insignije. Tudi debate v dinastiji Song, ki so potekale tako znotraj šole *Chan* kot tudi med šolama *Chan* ter *Tiantai* budizma, kažejo na to, da v osnovi ni šlo samo za problematiko striktnega ločevanja omenjenih dveh načinov razsvetljenja, ampak za cel niz kompleksnejših vprašanj (Schlütter 2002, 109–15).[39]

Pomembno dejstvo, s katerim se srečamo v naši pesmi, ki je nastala v dinastiji Song, je tako prepletanje motivov postopnosti in nenadnosti razsvetljenja, ki ju dopolnjuje ideja o inherentni Budovi naravi.

38 Prim. *Diamantna sutra*, pogl. 26 (JBJ III, 247).

39 Glej tudi Faure 1997.

V Su Shijevi pripovedi Budovi nenadni izpopolnitvi sledi še telesno izničenje, ko njegovo bitje kot hladen mesec izgine za osvetljeno obzorje. Podoba hladnega meseca je imela v klasični kitajski literaturi izredno širok pomenski spekter. V kitajskem budističnem simbolizmu pa se je simbol pomensko nanašal predvsem na stanje duha ali bolje razuma, ki sta ga popolnoma preplavila čustveni mir in eksistencialna spokojnost. V nasprotju z negativnimi konotacijami, ki jih sta jih imela hlad in led v konfucijanstvu ter daoizmu, sta v budizmu označevala pozitivne lastnosti razsvetljenega duha. V tem pogledu je bila budistična simbolika hladnega meseca diametralno nasprotna konfucijanski in ponekod tudi daoistični. Pri tem je zanimivo, da je pozitivna interpretacija hladu in ledu, ki jo zasledimo v budističnem miselnem svetu, v skladju z nekaterimi idejami v kozmologiji *Knjige premen*, kjer sta hlad in led povezana s heksagramom »*yang* v *yangu*« oziroma pojmom neba.

Kot primer negativne rabe simbola, ki je bila v nasprotju z rabo v budizmu, lahko omenimo pesmi Han Yuja (韩愈, 768–824), gorečega zagovornika konfucijanstva in razvpitega nasprotnika budizma iz dinastije Tang. V eni svojih pesmi je Han, na primer, zapisal naslednje (*Antologija borovih gričev* 1994, 5):

poledica v boju zmaga
in vse stvari slede
oblaki se zgostijo
in sonce zameglijo
kot v strahu pred voljo neba[40]

V konfucijanski rabi se pojma hladu in zime navezujeta na stanje v vesolju, ko pasivni ali uničujoči princip *yin* prevlada nad kreativnim *yangom*, to stanje pa ima nadalje implicitno politične ali moralne implikacije. V politično motivirani poeziji dinastij Tang in Song, ki je svoje aluzije in simboliko črpala iz konfucijanstva, je bilo to stanje pod nebom, ki ga opisujeta simbola, sinonimno z idejo nečlovečne vladavine ali gospodarsko stagnacijo v kraljestvu, zaradi česar so bili pojmi, kot sta hlad in led, običajno rabljeni v kritikah trenutne oblasti, ki sta jo s svojimi podobami oblikovali slikarska in besedna umetnost. V dinastiji Song se je podoba zime in selitve ptic, ki je sledila nastopu principa *yin* v deželi, prav tako uporabljala kot prispodoba za dekadentnost vladavine in zaton kreativne energije v cesarstvu. V okviru poezije izgnanstva, ki jo – po področju, kamor so običajno izganjali uradnike – imenujemo tudi poezija *Xiaoxiang* (瀟湘), lahko pogosto zasledimo prispodobo selitve divjih gosi, v kateri gosi simbolizirajo sposobne uradnike, ki so jih zaradi izpolnjevanja moralne dolžnosti do vladarja pregnali z dvora. V *Xiaoxiang* poeziji kraj izgona, kamor letijo gosi, pogosto opisujejo kot utopično deželo,

40 霜阵一捷 万物昔率 云沮日惨 若惮天责

v kateri vladajo popolne vrline in kjer lahko izgnani uradniki končno neovirano delujejo v skladu s potjo neba.[41]

S svojim pozitivnim pomenskim pridihom se budistična simbolika mraza ali zime tako postavlja nasproti tedanji politični rabi pesniškega jezika, ki izhaja iz konfucijanske filozofije itn.[42] V budizmu je hladen mesec prispodoba za umirjenost, hlad, ki ga v opisih seva Budova narava, pa opisuje blagodejni učinek njegovega razsvetljenja. Nedelovanje ali praznina razuma, ki ga označuje zima ali sneg, je v budizmu veljal za najvišji ideal. Podoba ledu pa še toliko bolj navezuje na stanje človekovega razuma, ker se slednjega v večini primerov primerja z vodno gladino (Lai 1979, 244–45). Ker, kot smo že omenili, mesec pomeni luč razsvetljenja, ki človekov razum razsvetljuje odznotraj, bi lahko podobo meseca, ki se pojavi v obravnavani pesmi, razlagali izključno kot opis notranjega stanja. »Zunanje« razsvetljevanje ljudi, ki so ga po mahajanskem verovanju izvajali posredniki Budovega nauka (*bodhisattve*), pa se tako običajno simbolizira s svetlobo sonca, z levjim rjovenjem in v nekaterih primerih tudi z zvonjenjem samostanskih zvonov.

Grant (1994, 51) omenja tudi budistično prispodobo, v kateri se je budistični modrec Nāgārjuna nekoč spremenil v mesec, da bi tako svojim učencem predstavil bistvo Budove narave. Na istem mestu tudi zapiše, da v obravnavani pesmi mesec verjetno simbolizira *dharmakāyo* Bude Śākyamunija, ki izgine za jutranjim obzorjem podobno, kot se kaplja vode zlije z velikim oceanom. Pri tem pa je treba dodati, da se znotraj budističnega koncepta *dharmakāye* človekova notranjost in vseprisotna Budova narava med seboj izenačujeta. V tem smislu bi mesec kot simbol koncepta *dharmakāye* težko ločili od nekega drugega »splošnega« budističnega simbola – meseca. Razlika med obema bi bila morda v tem, da gre v obravnavanem primeru prav gotovo za vrsto ikonografske upodobitve, ki po drugi strani vključuje tudi metaforični pomen meseca, ta pa mora skoraj nujno izhajati iz določenega tipa vira, od koder aluzija črpa svoj pomen.

V *Bodhidharmovi antologiji*,[43] ki je sestavni del besedila, imenovanega *Erru sixing* 二入四行 (*Dva vstopa in štiri prakse*), lahko preberemo naslednjo Bodhidharmovo (*Putidamo* 菩提达摩) definicijo pojma *dharmakāye* (Broughton 1999, 15):

> *Dharmakāya* nima oblik. Zato jo vidimo brez gledanja. *Dharma* nima zvoka. Zato jo slišimo brez poslušanja. Vpogled v stvari nima vedenja. Zato nekdo ve brez vedenja. Če nekdo jemlje videnje kot videnje, potem

41 Na primer Song Dijeva (宋迪) slikarsko-pesniška stvaritev *Osem pogledov na Xiaoxiang* (瀟湘八观).

42 Dalje glej Hawes 2005, 11–35.

43 Izvirnega besedila v namene naše raziskave žal ni bilo mogoče pridobiti po običajnih poteh, saj gre za razmeroma novejšo najdbo (1934), do katere je zelo težko dostopati. Besedilo je del najdb iz Dunhuanga (敦煌), ki jih je v tridesetih letih odkrila japonska odprava na čelu z D. Suzukijem.

> obstaja nekaj, kar ni videno. Če pa kot videnje obravnavamo ne videnje, potem ni ničesar, česar ne bi vedeli. /…/ Ena vrata doumevanja so kot sto tisoč vrat doumevanja. Lahko vidimo kup in ga razlagamo kot kup. To pomeni videti njegove značilnosti in ustvariti njegovo razlago. Vedi, da je um *dharma* kupa in da nobena značilnost kupa [v resnici] ne obstaja. Zato, kadar vidimo kup, je to v resnici dojemanje *dharme*. Videnje vseh oblik je temu enako.

V istem besedilu lahko najdemo tudi vzporednico ledenemu mesecu, ki pada za obzorje (Broughton 1999, 33):

> Vprašanje: »Zakaj govorimo, da sonce razumevanja *Tathagate* tone za rob dežele obstoja?« Odgovor: »Če v neobstoječem vidimo obstoječe, potem sonce razumevanja tone onkraj dežele obstoja. To velja tudi za primer, ko vidimo stanje brez lastnosti kot eno izmed lastnosti.«

Meja, ki jo nebeško telo v svojem krožnem gibanju prestopa, je tista med obstojem in neobstojem. Na soroden način lahko zaton meseca razumemo kot Budov prehod v stanje telesnega neobstoja, torej v smrt. Vendar pa je glavna razlika med soncem in mesecem ta, da je sonce dojeto kot dejavnik razsvetljevanja, ozaveščanja in je v budističnih besedilih velikokrat uporabljeno kot prispodoba za enakomerno razsvetljevanje vseh ljudi, medtem ko je mesec zasebna ali notranja kategorija človekovega razsvetljenja, ki ima popolnoma drugačno mesto v budistični anatomiji človekove duševnosti. Simbol hladnega mesece pa, po drugi strani, še posebej poudarja mirovanje notranje duševne gladine oziroma notranjo osvoboditev od sveta, vpetega v večno vrteče se kolo samsare. Tako se nam morda lahko zdi samoumevno, da je v prispodobah o razsvetljevanju človekovega razuma luč Bude postavljena v nasprotje s temo nevednosti in bivanjem v iluzijah.[44]

V reprezentativnem delu južne šole budizma *Chan*, v Huinengovi *Sutri šestega patriarha*, lahko zasledimo naslednji primer, kjer avtor razglablja o razmerju med *dharmo* in razsvetljeno osebo s pomočjo prispodobe o svetilki in njeni svetlobi (T 48 (338), 28):[45]

> (To je) kot svetilka in njena svetloba. Če obstaja svetilka, obstaja tudi njena luč. Če svetilke nimamo, nimamo tudi njene svetlobe. Svetilka je substanca (*ti* 体) svetlobe in svetloba je funkcija (*yong* 用) svetilke. Čeprav sta dvoje po imenu, sta vendarle eno v substanci (*ti*).[46]

44 Npr. v *Lotosovi sutri*, pogl. 21.

45 *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖坛经 (*Sutra terase šestega patriarha* ali *Oltarna sutra šestega patriarha*).

46 如燈光。有燈即有光。無燈即無光。燈是光知體。光是燈之用。即有二體無兩般.

Na prvi pogled se zdi, da pred seboj nimamo nič drugega kot ugotovitev, da sta substanca in njena funkcija soodvisni. Medtem ko so tovrstne razprave, v katerih se poudarja medsebojno pogojenost substance in funkcije, skorajda značilne za nekatere doktrine v preostalih šolah tradicionalne kitajske filozofije, pa v kontekstu budistične filozofije nasploh tovrstni pristop predstavlja posebnost njenega razvoja na Kitajskem, kjer je *vprašanje* tega razmerja eno temeljnih epistemoloških vprašanj, preko katerih se je, še posebej v poznejšem budizmu *Chan*, razvil nek nov fenomenološki nazor v budizmu. Uporabo binarnega para *ti-yong* 體用 lahko zasledimo tudi v prispodobi o gladini in valu v delu *Razprava o prebujenju vere*.[47] V *Laṅkāvatāra sutri*, ki velja za enega osrednjih virov južne šole budizma *Chan*, pa lahko zasledimo misel, ki govori o enotnosti sonca in njegove svetlobe, pri čemer omenjena sutra ne operira z binarnimi kategorijami, kot jih omenjamo zgoraj.

Metafora o luči, ki jo navaja Bodhidharma, pa želi z uporabo metafore luči in svetlobe pokazati, da je nauk budizma *Chan* oboje, cilj in sredstvo njegovega osrednjega prizadevanja. To isto prispodobo je mogoče prenesti tudi na razmerje med umom in virom razsvetljenja: Če je um sam po sebi jasen in razsvetljujoč, potem razsvetljenje lahko izhaja iz njega samega, da je podoben svetilki, ki lahko sveti sama od sebe in hkrati napaja samo sebe z lučjo. S tem um ni prav nič drugega kot svoje lastno razsvetljenje (Lai 1979, 250). Če na pojem luči pogledamo s stališča *Lotosove sutre,* pa za nas tudi stopnje spoznanja ne potekajo več v pričakovanem vrstnem redu.

Ustroj idejnega sveta, ki ga pripoved spleta okoli obravnavanih simbolov sonca in meseca, je tako pomensko omejen predvsem z načinom njune rabe, ki črpa svoje ustaljene ikonografske elemente iz kanonskih suter in jih spaja z globinami budistične filozofije. Na ta način, z uporabo izraznih sredstev z jasnim aluzivnim ozadjem, ponujajo tovrstne pripovedi bralcu ključ, s katerim lahko razvozla globlje pomenske ravni verzov in podob, ki jih opisujejo. Do najgloblje pomenske ravni pa se lahko dokoplje samo bralec, ki je dodobra seznanjen z vsebino in pomenom določenih budističnih suter.

V zaključnem delu pesmi lahko beremo pesnikovo pripoved o njegovih preteklih srečanjih z opisanimi poslikavami. Preko dela izrazi še svoj mnenje o slikarski tehniki dela in njegovem avtorju. Izrazje o slikarski tehniki je zavito v povoje metafore, ki jih avtorji dinastije Song pogosto uporabljajo v nanašanju na slikarska dela, predvsem njihovo tehniko, ki v svojem postopku uteleša prepletanje kozmoloških principov.[48]

47 *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信论.

48 Glej tudi Murck 2000, 126–57.

Zaključek

Na podlagi zgornje analize ozadja budističnih simbolov, ki se v Su Shijevi pesmi pojavijo v povezavi s podobo Budovega razsvetljenja, je mogoče zaključiti, da njihova pomenska vrednost v veliki meri izhaja že iz budističnih suter in razprav. Po drugi strani pa so med omenjenimi simboli, ki so v budistični poeziji in slikarstvu uporabljeni tako, da izražajo neko Budovo lastnost, tudi takšni, ki imajo svoj izvor v tradicionalni kitajski literaturi ali literarnem imaginariju. Tak je na primer simbol žada, ki je v kitajski budistični literaturi na nekaterih mestih zamenjal simbol bisera ali dragulja, ki se je v določenem delu indijske budistične literature uporabljal v povezavi z Budovo duhovno naravo (simbol žada bomo podrobneje raziskali v drugem članku). Nekateri simboli, ki so se že v najzgodnejših časih uporabljali za izražanje notranjih, duhovnih lastnosti modrecev, kot na primer simbol vrbe, se še v času dinastije Song pojavljajo tako v budistični rabi kakor tudi v rabah, ki nimajo nobene povezave z budistično mislijo. Takšni simboli so prešli v budistični imaginarij (in obratno) in izrazoslovje v času prvih stikov med budizmom in kitajskimi miselnimi tokovi, kmalu potem ko je budizem prišel na Kitajsko.[49] Nato pa so se takšni simboli uporabljali hkrati v budistični in nebudistični literaturi. Med pomembnejšimi zaključki, ki jih lahko izpeljemo iz zgornje obravnave, je ta, da so se v vrstah pesnitev, kot je Su Shijeva pesem o sliki Budovega razsvetljenja, uporabljali izključno budistični simboli, in to v točno določeni kombinaciji. Z drugimi besedami: Lastnosti Bude v trenutku njegovega razsvetljenja so izražene po določenem ikonografskem ključu – izpostavljene so določene lastnosti (bodisi njegovega telesa ali okolice), ki so opisane s točno določenimi simboli ali metaforami. Po drugi strani pa se v primerih, ko v budističnih doktrinalnih besedilih ne obstaja uporabna simbolika za nek določen vidik Bude, uporabljajo tudi metafore, simboli ali aluzije, ki izhajajo iz drugih miselnih smernic ali sfere izvorne kitajske kulture. Takšne lastnosti Bude so bile že od samega začetka prisotnosti Budovega nauka na Kitajskem tudi predmet debat, v katerih so pripadniki »domačih« miselnih tradicij izpodbijali ali potrjevali dejstvo, da je mogoče lastnosti Bude izenačiti z lastnostmi starodavnih kitajskih modrecev. Do dinastije Tang se je tako že uveljavila »neformalna« enakost med Budo in ostalimi modreci ali nadnaravnimi bitji iz kitajske tradicije, s tem pa je bilo mogoče tudi v povezavi z budizmom uporabljati simbole, ki so opisovali notranje lastnosti vzvišenih bitij v »drugih« miselnih kontekstih.

Nekaterim ugotovitvam o ozadju posameznih budističnih simbolov v poeziji in slikarstvu dinastije Song je mogoče dodati tudi sklep, da zgornja analiza ponovno potrjuje dejstvo, da je pri formaciji in uveljavljanju nabora izraznih sredstev kitajske pesniške umetnosti, kot so na primer simboli, pomembno vlogo imela potreba po navezovanju na izrazje in podobe iz klasičnih virov (aluzije). Prav

49 Glej Huang 2017; Zürcher 2007.

zaradi tega je mogoče razumeti zaključke takšne obravnave, ki izhaja iz posameznega dela in išče izvore izrazja v večjem številu virov različnih vrst, kot ugotovitve o rabi obravnavanih elementov v splošnejšem smislu in ne samo z veljavo v dotičnem primeru.

Seznam okrajšav:

BJYJ *Bai Juyi ji*白居易集
FGDC *Foguang da cidian*佛光大辞典
FXJH *Foxue jinghua* 佛学精华
QTS *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩
QTW *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文
SSSJ *Su Shi shiji* 苏轼诗集
T *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經
TSJS *Tang shi jianshang cidian* 唐诗鉴赏辞典

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BOOK REVIEW

Hisaki HASHI: ***Das Paradoxon in der Philosophie – Zum Aufbau der humanistischen Welt***

(2019. Wien and Münster: LIT-Verlag. 144 pages. Paperback ISBN 978-3643509031.)

Reviewed by Jana S. ROŠKER[*]

Hashi Hisaki, the author of this interesting book, is founder of the Association for Comparative Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Education (http://kophil-interdis.at/wb/pages/home.php). Since 1995 she has taught at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Austria.

The present book is written in German, as it is based upon Hashi Hisaki's philosophy lectures at this university. It elaborates upon intercultural dimensions of a wide scope of problems, linked to the concept of paradox, starting from the famous classical "liar paradox" and then analysing various paradoxes exemplified in the works of Plato, Kant, Hegel, Klein, Reininger, Nagarjuna, Hanfezi, Dogen, and Nishida. The main goal of the work is to illuminate the creative function of paradoxes, and to show that it can raise in readers a vivid interest in independent and critical thinking. At the same time, it represents an inexhaustible source of integrative thinking and acting in our daily life.

This stimulating and thought-provoking book is structured into twelve chapters, beginning with an introduction, in which the author sheds light upon the significance of the topic through the lens of contemporary life, which is permeated by an infinite flow of information and artificial intelligence. In this context, the author exposes the urgent need for establishing new forms and levels of critical thinking and autonomous decisions. In her view, the studying and mastering of paradoxical thinking modes can positively influence our thought, enriching it through novel patterns of reasoning.

In the following parts of the book, Hashi Hisaki offers motivating analyses and explanations of the paradoxes included in various important philosophical works written by some of the most influential European and Asian philosophers.

This core part of the book opens with her interpretation of the classical Epimenides paradox, also known as the "antinomy of the liar", in which a classical binary truth value leads to a contradiction. The author shows that in our concrete

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life, we are frequently (and often unconsciously) confronted with similar phenomena of "lying", positioning us into a sphere "between appearance and reality" (p. 15). The chapter clearly shows that an insight into the multifarious possibilities of interpreting this classical riddle can enable us to gain a deeper comprehension of complex situations we encounter in our daily lives.

In a similar way, the book elaborates upon other well-known models of paradoxical thinking, beginning with the paradoxes of space (Hegel) and time (Reininger), which are then compared with the classical Indian paradox of time and space as presented by the most influential classical Indian logician Nagarjuna.

The author then proceeds to Plato's paradox of the "one", which is tackled through its comparison with Aristotle's principle of the excluded third and explained through interpretations of Plato's "Parmenides dialogue".

In the next chapter (Chapter 7), Hashi studies the concept of paradox on a higher level of discursive logic, i.e. through Kant's antinomy of pure reason. At the beginning of this chapter the author explains the specific nature of such paradoxes, expressed through antinomies. Again, the model is studied through the comparison with the principle of the excluded third; in the final section of the chapter, the author focuses upon the first and third antinomies of pure reason.

The next study of paradoxical thinking takes us to Ancient China. Here, the reader is acquainted with the classical Chinese model that can be found in the work of the legalist thinker Han Fei. His paradox, which represents a well-known segment of traditional Chinese philosophy, is treated in connection with human life as an expression of ontic reality.

Before returning to Hegel's philosophy, the author offers us an extensive analysis of the linguistic dimensions of the paradoxical model, based upon the Zen-Buddhist dialectical surpassing of dualistic thought.

The author shows in the next chapter that similar approaches were also sought in the scope of Western philosophy, exemplified by Hegel's dialectical thinking and his attempts to establish a model of "excluded contradiction". In this context, Hashi Hisaki points to the fact that dialectical thought has been widely neglected in the present era of "total digitalization" (p. 90). Hence, Hegel's model represents a powerful alternative to the principle of excluded third, which is in Hashi's view a core of our "dead thinking" (p. 91).

The notion of contradiction also remains the focus of our attention in the next chapter, i.e. Chapter 11. In this readers can learn about Nishida Kitaro's classification of this notion. Nishida, who belongs to the crucial pioneers of the Kyoto School of modern Japanese philosophy, has integrated the concept of contradiction into the central parts of his theoretical system; through his model of surpassing

and overcoming contradiction, he has immensely contributed to a widening and transformation of global philosophy.

In the last chapter, Nishida's thought, particularly his idea of the "self-identity of absolute contradictions", is placed into a contrastive dialogue with the philosophy of the Austrian scholar Hans-Dieter Klein and his prototype of "being and liberation from contradictions". This comparative perspective confronts the reader with two different, but essentially related modes of dialectical thinking. While Klein understands the absolute as the *monas monadum* (which can be equated to God), Nishida sees the absolute as nothingness (*mu*) and as a dimension of the limitlessness, which includes both goodness and evil, the absoluteness and the relativeness, whereby both anti-poles are continuously overcoming and developing one another.

The book concludes with an afterword, in which the author sums up the main ideas of the work and reveals the significance of the paradox for a more complex, interculturally enriched global philosophy.

The book is relevant for students and experts in comparative philosophy, but also for a wider interested readership. The chapters do not structurally build upon one another, which means that the particular contents are not interconnected in a strictly successive way, but rather in a holistic one. Even though numerous internal references are implied in the overall body of text, each chapter represents an independent, coherent unity of knowledge and learning. This arrangement makes a more flexible reading possible: the reader can start with the study of any chapter which he or she finds most appealing. As soon as readers understand the main ideas of the entire work, they might take time to contemplate on their relevance for the contemporary world and for the shaping of new forms of reasoning, which are urgently needed in our globalized societies.

Even though in some parts the text is relatively difficult to understand, it offers potentially fruitful encounters across different philosophical traditions. The structural arrangement of different chapters represents a specific path of comparison, in which we cannot risk a danger of assuming that one tradition has offered the final answer to the central problems of the inquiry. Their mutual complementarity, however, doubtless represents an important contribution to the awareness of the fact that, in our current world, genuine philosophy is necessarily intercultural by its very nature.