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# History, Thinking, and Literature in Chinese Philosophy

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To My "other I's" (alphabetically):  
Huang Chün-chieh, Kuo Powen (my co-Chinese-thinkers)  
and Rob Nixon (my co-computer-writer);  
"Without Whom Not. . ."

## CORRIGENDA

p. 2	Line 18	certely,	cretely,
4	26	the pile historical	to pile up historical
6	16	result of purpose	result but of purpose
23	10	wranglings-enemies	wranglings-enemies
		others-spread	others--spread.
28	2	This the best,	This is the best,
	7	(preseent), it	(present); it
35	10	冥 <i>ming</i> -night 暝	暝 <i>ming</i> -night 冥
43	28	She 許力,	She 徐立,
53	17	development in	development is
57	16	(if is	(it is
	17	(if is	(it is
63	2	aroused of	aroused, of
68	14	<i>pis</i> , it	<i>pis</i> , it
	23	Li m,	Li 理,
	30	with ethnics,	with ethics,
72	11	as well having	as well as having
	30	taken s	taken as
92	31	Ti 皇帝	Ti 黃帝
95	20	internationali-	internali-
	28	internationalizing	internalizing
114	15	worlds	words
	17	out	our
132	17	silly if	silly if not
139	16	a Chinese music	a Chinese scholar sing, the deeper and inner message of Chinese music
140	7	Othl	Othl
	18	of	[delete]
142	23	musical	musical;
146	13	corresponds	co-responds
157	1	to	of
	19	Harbor,	Arbor
165	1	1983,	1938
	6	" <i>legien</i> "	" <i>legein</i> "
	30	versue	versus
	36	mind and	mind
176	14	feld	felt
177	28	gone small this;	gone in all this;
188	10	form life	from life
190	17	unmistakably. his	unmistakably. This
205	31	<i>aya</i> 譚の	<i>aya</i> 言葉の
209	8-9	lover (cf. Note 11 above).	lover.
227	16	with nimistic	with animistic
246	28	wrong. <sup>14</sup>	wrong. <sup>13</sup>
248	3	duty.	duty. <sup>14</sup>
257	5	position--having-	"position"-- having-
267	10	氣または雲氣い	氣または雲氣に
	12	「氣」	「氣」

3	29	are AI,	are RAI,
4	23	"we	"We
7	14	first stimulated	first be stimulated
	26	thinking	thinking
20	23	ience past,	ience past,
22	21	failutere into	failure into
24	28	tehn	then
25	29	tao	Tao
27	25	Bth	But
	29	wheel-wright	wheelwright
		loard	lord
28	9	destory	destroy
	23	the day to day	the day-to-day
31	1	<i>foor</i> which	<i>for</i> which
32	5	oppressed	oppressed
34	22	tobe	to be
	30	tat	that
39	15	wich	which
42	5	build on	built on
	23	981,	1981,
46	23	someting	something
53	16	Later,	later,
54	4	Sren Kierkegaard	Soren Kierkegaard
56	9	manipulate	manipulated
67	15	Our thinking	Our thinking
69	1	--tosing	--tossing
	6	<i>pis</i> and	<i>pis</i> , and
		"copernican	"Copernican
	11	wherethe	where the
	14	of Li-	of li-
	18	to little	too little
	32	obtain	obtains
70	10	An essay poetic	An essay is poetic
72	19	wonders	wonder
	30	if "pli-"	If "pli-"
		taken s	taken as
73	14	has their	has a
	16	discover its	discovers its
74	4	177-44.	177-244.
	8	resemblance	resemblances
75	8	, called	called
	12	classes <i>fu</i>	classes, <i>fu</i>
80	21	<i>lible</i>	<i>ligible</i>
81	11	Ho do	How do
84	19	as (Aristotle	(as Aristotle
	29	activity	activity,
86	2	in a specific	) in a specific
90	4	Technologies?	technologies?
		Of Wars?	Of wars?
	24	that matter.	that manner.
93	11	<i>Wei shi-</i>	<i>Wei shih-</i>

	18	[not] yet	, [not] yet
94	19	<i>huan</i> "	<i>huan</i> "
97	29	is smugly	is so smugly
99	28	enveloped and	envelops and
100	14	fair and	fair, and
102	23	Sacks.)	Sacks).
106	11	verdic on	verdict on
	12	, inflecting	, inflicting
109	2	into bundle	into a bundle
110	5	obsesses--in	obsessed--in
	18	atrocitious	atrocious
111	10	implies in	implied in
112	15	has its	has at its
	18	caress both	caresses both
	30	39), A. C.	39, A. C.
113	27	per impossible,	per impossibile,
116	14	per impossible,	per impossibile,
117	3	greatful)	grateful)
120	10	engrave, in-	engraved, in-
121	19	pushed itself	pushes itself
122	8	"self-abandonment"	"self-abandonment"
	9	self-abandonment	self-abandonment
124	3	travered in	traversed in
	4	established the	establishes the
	17	have our	have for our
125	5	one to one	one-to-one
126	6	and described	and describe
	23	cliam that	claim that
136	2	to out	to our
	11	('mountain,	("mountain,
	17	超	超
	19	rhythm,	rhythm)
143	19	facts, (a)	facts. (a)
144	10	thetic related	thetic, related
145	29	argumen can	argument can
149	19	Now, the	Now, the
151	6	Both Philosophy	Both philosophy
152	26	description	descriptive
158	18	(the	(a
159	5	reshaping of the	reshaping the
	15	, and like	, the like
	18	Tzus	Tzu's
163	6	or "Every	Principles
164	3	Peinciples	impossibility, much
	7	impossibility. much	
173	5-7	[three lines]	
178	2	understano"	understand"
181	25	to situational--	too situational--
182	1	senss	sense
	22	human(e)ness.'	human(e)ness."
185	22	medecine	medicine

192	12	constrastive	contrastive
193	6	universals, is	universals is,
194	9	wave a noticing	wave, a noticing
195	5	"Something	"something
196	3	smuch	much
197	32	Mozart"	Mozart's
203	8	tively pply	tively apply
	25	to many	too many
206	22	not, moreover,	not; moreover,
208	15	(132), ,	(132),
212	5	tht	that
		inconquerably	unconquerably
	30	--value-aware therefore	--value-aware, therefore
214	15	like?	like?'
	16	)?'	)?''
219	11	frward,	forward,
224	10	super-stition	superstition
	27	Idnetity	Identity
228	9	inter-penetrated	interpenetrated
	12	ar patterned	are patterned
	21	compassionatealarm,	compassionate alarm,
	33	(knows	[knows
237	9	filialty-	filiality-
	14	deceased mother,	deceased mother,
238	14-15	(No. 10).	
242	9	with in	within
247	32	beingasked	being asked
254	33	not the	nor the
256	4	Fifthe	Fifth
	30	ethics the	ethics, the
258	18	) see	) (see
259	2	is taken	was taken
	17	aboslutism	absolutism
	24	' , worst''	"worst"
260	4	wat the	what the
263	11	ical	cal
	24	IV Grand	IV, Grand
264	8	Paganinian	Paganiniana
	26	<i>Ethica</i> ,	<i>Ethica</i> , London: Cambridge University Press,
265	2	Two Vols.,	Three Vols.,
	3	1984.	1984, 1988.
	14	1949.	1964.
266	4	forthcoming.	1989.
	26	反	友

**HISTORY, THINKING, AND LITERATURE  
IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY**

**Kuang-ming Wu**

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– The Table of Contents –

Preface .....	v
Part One: History and Thinking .....	1
Prologue .....	1
I. Historicity in Thinking .....	11
II. History as Thinking .....	45
III. Historical Thinking, Thoughtful History .....	79
Inconclusive Epilogue .....	119
Part Two: Literature, Thinking, History .....	124
Prologue .....	124
IV. Sound, Sight, Sense .....	125
V. Chinese Universals .....	175
VI. Mencius's Concrete Thinking (co-authored with Chun-chieh Huang) .....	211
VII. Tragic Dilemmas in Life (co-authored with Chun-chieh Huang) .....	235
Conclusion .....	260



## PREFACE

History is as much the route carved out by thinking as thinking is history in the making; they are interinvolved. This entails that history is as much achieved by Chinese philosophy as Chinese philosophy grows in the humus of history. For the Chinese mind is both literary and historical. As an inner movement of language tracing out the way we think, Chinese philosophy is literary; since the way we think is that of human life, it is historical. For it operates on the literary way of evocation and metaphor, the way of human life thinking itself out in history.

Thus history is our way of thinking life, and the Chinese thinking expresses it philosophy — in Part One. Part Two presents *how* Chinese philosophy describes such our historical way of life. Part One is in the spirit of Part Two; Part Two is Part One made structurally explicit, in Chinese philosophical manner.

Part One, divided into three chapters, concerns that extraordinary intertwinning at the base of all our life activities — “history and thinking.” The interweaving is seen from three angles — “historicity in thinking,” “history as thinking,” and “historical thinking, thoughtful history.” Here the general humus of historicity for human nature is considered, and so things and thoughts, both Chinese and Western, are treated, but always with a Chinese gaze and ethos. This is what is meant above by Chinese thinking expressing history philosophically.

Part Two in four chapters depicts the Chinese minds which exhibits

this intertexture. First, the coherence of “Sound, Sight, and Sense” of the world appear in their Chinese expressions. This is Chinese philosophy whose significance manifests itself in the context of comparative philosophy. Secondly, *what* Chinese philosophy is is crystallized in “Chinese Universals,” which exhibit the primordial nervure of the human world with twin parts — the literary, the historical, in the evocative, the metaphorical.

Thirdly, the literary side of Chinese thinkings is explicated through a historical case, “Mencius’s Concrete Thinking,” his concrete argument by analogy (evocation, metaphor) with actuals (literary) and factuals (historical). This concrete thinking in its mystical depths and widths is profoundly relevant to history as we live it. Finally, the historical side of Chinese thinking is tested on the nitty gritty of “Tragic Dilemmas in Life.” Through this ultimate test we catch some glimpses of what it really means to become human. This also exhibits Chinese philosophy contributing to world at its toughest moment.

An early version of “History and Thinking” was presented as the Ch’ing Hwa Lectureship in the spring of 1989. “Sound, Sight, Sense” originally appeared, titled “Sound, Sight, Sense — the Chinese Mind and the Prospect of Comparative philosophy,” in the *Bulletin of the College of Liberal Arts*, National Taiwan University, December 1988. An early version of “Chinese Universals” was presented at the Conference on Methodology of Chinese Philosophy, National Taiwan University, in May of 1990. “Mencius’s Concrete Thinking” and “Tragic Dilemmas in Life” (originally titled, “Tragic Dilemmas in Ancient China — Conflict in Justice”) were co-authored with Professor Chün-chieh Huang (黃俊傑).

These chapters represent some of the harvest in Chinese philosophy and its contributions to world philosophy, during my two turbulent years, 1988-90, of visiting research professorship in philosophy at National Taiwan University. My treasured colleagues there, first Professor Kuo Po-wen (郭博文) (philosophy), then Professor Huang Chün-chieh (黃俊傑, history), encouraged me to go on and protected me from many imperfections. Both are innocent of my obtuseness which failed to benefit from all their valuable critical suggestions.

—ACKNOWLEDGEMENT—

Every fruit of intellectual labor owes much to friends' assistances, collaborations, and critical encouragements. This monograph is no exception. In addition to my two treasured colleagues, Professors Huang, Chün-chieh (黃俊傑) and Kuo, Powen (郭博文), already noted, the following persons cannot be appreciated enough.

The original version of Part I was, as mentioned above, the Tsing Hua Lectures in spring in 1989. Dr. Chang, Yung-t'ang, Director of the Institute of History at National Tsing Hua University, must thanked for his kind invitation and arrangements for the distinguished lectureship. Its Chinese version will be forthcoming from the Lien-ching Publishers. (聯經出版事業公司)

Part I in its pre-revised form was also a report of my research project (No. NSC 79-0301-H002-01) to National Science Council, ROC, during 1989-90. Their generous financial supports enabled the project to be successfully carried out. I also appreciate their permission to let its revised version (minus its Chinese part) appear to the public in this form.

Furthermore, I wish to express my hearty gratitude to Professor Lai, Tze-han (賴澤涵), Director of the First Division, Sun Yet-sen Institute for Social Sciences and Philosophy. Academia Sinica, ROC, for going through the tedious committee proceedings of examination and decision on this monograph, then seeing it through to publication from the Institute.

I appreciate Professor Yang, Ju-pin (楊儒賓) of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at National Tsing Hua University; he read the

final two Chapters and made valuable comments on their contents. Thanks are due to the faculty and students of Departments of Philosophy and Chinese Literature at National Taiwan University, and those of Institute of History and Department of Chinese Language and Literature at National Tsing Hua University, who constantly criticized and encouraged my thinking.

## PART ONE: HISTORY AND THINKING

### PROLOGUE

Our topic is predicated upon an important twofold realization about ourselves: First, human beings are rational animals. Thinking belongs to human nature, and we are by nature thinkers—some of us are thinkers of history, some are thinkers of thinking. Secondly, all of us humans daily live and deal with many things and people, and by and by our dealings accumulate into history—history is, then, also part of human nature. Thus, man is the rational and historical animal; reason and history are two basic features of human nature. The general title of this part, “History and Thinking,” captures the basic essential characteristics of human nature; we will first consider “and,” then “thinking,” then “history.”

A. The word “and” in the title is particularly noteworthy; “and” here is the center of our considerations that concern the mutuality, the closest possible involvement, between “history” and “thinking.” Since we are both rational animals and historical animals, our being human can be exhausted neither in merely thinking nor in merely being historical. Our history must be full of thinking implications; our thinking must be filled with historical significance. Human history should be rational; our thinking should be historical.

Kant said that concept without percept is empty; percept without concept is blind (*Critique of Pure Reason* B75 A51). We can say that

thinking without history tends to be empty; history without thinking is simply blind. Confucius said that, learning without thinking, we lose our way; thinking without learning, we fall into danger (2/15). We can say, history without thinking is foolish; thinking without history is dangerous. Therefore the royal way to being human lies in practicing historical thinking.

The purpose of these pages titled "History and Thinking" is to consider how important history is for thinking, how indispensable thinking is for history, and how, in order to be truly human, we must practice historical thinking to constitute thoughtful history. These pages are then naturally broken into three: history for thinking, thinking for history, and historical thinking, thoughtful history. In the first chapter I will sell history to thinkers (philosophers); in the second I will sell thinking (philosophy) to historians; in the third I marry these two disciplines into a humanistic science truly so called.

In "Historicity in Thinking" we shall consider the indispensable role history plays in thinking; thinking is through and through historical. Concetely, we shall think about how indispensable the tradition is for thinking, that even the all important "universals" have to be "hidden" in history. In "History as Thinking" we shall consider the philosophical character of historiography, that without thinking history is reduced to mere haphazard eruptions of brute happenings. These considerations inevitably lead us to consider what structure "Historical Thinking (as) Thoughtful History" has, and how important thinking that *is* historical is for our life as human persons who live as thoughtful history.

B. Perhaps at this point what "thinking" and "history" are should be considered. Seeing the word "thinking" people (especially historians) immediately think of random association of ideas. We now know that even this seeming randomness has its own regularity. We remember the single greatest contribution to mankind Freud made, which made him one of the giants of the twentieth century, was his discovery that what seems random in our consciousness actually has its own "law," its inevitable regularity.

He called it the law of the “unconscious” and investigated on it. We also remember Sartre’s telling critique (in *Being and Nothingness*) of this “unconscious realm,” pointing out its fatal internal inconsistencies; consciousness is by definition aware of itself, but the notion of the unconsciousness entails that consciousness can be unaware of itself, which is a contradiction. We do not need to follow Freud into the unconscious, either, but we can agree that one of thinking’s important tasks is to follow up on this regularity (call it law or principle of thinking) in free connection of ideas. To *think* means at least to find out the structure of this regularity of association.

But this is not to say that random association of ideas (RAI) is not different from responsible thinking, what we just call “thinking.” What is the difference?

Thinking is a systematic connection, a coherence, of our thoughts, where “systematic” implies “meaningful,” which can be something “significant” for life. Thinking is a coherent system of thoughts, a logical linking of many ideas, a meaningful system, a discourse that is significant to life. RAI is in contrast only random accumulation of bits of ideas, without system, coherence, meaning, or significance – Just a random pile-up of bits of ideas on the spur of the moment’s fancy. We now first look at RAI, then at thinking.

Random association of ideas (RAI) is a confusing pile-up of ideas. It has at least two kinds: a mere pile-up of one’s *own* thoughts, and a pile-up of someone *else’s* ideas randomly pulled out.

When my daughter was three years old, she drew on paper some random crayon strokes, then asked me what they were. I said I did not know. She then got angry and said, “Daddy! Don’t you know? It’s a design!” This neatly exemplifies a random pile-up of random thoughts. A few strokes on paper, when connected systematically, meaningfully, significantly, are the painter’s design; if not, they are AI, a mere pile-up of *one’s* thoughts; Confucius would have described it as “thinking without learning.”

Confusing pile-up of ideas randomly pulled out of someone *else’s*

thinking is a bit hard to detect, and so more dangerous. This is to pull ideas, phrases, categories, and the like, out of famous people, then randomly pile them up. This is a random accumulation of copied ideas. Confucius would have called “learning without thinking.” The market is littered with books of this sort.

Sadly, this second sort of random thinking is often taken to be a respectable academic research; it is full of notes, quotations and such, filling the shelves of historiography, literature, philosophy. Those “scholars” are really just pulling ideas and big words out of someone else’s books, lumping them together, capping them with fashionable jargon and categories. This is the most difficult case of academic disease we have today.

Fortunately, the boundaries between history on the one hand, and sociology, economics, cultural anthropology, and other human sciences, on the other, are being continually blurred these days, and the historians are more and more taking in the methodologies of those disciplines. This shows that we are becoming aware that obsession with the wil-o’-the-wisp of “pure facts” is wrong.

And yet what is warned above is anything but a straw man; it is very much alive today. Historical positivism insistent on a statistical average of bits of factual information is a variant of this RAI, taking history more as factual chronicling than as history. Statements such as “Just dig up the facts,” “Facts speak for themselves,” “This bronze relic clearly tells us that. . . ,” “we must separate facts from opinion,” and the like, all too ominously exhibit something of historical positivism hovering at the back of the historian’s mind.

For the pile historical documents is just to pile up, and not to do historiography. Collecting historical documents is a *preparation* for historical thinking, a start of historical research, readying us to arrange, digest them, and see threads of meaning in them. Collection of historical data is a preparation for historical hermeneutics, not historical hermeneutics per se, a second level of work beyond preparation. Without this second level of work, thinking, and only staying on the first level, collecting data and ideas – taking collecting to be thinking itself – is to do RAI. If one thinks one is



doing historical research because one piles up documents, then one is cheating everyone, including oneself.

This sort of mistake is more dangerous. Document-less speculation is easier to detect to be a random pile-up of thoughts than impressive document-piling, which often serves as a smoke screen for not thinking at all. For document-piling is just piling, while documentation is careful, documented thinking. These two are worlds apart, in fact mutually opposed, yet easily confused.

Facts are not facticity, nor is factual chronicling synonymous with historical-mindedness, that is, the historical manner of thinking, clearly thinking through phenomena of events. Seeing reports of bits of facts on printed pages, memorizing capsule generalizations, is one thing. Seeing social forces at work, complexity of causation in an episode, the strands of continuity, the relevancy of the past to the present, and pondering how all this is none other than an exhibition of human nature, is quite another. The former route is a version of RAI, and to take it as valid achievements in historical studies constitutes a disaster.

The same holds for literary criticism. To pile up literary documents is to pile up bits, not to engage in literary criticism. If one thinks that because one has piled up literary material, pronounced fancy literary phrases and jargon, one has therefore accomplished the job of literary criticism, one is then doing RAI, not thinking.

The worst case is in philosophy. Again, to pile up philosophical material, mouthing fashionable jargon and technical terms, is just to pile bits, not to engage in philosophy. If one thinks this is to introduce a school of philosophy, doing philosophy itself, then one just “shoots the breeze”; one is not doing thinking at all.

In contrast, responsible thinking is this. *After* having collected material, one goes through painstaking critique and systematization – digesting the evidence collected, making their logical connections, and deducing from them deliberated conclusions, thereby exhibiting the importance of these deliberations and conclusions.

Of course, without a pile-up of materials, even RAI of someone else's, thinking cannot start. Thinking without ideas is equivalent to not having started thinking at all, although outwardly there seems to be some thinking going. This is RAI again, of one's own. Thus, to prevent RAI of one's own, one needs RAI of someone else's to stimulate RAI of one's own, thereby, with these two kinds of RAI, starts true responsible thinking.

The solution to the darkness of learning-without-thinking and the danger of thinking-without-learning is *both* to think and to learn. This combination of history and thinking is structured as "warming up the old and knowing the new" (*The Analects*, 2/11). But what is the "new"? What is "knowing the new"? The new is "really new" in the twin senses of truly new and the real that is new, both being so novel that no one has ever noticed it *and* realizing that the truth is ever fresh, not just knowledge that is new but the knowledge of new reality.

The "and" in "warming up the old and knowing the new" should not be the *and* of result of purpose – not "warming up the old" will result in "knowing the new," but "warming up the old" so as to enable one to know the new. To wit, "warming up the old" is for the sake of discerning the new real, sensitizing us to the subtle nuances of the fresh real. To warm up the old is for the sake of discovering, discerning, the new.

But the new cannot be completely encapsuled in the old, but has to break through the old to the novel present. Thus to quote the old to "argue" for the new is really to point to the new by means of the old; the old here is a contrast, a pointer, a metaphor, a nurse that fosters our sensitivity.

Why can the old aid us to sensitize ourselves to the novel real? Because the old that is worth quoting is the tradition, something worth handing down to us, something pointing up the novel real to the people of those days. The old is our sensitizer to the new because the old was itself a discernment of the new in those days. The tradition is useful for the discernment of the new because it *was* itself such discernment. The old helps us break through the tradition to the novel because the tradition was

itself such a breakthrough – otherwise the old would not deserve to be warmed up by us now.

Thus one cannot demand *proving* what is claimed to be new (and worth noting ) by quoting, merely quoting, from the old. One can only be honed by the old into knowing the new. This is what it means to warm up the old and know the new. Irresponsible thinking is not more novel, but less, than responsible thinking, seeing that the former is not, while the latter is, sensitized through warming up the old to the really novel.

We must then remember that RAI is not without its use. For all academic works and researches begin with it. All scientific breakthroughs, all inventions and discoveries, originate in a good mobilization of RAI. But this is not to say that therefore science *is* itself RAI; science is rather a good mobilization of RAI. This “*good mobilization*” is responsible thinking, through warming up the old. We must first stimulated by RAI of others in the past, randomly associate our ideas, that is, “brainstorm,” and then responsibly mobilize whatever we get out of it. Hu Shih once said that we must boldly hypothesize, then carefully document. I say, we must randomly associate, brainstorm, then carefully document, mobilize RAI – carefully arrange, sift through, and utilize our RAI for the discernment of the really novel. This is responsible thinking, thinking proper.

But of course “association” is a very weak cipher for what I would take to be the first required characteristic of “thinking,” that it should be *coherent*, that our thinking should get rid of internal contradictions, in order finally to become *systematic* – everything we think should involve (imply, entail) everything else in what we think. This second characteristic of thinking being systematic, carried out widely and thoroughly, renders it *comprehensive*, a third characteristic. Nothing that is relevant to the considered topic should be overlooked; thinking should leave no stones unturned in relevant areas of reality for relevant data.

And so coherence, systematicity, and comprehensiveness, these three are the minimum characteristics of “thinking” properly so called. Documentation and argumentation of the historian is really a rigorous thinking

of this responsible sort applied in the realm of historiography.

C. We have just defined or rather depicted what thinking is. What about “history”? The most convenient way of seeing what history is is to compare (and contrast) it with tradition. History is whatever meaningful connection we see when we look back on what we have been through. Tradition is what we find we have on hand, and what we are – what we have inherited – when we try to do something on our own. History and tradition are thus two appearances of our past to us from opposite directions. History is retrospective appearance of the past; tradition is prospective appearance of the past. History is what we get as we look back; tradition is what we find on hand as we look forward.

But the past is part of ourselves; history-tradition is our thoughtful awareness of the crucial part of ourselves – our very root. Thinking in this context is then thinking reflectively about ourselves as a whole, a total self-examination of our living, a Socratic reflection that is about our very selves (including our root, our past), leading us to reflection about our world as a whole.

To see how closely these two – thinking and history – are intertwined, and how important for our living this intervolving is, is the topic of these pages. Negatively put, without history we cannot even think (first chapter), without thinking we cannot be historical (second chapter), and without historical thinking and thoughtful history we are not human (third chapter). Positively put, thinking is itself historical (first chapter), history is imbued with thinking (second chapter), and to be human is to think historically and historize ourselves (third chapter).

D. Finally, I have an important reminder. I am concerned neither with historical documentation nor with philosophical argumentation. They come later. I am concerned instead with the very constitution of personhood, what is customarily called “human nature.” As human persons we *are* “history and thinking” through and through, and our humanity lies in making clear about this “and,” this natural internal connection, this ontological chiasma in every tissue of human being. And so I shall consider

the human constitution – “human nature” – in this historico-thinking light. This is the root issue that must be clarified before historiography and philosophy can even begin.

## I. HISTORICITY IN THINKING

In this chapter we consider how indispensable history is for thinking. (A) First, we go the negative route and see how, deprived of memory—historical awareness—we cannot think. (B) Then, we go our positive route, and see how we think only *in* the tradition. (C) But then how should our thinking which is by nature universal operate? The question is best tackled by considering concrete universals. And we find, to our surprise, that thinking by concrete universals is thinking that is in history after all, as instantiated by the Chinese historical thinking.

A. First we go the sad *negative* route, and see how tragically lost we are, how we lose our very identity, become dis-oriented, de-souled, when we lose our memory, history-awareness—being afflicted with what the psychologist calls Korsakov's syndrome, "a profound and permanent, but 'pure,' devastation of memory."

For movement bespeaks something that moves; self-movement bespeaks the self that lives on, claiming that that whole series of movements is his, or rather he himself who has undergone it, and is now undergoing it, which constitutes *he*. Thus the self is self-movement, which is a history of the self, a biography that is aware of itself, an unspoken (and ever ready to speak) autobiography. The self is an autobiography—a self-conscious story of a life that coheres into a subject, *one* coherent history. To lose part or whole of it (in a loss of memory, loss of history) is to lose oneself, partly or totally. To lose memory is to lose part or whole of that

history we call the *self*. This is the first point.

Secondly, Thinking is an activity of connection, which takes place in time; thinking is time-activity, time-rationality. To think is to connect, and connecting needs a recognition (remembrance) both of things to be connected and of an anchorage of connecting, the connector that connects, the self. Connection requires the connecting subject who connects the connected objects. Both the subject and the objects need to be recognized and claimed as such, before a connecting obtains. Loss of memory is loss of history, and losing history loses recognition of both the things to be connected and the self who connects; losing history loses *thinking*. This is the second point.

Both points above—to lose memory is to lose both the self and thinking—point inescapably to the conclusion that thinking needs history. To be deprived of memory or continuity is to be without a past or future, isolated in a constantly changing, meaningless moment. Life without connection is Hume’s “bundle of different sensations, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.” No, there cannot even be “a bundle”; there is only a meaningless flux of isolated impressions.

To lose history is to be radically lost. He who is in this radical loss can recognize *nothing*; he cannot recognize anyone, does not know his way around anywhere, and cannot think in depth, for “depth” has meaning only in terms of what is at hand, and “in terms of” is possible only when one has memory to compare (connect) one thing with another. Socrates wondered aloud in the *Theaetetus* how one can find and know anything if one does not know what it is that one is supposed to find. To lose memory is to be in that bottomless pit of “one does not know,” despite one’s preservation of feeling, willing, intelligence, sensibilities.

No, it cuts deeper; losing history loses the *self*, the anchorage of thinking. Dr. Oliver Sacks (a neuropsychologist teaching at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine) said, “If a man has lost a leg or an eye, he knows he has lost a leg or an eye; but if he has lost a self, himself, he can-

not know it, because he is no longer there to know it.”<sup>1</sup> Zazetsky in A. R. Luria’s famous *The Man with a Shattered World*<sup>2</sup> is passionately conscious of his state, and always fighting with “the tenacity of the damned” to recover the use of his damaged brain. The man who has lost memory has erased himself (partly or totally), and is so damned he does not know he is damned. This is amnesia for the amnesia, forgetting that there is one who has forgotten, a radical loss of the *self*. Dr. Sacks describes Jimmie the man this way:

“He had originally professed bewilderment at finding himself amid patients, when, as he said, he himself didn’t feel ill. But what, we wondered, did he feel? He was . . . fit and [yet] . . . had a strange inertia and . . . ‘unconcern’ . . . ‘How do you feel?’ ‘How do I feel,’ he repeated, and scratched his head. ‘I cannot say I feel ill. But I cannot say I feel well. I cannot say I feel anything at all.’ ‘Are you miserable?’ ‘Can’t say I am.’ ‘Do you enjoy life?’ ‘I cannot say I do . . .’ ‘How *do* you feel about life?’ ‘I cannot say that I feel anything at all.’ ‘You feel alive though?’ ‘Feel alive? Not really. I haven’t felt alive for a very long time.’ His face wore a look of infinite sadness and resignation.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus one way of being a man who has lost memory, history, and so himself, is a bottomlessly resigned, pensive calm. Another manner of being such a man is to constantly invent stories about himself. Sacks said,

“If we wish to know about a man, we ask ‘what is his story— . . .?’ — for each of us *is* a biography, a story. Each of us *is* a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us—through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives—we are each of us unique.

To be ourselves we must *have* ourselves—possess, if need be re-possess, our life-stories. We must ‘recollect’ ourselves, recollect the inner drama, the narrative, of ourselves. A man *needs* such a narrative, a continuous inner narrative, to maintain his identity, his self.



This narrative need, perhaps, is the clue to Mr. Thompson's desperate tale-telling, his verbosity. Deprived of continuity, of a quiet, continuous, inner narrative [by loss of memory, of history], he is driven to a sort of nar-rational frenzy—hence his ceaseless tales, his confabulations, his mythomania. Unable to maintain a genuine narrative or [inner] continuity, . . . he is driven to the proliferation of pseudo-narratives, in a pseudo-continuity, pseudo-worlds peopled by . . . phantoms. . . . The world keeps . . . losing meaning, vanishing—and he must seek meaning, *make* meaning, in a desperate way, continually inventing, throwing bridges of meaning over abysses of meaninglessness, the chaos that yawns continually beneath him. . . . And indeed he can never stop running, for the breach in memory, in existence, in meaning, is never healed, but has to be bridged, to be 'patched,' every second. And the bridges, the patches, for all their brilliance, fail to work—because they *are* confabulations, fictions, which cannot do service for reality, while also failing to correspond with reality. . . . And with this, no feeling *that* he has lost feeling (for the feeling he has lost), no feeling *that* he has lost the depths, that unfathomable, . . . myriad-levelled depth which somehow defines identity or reality. This strikes everyone who has [met] him . . . —that under his fluency . . . is a strange loss of feeling . . . which distinguishes between 'real' and 'unreal,' 'true' and 'untrue' . . . important and trivial, relevant or irrelevant. What comes out . . . in his confabulations, has, finally, a peculiar . . . indifference. . . as if it didn't really matter what he said, or what anyone else did or said; as if nothing really mattered any more."<sup>4</sup>

To be oneself is repeatedly, i.e., historically, to re-collect oneself, with a quiet power of historical recollection. One who has lost one's historical ability to recollect stops collecting and re-collecting oneself; such a one constantly loses oneself. This explains Mr. Thompson's frenzy tale-telling; he tries to thereby recapture the self, for he can no longer claim himself otherwise, now that he has lost his historical ability to re-collect the self, to recollect himself.

And so, whether in a pensive resignation or a frenzy mythomania, when we lose our memory, we lose our connecting identity, the self that *thinks*; history is indispensable to thinking. This negative point is also about the

past and its connection with and support of the present—and all this constitutes the self, that autobiography constantly consciously collected into a coherent history. The self is history. Without history the self cannot exist, much less think.

B. Now we come to the *positive* point, that thinking is imbued with history; thinking is itself history. First (1) we see how historical our thinking process is; then (2) we see how thinking something novel requires tradition.

(1) First we look into how historical our thinking process is. According to a Plato scholar, Stanley Rosen, the paradigm of philosophical method is a dialectic—division and collection (according to kinds)—in Plato’s *Phaedrus* and the *Sophist*, themselves governed by this method of counting the eidetic elements as divided forth from the initial compound and then reassembled into a final compound. An element is a ‘number’; a compound is a sum of ‘numbers.’ Dialectic is then a sort of arithmetic; to explain is to take apart and exhibit the structure of, the compound. (And the arithmetic operation is, as Kant said, a synthetic a priori operation, which is historical, as we shall see soon.)

This dialectico-arithmetical attitude continues to our present day. A thing is a compound, whose discursive account is a dividing according to kinds; further division determines what counts as a kind. Division determines predicates; running through the steps in the division demonstrates the validity of our determination of that set of predicates for that sort of thing. To explain what we perceive as a unity we analyze (divide); to say something about something is to predicate. And so predication is linked to arithmetic counting-dividing-analyzing.

But analysis is not the final word in thinking. Synthetic (collective) perceiving of a compound starts analysis, and certifies the appropriate measure of analysis, the elements not being homogeneous. And at “some point we must see that we are finished [and] . . . see an articulated structure as a unity, whole . . . There has to be some reason for our *not* adding another number to a given sum, and the reason is our . . . perception that

we now have *enough*.”<sup>5</sup>

Here Rosen gave us two points: (a) Western philosophy is basically patterned after arithmetical operation—division and collection, counting and summing up, analysis and synthesis. (b) Both the start and the finish of this arithmetic is a “perception” of totality, and this concrete total perception bespeaks a connection to the historical world. How about the *process* of this arithmetic? We can say that the same story holds.

It belongs to Kant’s genius to find that  $7+5=12$  is a synthetic a priori judgment (in the *First Critique*, B15-17). The operation is purely formal, “a priori,” and necessary, with no help from our concrete experience. Yet the operation is “synthetic,” related to the world of experience in the following three ways (one of which Kant saw also).

First, as Kant said, the notion of “12” is not logically implied in any of the notions that go before “12”—neither in “7,” nor in “5,” “+,” or “=.”  $7+5=12$  obtains only by actually going through the operation of addition. Addition is a priori; its *operation* and its result are synthetic. Thus this synthetic operation, though a priori, has a logical connection to the historicity of the world.

Secondly, as we operate it,  $7+5=12$  comes to click in on us (synthetic) as logically valid (a priori). We are convinced, clicked into mathematical understanding, *as we go* from “7” and “5” through “+” to “12.” Thus this synthetic operation, with all its quality of the a priori, has a subjective connection to the historicity of the world.

Finally,  $7+5=12$  applies to pens and apples; something mathematical (a priori) applies procedurally to actual *objects* (synthetic). We can do mathematics abstractly; we can also do mathematics by actually adding and subtracting things, and things do actually get counted. Thus this synthetic operation, though a priori, has an objective connection to the historicity of the world. (Similarly, causal relationship is logically understandable, and is designed to describe the historical connections among objects and events.)

And here comes the crunch: Operationally, subjectively, and objec-

tively,  $7+5=12$  is perceived to be valid and significant. This perception is an actual ongoing, an understanding—an historical process. All the operational, subjective, and objective significance is none other than significance *in* and *of* the ongoing experience of the world, an *historical* significance.  $7+5=12$  is an historical operation.

“Synthetic” is a cipher for “historical”; “a priori” is a cipher for “thinking.” Kant said that our thinking—our metaphysical thinking—is synthetic a priori, which we now see describes no other than historical thinking itself. Thinking process is historical or it is nothing. Maurice Merleau-Ponty also noted the factual-perceptual basis of mathematical truth—with the example of Gauss’s formula,  $n/2(n+1)$ —in *The Prose of the World*.<sup>6</sup>

As for geometrical truths, Merleau-Ponty observed (in his *Phenomenology of Perception*<sup>7</sup>) that they have a perceptual basis. What distinguishes a drawing of a triangle, and a parallel line passing its apex, from the child’s arbitrary drawing which suggests different things as its configuration changes, is that the former has, while the latter does not, my act that prevails over the temporal dispersal of my mental events. This intentional control has the consistent purpose of exhibiting (demonstrating) some “necessary” characteristics which this physical triangle necessarily has. Definition is a directive of an intention for a body to move in *that* manner rather than another.

Someone may object that this is a psychologizing irrelevant to formal demonstration. But formalization is always retrospective, historical, proving that its completion is merely apparent, that intuitive thought brings to formal thought rigor to truth, basis for its certainty, enabling us to experience truth by crystallizing it in concrete particulars. The construction of a demonstration relates to the triangle’s configuration, to the relations expressed by the words “on,” “by,” “apex,” and “extend,” all of which are meaningful by virtue of my working on a perceptible or imaginable triangle situated on my perceptual world.

Clarity is a resting place in our process of pursuit for truth; a state-

ment is “clear” (“The time is one o’clock.”) when it is taken for granted, and is not when probed (“What is time?”). Evidence is what is perceived as true. The truths about the triangle are as permanent as Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is—neither can be added or detracted by being performed well or poorly. Someone must invent geometrical (Euclid) or aesthetic (Beethoven) truths. “Necessity” (as in geometry) is as contingent as historical contingency (as in music) is necessary. The body is our view on the world (made up of such things as geometry and music) and the world is a contraction of our bodily purview—again, made of such things as geometry and music. Thus geometrical truths are as historical as mathematical ones.

For the child everything is literally a play; he plays a dinner, a bath, going to bed. Nothing is dull here. Repetition of the “same” ritual (play) of napping, eating, bathing, is merely an intensification of the fun of playing; the child gains something new every time he goes through the “same” ritual. That is, there is no word “same” in his vocabulary; “same” is an intensification of unique happenings.

And that should be the way of *our* life. Everyday is different. We do not hit the same pillow at night. We have no “routine” but intensification. This is because the “now” is always on the go, changing. No sickness, no disappointment, no ache, is absolutely the same with the ones we have experienced before. This makes diary-making a significant act.

And this makes scientific discovery of natural law a fascinatingly mysterious affair. On the one hand, nothing happens twice—every boiling of water is different; every copy is a slight variation of the original. On the other hand, we see (and we are ourselves changing!) a rough similitude that repeats (only similitude repeats) often enough for the scientific researcher to affirm a “law,” a law of identity of a happening.

This is like the historian’s discerning of a pattern in (historical) events—say, the naming of so often repeated bloody series of events as the “*Second World War*.” To see the pattern of repetition of similitude is the task of both the scientist and the historian. They are alike in being the pattern discerners in unique events. To catch sameness in difference, difference in

sameness, the former in terms of the latter, and the latter in the former—if this is not “play” in the wonder of being historically alive, we don’t know what it is. The child, the scientist, and the historian, these three are one, and the greatest—the primary, the pattern—of these is the child, who plays with uniqueness in similitude.

What holds the child’s breath in wonder is the change; what integrates this change into the change of “*myself*,” what identifies the change as *mine*, is this fun. This is the fascination of becoming “*myself*”—to find what continues through the change, to found the historical continuity, as one’s personal identity.

Personal identity is thus historical. History happens when one holds on to one’s present which changes. The now that holds the change from the past to the future, holding the flow together as one, recognizing it as *change*, thereby recognizing that *this* change is “*mine*”—is *me* myself. To recognize change from the past to the future, to holds them together—to connect them—is thinking. Thinking is historical, history is myself; I think in history flowing from the past to the future in the now.

(2) But the thinking recognition of historical flow begins with recognizing the past as “*my*” past. To recognize my past as the past of me is to acknowledge the importance of the tradition in my life. We must see how much steeped in tradition thinking is. This is also about the connection of the past with the future, the new creation. For to think is to think something new. Even to think of the old is to reaffirm the old, and reaffirmation is a new affirmation. We must think about how thinking that is new creation is made possible by steeping in the tradition.

To describe thinking *is* to trace what has been going on throughout the history of thinking—we cannot avoid citing Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, and they are without exception historical greats. To describe thinking at all is to engage in a review of, a retrospective look-again at, the historical traditions of humankind. And thinking itself operates in the light of the frame of reference (the universe of discourse) set up by those great thinkers of our past. Even to oppose that frame set

by our previous thinkers we need that frame. Edmund Husserl said in his *Crisis* that

everyone has certain formulae, expressed in definitions . . . word-concepts. . . . In that “knowledge,” and in the word-concepts of the formulae, the historical is concealed; it is . . . the spiritual inheritance of him who philosophizes; and . . . he understands the others in whose company, in critical friendship and enmity, he philosophizes. And in philosophizing he is also in company with himself as he earlier understood and did philosophy; and he knows that, in the process, historical tradition, as he understood it and used it, entered into him in a motivating way and as a spiritual sediment.<sup>8</sup>

We may be Renaissance historians without having read every aspect of Renaissance; we may be Platonists without a concern for every word of Plato. This is because history is an integral *part* of our thinking. We breathe Platonism and Renaissance. When we think, we think *in* history. As we first attempt at painting, the whole past of painting peeps over our shoulders, animating our brush with the tradition. The tradition is in our bones, with which we make our own new gestures and waves of new sense, which found a new tradition—without being aware of our bones or our tradition. Tradition is our living historicity.

This raises an important question of what it means to inherit the tradition. Three points can be raised: Tradition as part of us, as our root, and as our future. Tradition envelops us in our present activities, at our experience past, and toward our creative future.

First, cultural life is an embodiment of tradition. All our thinking is couched in dialogues with the historical greats — the notorious as well as the famous. All our thinking, our way of life, is shaped in terms of tradition. We understand something new by reference to what we already know; and our very frame of reference for understanding—our language, convention, and thinking pattern—is the legacies of history, without which we cannot live as humans. Besides, in our gripping of the pen, in our manner of comportment, we live (our cultural life) in tradition. We are human by virtue of culture, an accumulation of our past experience

in us that we care to preserve, consciously or unconsciously. We breathe physically in the air; we breathe humanly in the air of tradition. We cannot survive in a historical vacuum. Tradition is, when used well, our "tacit dimension" (Polanyi), our blood and muscle to go on in *our* own thinking and our own culture-formation.

Secondly, to trace ourselves back to this cultural root, the tradition, is to partake of the original-originating root power, without which neither Chuang Tzu's "spring power of life" (*chi* 機) nor Mencius's "buds of our original nature" (*tuan* 端) is thinkable. To tap this primal vitality is to be renewed at the root. To become like the child is to partake of the primal vitality of the child; here the child is father to the man.

This is not to revert to infantilism. Although the child participates in the primal, to stay being a child is to be primitive and childish. The so-called "primitive culture," if there be any, is not something prior to culture but itself a full-grown *culture*, grown ossified in the childhood stage; the mature sophisticated culture would seek its normative vitality in the primordial and formative power within itself—its own tradition. Primitive culture is an infantile *culture*; mature culture is one that returns again and again to its "heart of the child" (Mencius), so as to become the "great Wise [who is] like a fool" (Lao Tzu).

Thus artless art is natural; uncultured casualness is not. Dadaism, for instance, is anything but the uncouth's scribbles. Dadaism makes sense only among those so much steeped in the tradition as to be numb; dadaism shocks them into cultured appreciation. No wonder philosophical archeology has been proposed again and again, especially among the cultural iconoclasts such as Nietzsche, Marx, and M. Foucault.<sup>9</sup> Confucius "transmitted, not innovated," and thereby effected an epoch-making revolution in culture and morality.

The cultural iconoclasts bring us to the third point; the tradition is futuristic. We must study the past to be creative and novel. The expert creates novelty; the expert is literally one who is experienced, in the know about the past. We must go through our (past) experience to create



something new.

Thus creation of novelty must be rooted in the tradition. But creation is not imitation. Having one's root in the tradition is one thing; blindly repeating the tradition is quite another. To try and capture the fresh gust of present actuality in the box of past convention is one thing—a traditionalism. To express the freshness of actuality, even create a new sort of freshness, with the tradition as *tool*, that is, by creatively mobilizing what we embody—the language, the experience, and the thinking that we inherit—is quite another. But what is the difference? With this question we initiate the problem of inheriting the tradition: How can returning to tradition not be a blind repetition, but a precondition for creativity and novelty?

Tradition is what is handed down from the past. And what is handed down through the ages must have been what is worth preserving, the noteworthy (that is, most deserving of our learning from it) in the past. And the past-noteworthy here means what differs from those existed before.

In addition, tradition is alive in the present. Tradition introduces our present to the *noteworthy* in the generations of our common past, which penetrates and disciplines us at the core of our present. For the present emerges not in a vacuum but by transcending the past—destroying idolization of past excellence, countering past failure into a renaissance, improving on past achievement into the dawn of a new age. Thus transcendence assumes inheritance; only by first acknowledging the past can the present transcend it.

Finally, what is noteworthy throughout the ages, the tradition, is the root out of which we came. Therefore the tradition as our root, the root of our reality, is best at introducing us to the root of the real, the really real both in ourselves and in present actuality. Our tradition is the root of ourselves now; it connects both ourselves and actuality inside out. This is tradition truly so called. To promote this reality-connection is to inherit and live in the tradition.

An institution, no matter how big, loose, or ideal, is by the nature of

the case imperfect. For we need to be “we” and *not* “they”; becoming autonomous is to be definite, which is to be delimited and finite—becoming limited, local, self-centered. This tendency attendant on autonomy breeds imperfection. Even a medical association must officially endorse or sanction a policy, an individual. And then a circular argument often results: Since he (or it) is wrong, he is not a doctor; since he is not endorsed by our association, he is wrong; since he is outside our group he is not endorsed by us; since he is not endorsed by us, he is wrong. And so on indefinitely. And then dogmatism and bigotry come about. Pettiness and petty wranglings—enemies to truthful magnanimity to others—spread. And the initial purpose of the association—to promote medicine—is lost. Thus defending and promoting the cause of medicine necessitated the formation of the association, whose autonomy often ends up militating against the cause.

There is only one cure to this predicament: “We” must be *open* to critique and thereby open to change for the better. Critique and growth is not without a similar sort of trauma. This is an offshoot from the paradox of democracy, namely, freedom to choose includes freedom to choose to kill freedom, and democratic election can elect to abolish democracy.

But such a growth-paradox is inherent in the integrity of life. The paradox is in the final analysis the paradox of history—that one is not what one is, and one is what one is not. Sartre hits upon this in his *Being and Nothingness*, but he ontologized it so much that he missed historicity in all this. To be *open* at all is to be in for a historical paradox of this sort.

For to be open is to be open to something other than oneself, and so to be open to the possibility of changing what one is now, namely, open to the danger of compromising if not losing what makes an individual an individual—now. But if one resists change and refuses growth, one dies in “orthodoxy,” ossified in the past. The one thing needed in life is the courage and strength to (1) accept the change into oneself (*sheng sheng pu hsi* 生生不息) and to (2) keep oneself as oneself throughout (*rsu ch'ih* 自持). In life to be is to grow into oneself.

For such a courage to be and grow one needs strength, a tremendous strength to include both the past and the future, that open sore of change, into oneself. This is the courage to live, that adherence to Nietzsche's raw "biological principle," which keeps us ever fascinated with those "heinous rogues" who roam in historiography and historical novels. History is power, that raw elan vital that keeps humans human.

For to gain oneself in losing oneself this way is possible only in a historical dimension. He who stays put there, sustains himself in the midst of change, wins himself. Behold, the old self is gone, all are new—the *same* self renewed and grown. Thus the courage to be is the courage to grow, to grow out of the old, and to grow out of the old is synonymous with daring to turn the present into the past, one's own past.

This miracle of growth is only the natural, the all too natural process of the "history" of what there is. The courage to be is the courage to plunge into this natural-historical flow of the internal time of be-ing. The courage to be is that toward be-ing, toward the historical to the will-be, to the flow from the past to the future that turns everything into the past and turns the past (at least through revolt) into the Golden Age. This is the historical courage which initiates the historic event of the new self.

Since reality is alive, ever renewing, rebirthing itself (*sheng sheng pu hsi* 生生不息), to be connected to reality is to engage in continual self-renewals, to partake of the historical elan of self-transcendence at the heart of reality. We owe our very existence to our tradition, the connectedness to the self-birthing reality. To inherit the tradition is to inherit reality's life-elan of self-transcendence. To see what all this means, we must go to actual historical examples.

For such was what happened in the *Fu-ku* (復古) movement, the movement to "restore the past" by attacking the then current florid parallel-style writing (*pien wen* 駢文), hollow and out of touch with actuality. The movement began in the pre-T'ang periods and flourished in the T'ang dynasty, especially in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. There Han Yü 韓愈 said that when things are "not even, then [deep words and thoughts] sound

forth" (*pu p'ing tse ming* 不平則鳴), and Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 said that "the more straitened [the situation], the finer-crafted [the accomplishment]" (*yü ch'üung tse yü kung* 愈窮則愈工). All this amounts to bringing us back to the actual exigencies that goad us to excellence.

The Fu-ku movement was relatively less important than the Confucian and the Neo-Confucian movements. The Fu-ku was chosen to instantiate the grand ongoing pattern and tradition throughout history of attacking the encroaching falsifications of our root identity by reverting to the tradition of authenticity. The Confucians (Confucius, Mencius, Hsün-Tzu) saw in the collapse of Chou Dynasty, and the moral cultural dignity it represented, the radical falsification of human nature; the Confucians fought it with "warming up the old." the Neo-Confucians (Chou Tun-i 周敦頤, two Ch'eng Brothers 二程, Chu Hsi 朱熹, Wang Yang-ming 王陽明) similarly saw the acid of degenerating influences in the rise of Buddhism and Taoism, and countered them with a re-turn to, a re-thinking of, the Confucian tradition.

Unfortunately the movements which attacked false pretence to go back to the actual *and* to the ancient, never considered why and how going back to things themselves amounts to going back to the past, to the tradition. They did not bring out what they insisted on: The core of tradition is its concrete bloody grapplings with the recalcitrant actualities of the lived present, thereby coming out with fresh insights for (and in) *those* present moments. The connection would have clarified the equation—to go back to reality is to go forward to novel authenticity, to go back to authentic actuality is to go back to the past experience of grapplings with actuality in those actual moments; therefore, to go back to the past is to go forward to the novelty of the present.<sup>10</sup>

Against the then current trend of literary ornaments and artificiality the *Fu-ku* movement advocated a return to the ancient tradition of reverting to the tao 道 of things itself. Similarly, against the then current trend of subservience to the Divine and to church orthodoxy, the Renaissance movement advocated a revival of the ancient Greek tradition of free striving humanism. Chinese *Fu-ku* was for the restoration of the Tao of

*actuality* (against all-too-human ornamentation); Western Renaissance was for the rebirth of *authentic* humanity (against inhuman authority).

But why didn't they *go* straight to actuality and authenticity; why going back to the ancient tradition? Perhaps because we humans instinctively realize that these "goings," whether past or present, are anything but sporadic and abnormal; they belong to the very historical roots of ourselves, the tradition which is the practice of self-birthing reality. Digging deep into our own past, we find our authentic roots there, the fountain that has produced us and ever nourishes us at the core of our being. It is this historical root that has thus produced us, that urges and leads our ways, from within us, to the genuine goings toward ourselves and toward actuality. And actuality is a verb; it is ever going-actual, ever self-actualizing. To go back to the practice of past goings into actuality, is the only radical veritable way to go forward into fresh actuality.

But then, the *Fu-ku* movement vividly illustrates a paradox. In letting actuality transparently (without artificialities) express itself in our sentences, *as the ancients used to do*, the *Fu-ku* purposely went back to the tradition to revolt against the tradition. To restore the (ancient) past of simplicity is to revolt against the (immediate) past of artificiality. To live in the tradition is to revolt against living in the dead past.

For living in the tradition is not living in the past, in traditionalism. The past is what we came *from*, our root; we live only by growing out of whatever has passed (away). Otherwise, our root will replace our own living, and we live no longer. Living in the past is simply to linger in it, a living dragging death; then a shameful past makes for living in guilt, and a glorious past makes for living anachronism. None of these is living the present.

It is a mistake to say that history is about bygone things and events. History takes away the oldness of things and brings them back *alive*—to us now. In history the pastness of the past is gone; the past is present-ed. To live in tradition is to let history be present in us.

An example of this attempt at living in history is of course that *Fu-ku*

movement mentioned above. Another example is the tendency to treat classical Chinese when thinking about Chinese language. Why do we not treat only the modern colloquial Chinese when thinking about the Chinese language?

To begin with, being versed in the classical Chinese, that language of vigor and economy, shapes the *manner*, the beauty, of the colloquial Chinese. Although few common folks in the West today read Shakespeare and the Bible as their "steady diet," Shakespeare and the Bible continue to shape the thought world of the West. Likewise, Chinese Classics (the *Book of Changes*, the *Book of Poetry*, etc.) and their language continue to provide the atmosphere—the thought- and language-pattern—of the Chinese people. Because archaic classical Chinese shapes the contemporary mode of thinking in China, one must read classical Chinese both to write in beautiful colloquial Chinese, and to understand the Chinese language and thinking.

The Japanese writer of cosmopolitan vigor, Natsume Soseki ( 夏目漱石 1867-1916), was reported to have re-perused the *Songs of Ch'u* (*Ch'u Tsu'u* 楚辭), before beginning to write that celebrated poetic *Kusamakura* (草枕 the Grass Pillow).<sup>11</sup> The famous literary critic and commentator, Chin Sheng-t'an ( 金聖嘆 1610-1661), was reported to have said that the methodological framework of the vernacular novel, *Shui-hu Chuan* ( 水滸傳, translated by Pearl Buck as "All Men Are Brothers"), was taken over from the classic of *Shih Chi* ( 史記, translated by Burton Watson as "Records of the Grand Historian").<sup>12</sup> All these are examples of how tradition lives on as part and parcel of present creativity. This has nothing to do with merely living in the past.

Both the *Fu-ku* movement and the Renaissance recoiled from living in the past. The Renaissance was a revolt against living under the authority of dross of past glories; the *Fu-ku* movement was a revolt against the trend then of drifting into a hollow beauty of expression. They remind one of Chuang Tzu's old wheel-wright who warned his lord against *merely* revering the dead letters of forefathers.

Thus both the *Fu-ku* and the Renaissance bring us back to the living power of our root, to what we came *from*, for us to embody that pristine

virile actuality, that power to actualize life and sustain freshness, to live in the present. This the best, the genius, of tradition; to inherit the tradition is to embody this genius of the past vigor worth handing down to us, so as to go forward to the novel future.

Not to live in tradition, then, is to be cut off from the root-power of our present; it is to sap the origin of life, to die. To live in the past is to cut off our living (present), it is to die as well. Thus to live in tradition is to revolt against living the past. We must revolt against living in the past to discernfully live out the tradition. To inherit the tradition is to destroy traditionalism. It is to live afresh in the present and continually produce (draw forth) actuality, in the same manner as the tradition used to produce ourselves, our actuality.

Here, however, we inadvertently, yet inevitably, face a dilemma. On the one hand, we noted that raw contacts with present actuality cannot be had by reading books of mere words, a depository of past (passed) experience. We should not let words and works of the past, tradition, impose themselves on our present actuality. On the other hand, we also noted that to go back to the tradition is to be inspired by our root fountain into present novelty. Only by following the tradition against the tyranny of past inauthenticity can we advance to the heart of ourselves and of actuality. We thus protest the tyranny of traditionalism by inheriting the tradition which propels us into novel actuality, against the arbitrary whims of the day to day present. But both tradition and traditionalism belong to the past. Thus we are told both that we must kick the past for present freshness, and that we must inherit the tradition (past experience) for present freshness.

We answer the dilemma by noting the following: Since present actuality changes every minute, and each person is different, the connection of the heart of changing actuality with the heart of each changing person, also changes. And so to inherit the tradition, so as to connect the heart of actuality with the heart of the person, cannot be ossified in set formulae and embalmed in books. Each phase of the tradition leads the way to novel

authenticity by showing us the past examples, each time in a fresh manner. To kick the past is to kick set formulae of this connection; to inherit the tradition is to be *shown* afresh our connection to the past each time we are confronted with present actuality.

C. The rub lies in this “showing.” What is this leading life by showing? This leads us straight into the question of universals.

The most noteworthy of the past is tradition truly so called, we noted. The noteworthy in the past are the raw contacts with actuality in those past moments. Those past raw contacts with actuality are both the same as and different from the present raw contact with actuality. They are the *same* raw contacts; they differ because each moment is the fresh unique present. They can be described by the *same* word, “fresh,” which yet means that each moment differs from others. This sameness of being “fresh” everywhere is everywhere different by virtue of its freshness.

Sameness-everywhere is what has been called “universals,” what make things as they are, as things. This is the sameness of (the vitality of) a fish as fish (in the water), for instance. Yet this fish-vitality expresses itself differently at each moment in each fish. This is the familiar problem of universals in the West, on how to capture the same chairness in so many different chairs, or how to make of the greenness of this fresh leaf, which differs from others, having the same greenness with that of others, or how to make of this particular ball sharing the same roundness with that different ball, and so on.

And this problem makes us aware of the three ways of thinking, which give us three different answers to the problem. Cognitive argumentative thinking says that there are immutable logical universals that render things and events rational, understandable, thinkable. Explanatory thinking tries to explain how this is the case, even explains how inexplicable this fact is. Evocative thinking stands aside to evoke what cannot be expressed, what is discernible as “usual” and “reasonable,” yet only in the unexpressed experience. And both explanatory and evocative thinkings use more metaphors than universals to understand *actual* things, where universals go



hidden. We call this universal-hidden-in-actuality, “concrete universal.” What does it look like?

Some historians may doubt the factual existence of a person called “Lao Tzu,” but no one doubts that of Chuang Tzu. And yet, we know practically nothing about Chuang Tzu’s life. This strange *fact* about Chuang Tzu perhaps indicates—instantiates, if you wish—a concrete universal. We have here one concrete individual whose factual details are blank, to be filled in by any one’s own life who cares to, to become *as* carefree, as composed, as roaming, as he. This is a concrete universal, to be taken with more seriousness than being dismissed as a mere “existential interpretation of Chuang Tzu.”

It is in this manner perhaps that the varied problems kicked up by abstract universals are dissolved. Universals should be left alone, hidden in the concrete; whatever universal sameness made explicit turns false and restrictive.

Thinkers in China expressed universals only concretely. Perhaps they intuitively felt falsehood in our artificial labors to express the universals. Thinkers in the West also felt the imposing restrictive tendency of the sameness made explicit-external. All the so-called “problems of the universals” are symbolic of this feeling. And then more universals are used to “solve” them, as if to fear that universals would be dissolved in the solutions. Yet universals left alone, unearthed, are still universals; they are embodied, unnoticed, in our actual living. The tradition in us, and metaphors we use, hint at universals; the tradition and metaphors can suggest, can be used, but cannot be made into an orthodoxy of/and literalism.

Universals are like the ways things go, the Tao of things and thinking. As “the Tao that can be tao-ed (identified as such) is not the usual-constant Tao, 道可道非常道,” so the universals that can be explicitly identified as such and argued about are not the usual-real ones, which are indescribable, much less arguable.

As all we see in the sentences are letters, not the meaning for which we *read*, so all we see are things, and all we read about are events, not

things' nature and their historical trends, *for* which we "read," that is, experience, things. Thinking in China is literary and historical thinking. The Tao, the road, is formed by walking (as Chuang Tzu said, 道行之而成, 2/33); all we see for the moment is the walking—events and their expressions. The universals and thinking are what Luther called "*hidden gods*" (whom we want) in this world.

We can say T'ai Chi 太極, Li 理, Ch'i 氣, and the like, as the Neo-Confucians did. We can say that all nouns are universals, that proper noun like "Socrates" is a universal with one member whose identity is one and stays the same, that a common noun like "a man" is a universal with one member whose identity is one and can change, and "two" is a universal with two members whose twin identities can change, and the like. But note how strange and foreign such descriptions are. They are anything but the way in which we *usually* and constantly practice universals. They appear (as they are) only hidden in this world, as Luther's God is.

What does "hidden" in the concrete flow of events mean here? Consider music. As the same score of classical music is performed forth over and over, each time differently into a different "music," so the birth-senescence-illness-death of our life (in Buddha's "score" of the music of life) is lived over and over, each life differently from the other. The four-fold cycle of human life we know, yet our knowledge remains vacuous (unreal, hollow, "false") until filled in with actuality; the filling makes birth and death *real*, even when life is boring, for boredom makes no sense without life-as-lived. And life is life-as-lived; life is living, or nothing, of course.

"Filled in with actuality" above means "lived through in *that* (human) way, by each performer, to his or her fullest." To know the score (of music or of life), one must "form" the music by performing it, that is, live it, flow with it, taking time staying in it—in short, living through it. One stands out (exist) by living it, each one differently from all others.

Chinese poems are powerful because they are lived-through. They are born of and lived in actuality. Things are not at peace, out of balance, and

the writings sound forth (as Han Yü 韓愈 said); daily living constrained, and poems are crafted forth (as Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 said). They are actuality-filled, actuality-mirrored. The writings and the poems are the "what must be" revolting against what actually is; they are scores lived and formed compressedly, ex-pressed, per-formed, by oppressed lives.

One cannot "form" one's life straightforwardly; one can only perform it by living it. As each performer makes different music out of the same musical score, so each of us makes his or her own life-music of common human integrity, either patterned after our Confucian paragons of virtues, or inspired by the music of no music, the "heavenly piping," the musicality of being natural, as pointed to by our historical Taoists. This thought joins music to history, thereby universals to tradition. The score of humanness is a hidden universal, lived throughout history, handed down from life to life, generation to generation.

The closest that the Western philosophy has come to such a reality discernment is when Maurice Merleau-Ponty rightly and eloquently explicated the bodily perceptual basis of all our thinking and our behavior. On surface, he is indistinguishable from Chinese philosophers who also stressed the body (*shen* 身). But Merleau-Ponty, by eloquent systematic explication, shows himself to be firmly in the Western tradition of objectification (despite his aversion to "objective thought"). To explicate eloquently is the hallmark of objective description.

Chinese philosophy goes about instead referring to *shen* 身, not in the context of objective description and epistemology, but in an allusive and even hortatory literature, with various epigrams (such as in the *Chung Yung* 中庸) and stories (such as in the *Mencius*) about personal cultivation. Why is this the case?

Description is by the nature of the case objectification. To be able to describe at all shows one is already beyond (out of) the situation to be described. Phenomenological description is objectification at its most basic and eloquent. But "body" (*shen* 身) is what we *are*, ineffable. To describe the indescribable one cannot use straight description. One can at most ex-

plain why things bodily are indescribable, then use stories, epigrams, metaphors, and so on, to allude to or exhibit (pre-sent) what is to be shown, such as the bodily basis of perception, knowledge, moral awareness, world view, and the like. And this route is what Chinese philosophy took.

Examples are everywhere. Confucius's *Analects* is full of anecdotes, epigrams, and stories, and so are the *Chung Yung* and the *Mencius*. It is well known that Confucius did not define the basic human notions of *jen*-benevolence 仁 and *hsiao*-filiality 孝. He just produced various key situations in which they typically appear. Nor did Mencius define the root of humanness, but passionately adumbrated it in our natural human(e) feelings of alarm and unbearable heart-mind at others's sufferings, exemplifying those root-feelings in many situational mini-stories.

One of the most argumentative Confucians, Hsün Tzu, summed up his "doctrines" in Chapter Twnty-Six, the *Fu P'ien* 賦篇, which is in the format of poignant prosepoem, made up entirely of negatives, about what Tao or the Great Thing (*ta wu* 大物) is not. Furthermore, Hsün Tzu's way of presentation is in the connotative mode. A striking passage (just to cite what comes to mind) in Chapter Nine, *Wang Chih P'ien* 王制篇, goes as follows:

Water and wood have vitality (*ch'i* 氣) but no life; grass and trees have life but no knowledge; birds and brutes have knowledge but no rightness (*i* 義). Man has all of them; he then is the most precious under heaven. Not as powerful as an ox, not as fast as a horse, man uses both. Why? Because man can flock, while they cannot. Why can man flock together? Because he can separate-in-mind (*fen* 分). With what does [mental] separation work? With *i*-rightness 義. Therefore *i* works with *fen* into *ho*-harmony 和; *ho*, then [he] becomes one [with other humans]; oneness, then power, much power, then [he becomes] powerful; powerful over things—and so [man] can obtain palaces and rooms to live in, coordinate the four seasons, govern all things, and benefit all under heaven. [Man can do so for] no other reason [but that he] can *fen* and *i*. Thus man cannot be without flocking, yet flocking without *fen* brings strifes, strifes bring disorder, disorder results in weakness, weakness renders man unable to conquer things. (9/69-74)

Here *i*-rightness 義 is associated with *fen*-discrimination 分 and separation. This mental separation contributes to harmonious (*ho* 和) workings among men into oneness. This *fen* and *ho* can be compared to Plato's "dialectic" as "division" and "collection" in *Phaedrus* and the *Sophist*. Thus both Plato and Hsün Tzu treated many and one, separation and harmony.

Yet both differ from each other. Plato concentrated on the essence of philosophical method and cognition. Hsün Tzu sees this separation as the source of harmony and strength; harmony is also connected with flocking together, sociality. *Fen*-separation is pragmatic, evaluative *i*-rightness—ethical and otherwise. Hsün Tzu was talking about human dispensation, *in* which "separation" has its being, saying that it is the human *i*-rightness, the peculiar strength of the human over oxen and horses. This is in reverse direction from a phrase just a few lines back, "with similitude (*lei* 類) to walk through variegatedness (*tsa* 雜); with oneness to walk through myriad myriads" (9/63). In these instances Hsün Tzu talked about human strength, in which *fen*, *i*, and *ho* are (not defined but merely) manifest.

Two further examples may suffice—a casual statement of Chuang Tzu, and a spontaneous poem of T'ao Ch'ien 陶潛. We go to the first example first—Chuang Tzu's opening casual statement, "The Northern *ming* 冥 (ocean, darkness) has some fish." This statement is strangely similar to "The water (or ocean) has some fish." Yet the latter statement is too dull and common to be investigated even by the ichthyologist, while the former statement is an exciting beginning to the whole exciting book of *Chuang Tzu*. The statement says something uncommon about something very common.

For "The water has some fish" is a tautology; water and fish imply each other. "The Northern *ming* has some fish" adds to it things that are unexpected in the world of tautology. "North" is not just a place or direction but a place with an originative Yin 陰 elan. "North" concretizes where the water is, and at the same time leads us to the mystical reality-power that breeds unnoticed. "*Ming* 冥, 溟" is deep ocean that is dark and mysterious, in a meditative mood (*ming* 瞑 with an eye-radical, eyes-closed) where no visual probe is possible or even needed.

A little etymological family-tracing shows us how hidden the universal of "*ming*" pervades throughout. It is as if the word-stem of *ming* were equivalent to English "my-" which took on the basic implication of "dark mystery" (instead of "closed"). Adding "hydra" (water) to it—"my-hydra"—amounts to *ming* with a water-radical, indicating "dark, mysterious ocean": adding "opia" (eye) to it—"my-opia"—amounts to *ming* with an eye-radical, indicating "meditation" (with eyes closed); adding nothing to it indicates the dark "night" (of the soul), with a deep mysterious poetry of the night.

Thus "darkness" and "mystery," the root-meaning of *ming*, pervades throughout those words—*ming*-ocean 溟, *ming*-meditation 冥, *ming*-night 暝—without explicitly indicating that meaning. Here we can say that "dark mystery" is a hidden universal running through the *ming*-family of words.

And yet nothing is more natural than saying that "Northern *ming* has some fish." And so this *natural* statement, by being natural, is a mystical statement, saying something unsayable. And yet how could one say something unsayable, something beyond our vision, unnoticeable, mystical? To say something mystical is already something mystical indeed. Chuang Tzu said it naturally. Thus "The Northern *ming* has some fish" combines the ordinary with the extraordinary; by saying something natural it says something mystical. Such is the nature of the natural, Chuang Tzu is saying, which is richer than tautology. The mystical must be hidden in the natural, the unsayable universal in the said concrete.

Our second example is T'ao Ch'ien's 陶潛 all too famous poem, which goes as follows:

"Thatching my hut among men,  
I do not hear noises of horses and buggies.  
Asked how I could be so, [my only answer is]  
"My heart-mind being distant, my place is of itself remote":  
Plucking some chrysanthemums under the eastern fence,  
I looked long toward the Southern Hills;  
The mountain air—ah, ever so fresh in the setting sun,  
The birds—in groups flying home.

Herein lies what is truly meant,  
Desiring to argue about it, words are already forgotten.”

We have here five pairs of lines. Two pairs, each, form another two big pairs, with the last (small) pair dotting the real intention (“what is truly meant”) of the poem.

I half disagree with someone saying that the line “My heart-mind being distant, the place is of itself remote” is the real intent of the poem. For that line is only a part, albeit a crucial one, of the answer to the asking. The real answer is the last line which refuses to answer, or rather, confesses an inability to answer.

Here there are no “words” for “arguing.” But there are plenty of words on some other things that are the as-if “answer” to the asking; those words constitute *this* poem. It is ostensibly an innocent question-and-answer dialogue. The entire conversation is as carefree as all the scenes casually mentioned.

And, mind you, all the scenes mentioned are completely (on surface at any rate) irrelevant to the reason why the author does not “hear noises of horses and buggies.” What do chrysanthemums, hills, the sun, birds, have to do with “not hearing the noises” and its reasons? Nor are these scenes related to “heart-mind being distant.” But they do describe the *situation* in which the heart-mind is distant. They do not describe the heart-mind being distant. They *present* the heart-mind being distant as indescribable—“desiring to argue, words are already forgotten.”

Here are no words of argumentation, only words of irrelevant carefree description. And in this carefree mood is the answer, but even this *mood* is only presentable, not describable. As for the answer itself, it is merely to be hinted at with “words are already forgotten.”

The words of the poem are the words of evocation, of presentation, of transposition. The scenes and the rhythm of the poem are as unhurried and spontaneous as the heart-mind is distant. To think of it, perhaps the first pair of lines are fictitious, as well as all those scenes. Everything then goes unnoticed, being “distant” from actual horses and buggies. “Not hearing”

indeed. The “true meaning” pervades the poem without being brought out; it is a hidden universal animating the entire poem, the entire thatched life among men.

Aren't these hidden universals, because they are “hidden,” too vague and muddled for such precise thinking as philosophy? But “muddled” is not “ambiguous”; “imprecise” is not “subtle.” Bad writing is muddled and imprecise; actual life is subtle and ambiguous. Being precise is supposed to ban being muddled-imprecise; but precisely by doing so, being precise can also ban the subtlety-ambiguity of actual living, thereby becomes being muddled-imprecise *about life*, and heads for a mechanical way of being. Not accidentally, technology developed in the West. Western philosophy has this danger—to become inaccurate (about life) by being fastidiously precise (about words and thinking).

Boredom is born of striving for precision without expressing the subtle ambiguity of actual living. This is why the assembly-line worker is as bored as proofreading is boring; both require precision and suppress creative expression that strikes out in a new direction (which no one can pin down precisely, and so is synonymous with subtle ambiguity)—as one's living requires. Precision without freedom (to do justice to actual living) is boring, approaching machines. Logic makes for precision, and so the West developed technology. Metaphor requires accuracy, and so China has constantly thought about humanism.

On surface, however, being subtle-ambiguous looks being muddled-imprecise. It takes poetic-historical discernment to tell them apart, and to avoid being muddled, so as to express accurately life's subtlety. A poem is a compression of a life story, a history of life, and its expression. A bad poem is muddled and imprecise; a good poem is subtle and ambiguous. Poetry criticism consists in such poetico-historical discernment, which is after all the essence of good poetry and philosophy—to which Chinese historical thinking can contribute.

*Oxford English Dictionary* says that “precise” means to cut off (in front), to cut short, abridge; “analysis” means to loosen up, break up



something complex into its various simple components; “exact” is to drive or force out, to demand, require; “accurate” is to apply care to, be careful, “care” is to be concerned, even to be anxious; “correct” is to set right. “Nice” is interesting. Originally it meant “not to know,” that is, being foolish, strange, slothful, but somehow it came to mean refined, sensitive, subtle, delicate, tactful, attentive, discriminative, minutely or carefully accurate, finely poised, agreeable, considerate, pleasant.

Perhaps (in my opinion) fine discrimination of delicate aptness is not to be exactly known—hence, we have combinations such as “nice-conscientious,” “nice-eared,” “nice-fingered,” “nice-discerning,” “nice-hearted.”

We can say, then, that the West has precise and exact analysis of the matter in question, whereas China is careful in being accurate, correct, and nice-discerning about historical events. The West tends to be inaccurate (about historical actuality) in its precise analysis; China tends to be imprecise and inexact in its lived, historically involved, accuracy.

In short, the West may tend to be precise and inaccurate; China may tend to be accurate and imprecise—about the stories of life, historical actuality. The two modes of thinking should “marry” and interpenetrate to fine-tune our thinking into nice-eared nice-fingered nice-discernment, unawares. Being precise can then be used to expand-express the ambiguous (walk-around in meaning, peripatetic in experience) subtlety (under-woven in meaning, tacitly understood) of actual process of living. To be precise is to cut it right, to be concise; to be accurate is to hit it right, taking care that every word tells. Both exercises should join to tailor our expressions rightly to hit actuality rightly; words are to be used precisely (appropriately) to express historical actuality (subtle, ambiguous) accurately.

It is time to take stock. Universals are what are common among us; tradition is what is noteworthy in our common past. What is common among us resides in facts, which are literally what have been done, history; what is noteworthy points to excellence beyond facts, even counterfactual, and what is yet to be done. But since what is best results from our critical revolt against what is noteworthy in the tradition (what has been done so

extraordinarily as to be handed down to us), what is counter-factually best includes the factual (what has been done), with tradition as its cipher. Thus our counterfactual Utopia is rooted in tradition to revolutionize tradition; Utopia goes through tradition to break through it into the future.

And that is what happened in many descriptions of Utopia. Many fantastic myths are often couched in “once upon a time,” and are said to originate in poetic license. But they are actually smashings, arisen out of constrained situations, of our common sense categories, that is, universals and traditions. The Sermon on the Mount wants us to fulfill the laws and the prophets by going beyond them; it wants us to live in the Mount of Utopia, that perfection of our Heavenly Father’s who gave us the laws and the prophets. Likewise, St. Paul went beyond our usual categories of the negative sanctions of the moral law, to allude to that Perfection, love, which is at the heart of the laws. The childish categories are a mirror in which we dimly perceive the Utopia of adulthood.

Chuang Tzu has a Utopia beyond all judgments. His Fifth Chapter taunts the traditional universals of comeliness; his Sixth Chapter taunts those of life and death; his Seventh Chapter taunts those of happiness and fates of life. These three chapters taunt traditional universals, keep haunting and hinting at what is inexpressible, for expressions couch themselves in universals, trapped in tradition.

All this is summed up in his terse descriptions of Utopia (the Nowhere Land 無何有之鄉) –wryly nicknamed the “World-Age of Ultimate Virtues” (*chih te chih shih* 至德之世). One of its descriptions was casually tossed out in an imagined conversation while observing a regal military parade, the epitome of worldly power and idea. In that Utopia deeds have no traces of historicity, events do not spread as tradition; that Nowhere Land has nothing in common with even our past best.

And yet, intimating what Utopia is not is to show what it is. Chuang Tzu went over the list of our best in the morals we treasure, our common best, our tradition of morality—and then went beyond them. He left us

with a tradition that smashes the tradition.

In the World-Age of Ultimate Virtues the worthy are not honored, the talented not employed. Rulers are like the high branches of a tree, the people like the deer of the fields. They do what is right but do not know that this is righteousness, love one another but do not know that this is benevolence, truehearted but do not know that this is loyalty, trustworthy but do not know that this is good faith. They wriggle around like insects to serve one another, but do not know that they are being kind. They move without traces; their events are not handed down.<sup>13</sup>

Here, following the tradition is to go beyond it. Universals are picked, only to be negated to envisage the never never Land of what had better obtain, what we would rather have beyond all the best we have, have been, and have seen. Traditions and universals are used negatively, evocatively, in a *hidden* manner. Chuang Tzu himself thereby becomes the legend, a tradition (literary, philosophical) which refuses to be embalmed in the temple of tradition.

Jean-Paul Sartre the anti-traditionalist was nonetheless sensible enough to see in Bach's music (such as *The Well-Tempered Clavier*) "an open tradition"—"finding originality within an established discipline," demonstrating "the play of moral freedom within the confines of a . . . monarchical absolutism," depicted "the proud dignity of the subject who obeys his king," constrained himself to respect the postulates so that his successors can change them, and at once exalted obedience and judged and transcended it, by continuously reworking worn-out customs.

Similarly, Beethoven gives us "the musical image of the Assemblies of the French Revolution," and more; "without shattering the rules of his own art . . . he went beyond the triumphs of the Revolution, beyond even his own failure." "And if the musician has shared the rage and hopes of the oppressed, is it impossible that he might be transported beyond himself by so much hope and so much rage that he could sing today of this world with the voice of the future?"<sup>14</sup>

We can say, then, that all sincere poets, artists, and thinkers produce an "open tradition," a tradition that kicks itself in obeying it (as metaphor for fresh actuality), and by doing so create tomorrow today. The Chinese mind does so, not by logical-analytical thinking or descriptive-explanatory thinking, but by evocative-metaphorical thinking, an historical thinking.

For Chinese thinking tends toward actuality, to whose living suppleness it con-forms. And the suppleness and the shape of conforming performs "history." Chinese historical thinking usually expresses itself in literature and historiography, which are a soft packaging; Western conceptual thinking has secure ropes of logic and universals. Comparative philosophy stands beside both, showing the West how not to hurt, maim and even kill what Chinese thinking produces, namely, life history itself. At the same time, comparative philosophy warns Chinese thinking that it needs a clear Western manner of packaging to find its own genius, and to tacitly point to that thinking that is supple, alive, powerful—our own life history. Chinese thinking of history also needs the Western clarity to correct, revise, and present itself.

Chinese thinking has four ways of discerning and describing actuality, a beautiful example of how thinking performs history and how history in-forms thinking:

(1) Stories of past actuality (history) are told to intimate novel present actuality. In the West, since Aristotle despised Herodotus, history is history and philosophy, philosophy; in China, philosophers think in terms of history, using historical events and personage as paradigms that embody arguments and provide powerful demonstrations. And the so-called historiography (such as the *Ch'un Ch'iu* 春秋, the *Shih Chi* 史記) is no objective chronicling of events, but a more or less explicit argument, in terms of history, for a point.

(2) Compressed history (aphorisms) produced out of our past experience are told to allude to novel present actuality. Once classical writings express such experience, later writings compress them into aphorisms;

every Chinese writing is studded with them.

(3) Counterfactuals extrapolated from past actuality are told to admonish the present powers that be. Practically all writings from the great Classics down to the most recent literature are full of them; Chuang Tzu is especially build on this ploy.

(4) Generalized (not abstracted) summaries of the past ways of life are told to guide the present living. The so-called moral and metaphysical notions belong here. Thus Jen-benevolence is variously instantiated in the *Analects*; Jen-benevolence (and) I-righteousness are variously embodied in the *Mencius*; Li-decorum and Te-virtue are as variously manifest in the *Five Classics*, as Li-principle is in Neo-Confucianism and Wu Hsing (the Five Elementary Ways of things) are in the *Book of Changes*.

These descriptions of actuality show how the Chinese thinking is dominated by stories, either to admonish (as in histories and counterfactuals) or to clarify and “argue” for a point (as in aphorisms and summary notions of experience). They all lead us from past actuality to the present and to the future—allusively, metaphorically.

All this is the primordial—historical, concrete—dynamo of thinking; without this root, thinking turns desiccated, insipid, technical, irrelevant, lifeless, abstract—in a word, rootless.

## NOTES

1. Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, NY: Summit Books, 1970, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, p. 31.
2. A. R. Luria, *The Man with a Shattered World*, NY, 1972.
3. Sacks, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
4. Ibid., pp. 106-7.
5. Stanley Rosen, *The Limits of Analysis*, Yale University Press, 1985 (Basic Books, 1980), pp. 7-9.
6. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, ed. Claude Lefort, tr. John O'Neill, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 105-7.
7. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith, NY:

- Humanities Press, 1965, pp. 384-95.
8. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. David Carr, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 394-95.
  9. That both Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Marx are great critics of existing culture via their philosophical archaeology of culture is well known. That Michel Foucault also has engaged in a similar task is seen in his *Madness and Civilization: A history of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Pantheon, 1965), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Pantheon, 1972), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Science* (Vintage, 1973), *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (Vintage, 1975 [c1973]), *Discipline and Punish: The Archaeology of Prison* (Pantheon, 1977), and *The History of Sex* (Pantheon, 1978).
  10. The Fu-Ku 復古, or Ku-Wen 古文 Movement is well summed up by Niu, Pao-t'ung in his introduction to Niu, Pao-t'ong, ed., *T'ang-Sung Eight Great Literati-Their Selected Essays*, Kan Su: Jenmin Ch'u-pan She, 1987, pp. 1-15, 牛保同, 《唐宋八大家選集》甘肅人民出版社 and Liu, Ta-chieh's *Chung-kuo Wen-hsüeh Fa-ta Shih*, Taiwan: Chung Hwa Shu-chu, 劉大杰, 《中國文學發達史》台北:中華書局, 1968, Chapter 12, Section 4, pp. 334-342. That famed Kuo Shao-yü devoted to the Movement most of his *Chung-kuo Wen-hsüeh P'i-p'ing Shih*, Tainan: P'ing-P'ing Ch'u-pan She, 郭紹虞, 《中國文學批評史》台南豐平出版社 1974, pp. 174-652. See also William H. Nienhauser, Jr.'s detailed but loosely descriptive article, "Ku-wen," in *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. by William H. Nienhauser, Jr, et al., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 494-500.
  11. See the editorial epilogue in Natsume Soseki, *Kusamakura*, Tokyo Shinchö Bunko 夏目漱石, 《草枕》東京新潮文庫, 1981, p. 172.
  12. Hsü Li & Ch'en Hsin, *Ku-Jen T'an Hsieh-Tsuo* (What the Ancients Talked About Writing Essays), Kuang-tung Jen-min Ch'u Pan She 許力、陳新, 《古人談寫作》廣東人民出版社, 1985, p. 1.
  13. "T'ien Ti P'ien, 〈天地篇〉" 12/80 (Burton Watson's translation modified).
  14. Jen-Paul Sartre, *Situations*, tr. Bonita Eisler, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1965, pp. 153-54.

## II. HISTORY AS THINKING

Flow in time from one situation to another connects these situations; this flowing connection is history. And history looked at this way is thinking in actuality. Four points will be considered in the following pages: (I) probing into the content of the flow of connection, (II) wondering about its characteristic, as to whether the connection is necessary or contingent or both, and (III) realizing that that connection is typical of basic historical rationality that is concrete, perceptual, and poetic (as in the “simple people”), that is, (IV) metaphoric and evocative as in Chinese philosophy.

1. History is a meaningful flow in time, a time-connection, a flow-rationality. This meaningful flow is constituted by three qualities: (i) rhythm, (ii) naming, (iii) retrospective realization.

(i) It is primarily by meeting a rhythm that we notice a flow, and identify it as, for instance, the flow of music. There is an analogy between history and music. Both are order in time, rhythm. Music captures the rhythm, the heartbeat, of the actual.

The heart beats fast when one is running, glad, or angry. These moments share one mode of the rhythm of life, the excited mode of reality, with the striving, the courtship, the fight, the thunder in summer, the buzzing of bees, the volcanic eruption, and the like. All of these moments share one mode of heartbeat in common, and sharing-one-in-common is called “symbol.” Thus a musical composition is a symbol of a certain mode of actuality.

It is the rhythm of the heartbeat of reality that music captures. It can be so perhaps it *is* part of that reality, part of that reality-rhythm. It is all too natural, then, to see music as historical. For history, like music, captures the rhythm of reality – *Tso Chuan* 左傳, *Shih Chi*, and Mencius, for instance, periodized history. All literary figures have pondered on history. Some of these ponderings make periods of history. The periods are rhythm, waiting to be interpreted, meditated upon, embodied, learned from.

The rhythm may be that of repetition. Mozart just loves to repeat beautiful phrases in his composition, as in the first movement of his Symphony No. 40. And one can of course say that variation is subtle repetition and repetition, not so subtle variation. Music can be said to consist in a subtle blending of variations and repetitions, or simply, of repetitions, both subtle and not so subtle. What does musical repetition mean?

Repetition bespeaks indwelling, savouring the beautiful moments which one cannot get over, least of all the composer himself. One simply has to stay there. This there-ness, this calm being-there, an indwelling, is intimated, no, bodied forth, in the flow that does not stay, in the repetition of moments of music – the repetition of beautiful moments.

Such an indwelling in time-flow may be a symbol for eternity. Time is not the shadow of eternity (as spatially minded Plato said) as much as its dwelling, its home. History which tends to repeat itself may well be a pointer at something eternal, something timelessly precious. Or rather, eternity resides here; it is at home now, in the place called repetition.

There are also *slow* passages in music, a single note or melody sustained, softly, like the soft inner part of a stretched bow, tightly, bouncingly; they are also sustained moments of indwelling, of staying-there, of peeping eternity in time. This is another way to envisage eternity in time – to taste it quietly, softly, for a long while, for one long moment. “Slow” is this “one” in the “one moment,” tasted to the full.

Repetition is a manifest way of time dwelling in eternity; slow sustained single note (or melody) quietly lets in eternity, accepting every-



one in the meantime. This slow music is powerful enough to draw tears from the listener.

The excellence of a musician is apparent when he lets this silent sustained softness pervade the composition. The louder and faster the music, the louder and deeper the slow silence, that slow depth. When one enters the “slow,” one meets the quiet heat, quiet fullness, which spreads until the entire composition is a long integral piece of slow silence, the music.

The brooding period in history is this slow passage of music in life. The slow in the music of history is that period when no one notices, when things go as usual, when people go about their usual businesses, when there is no revolution or breakthrough – our ordinary everyday. Eternity also resides here.

And so, repetition and slow sustained passage – they are places in the music of history where eternity resides. Yehudi Menuhin the violinist-musicologist said<sup>1</sup> that “music is a place to be heard, as long as one’s spirit is right.” What does “place” mean here? How can beauty in time be in space?

Perhaps Menuhin meant by “place” the spread, the world, the environment, in which music happens. Perhaps music has its depth, thickness, and spread – and horizon – in its timely flow. Music runs deep and wide, and as long as “one’s spirit is right,” that is, as long as one’s perspective is zeroed in, focussed, in just the right manner, one can enter it. This depth and width, this spatial dimension of music, is perhaps related to “structure” which makes “sense” out of timely flow.

And this is perhaps what history means. The historian is one whose spirit is right, who has the right sense, right perspective, right focus, so as to see this sense, this depth, this structure in the timely flow of human life. History belongs to rhythm-rationality.

(ii) But rhythm is rhythm of something moving; to hear a rhythm one must see *something* moving. And to see is to name. Rhythm rationality must be constituted by naming rationality. To name something is to per-

ceive and identify it as such. And so we must consider perception in the light of history.

Kant said that concept without percept is empty and percept without concept is blind. This famous saying emphasizes both the “without” and *its* denial. This emphasis assumes, and warns, that thinking tends to separate what should not be separated, and that we must use further thinking to overcome the rift-tendency in thinking; thinking has the tendency to separate concept from percept, and is under the imperative to join.

But to perceive is to proceed to think, for without concept there cannot be percept and without percept there cannot be concept. And the process of thinking is history; there is a process of activity called thinking, and any human process, activity, is a unity of percept and concept, namely, history.

For to perceive is to perceive sense, and sense, as in French, means both direction and significance. The historical sense that is to be perceived lies in the unity of direction and significance of the time flow that is our life; this unity is aptly expressed in the notion of pattern. And indeed to perceive is to perceive a pattern, as Merleau-Ponty tirelessly said after William James. And this pattern-perceiving *is* what we call thinking. The pattern can be various – causality (among physical and psychic events), category (formal and informal), metaphor (in our understanding which perceives the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, in expression of our understanding in essays, stories, the arts).

And so to notice the possibility of the rift between perceiving the objects and the thinking-perceiving subject is otiose, and wrong. What is by nature joined cannot be put asunder, without putting asunder the very integrity of human nature and the natural world. The very noticing is the unity of the subject and the object, in the historical process of thinking-perceiving; to notice is to perceive, and to perceive the historical unity of thinking and perceiving. We must see (perceive) that the pattern means the web (the connection, the system) of the actual – to count *one* event, *two* events. is already to see a pattern. And in this *seeing*, perceiving and think-

ing are united. Perceiving and thinking, the perceiver-thinker and the perceived-thought, are a unity, and this unity is a process of history.

And the web is the significance, the meaning. To perceive this meaning is to have history – to historize, if one can coin a verb out of a noun here, for history is really a verb, as “I” am. Hume inadvertently noted it in his “bundle of sensations”; he should have said “one bundle of perception.” It is the “I” who unifies all perceptions, all historical patterns, into a history. And this unifying *process* is the self, and its history. In this sense Hume in all his conscientious observation is a deeply historical thinker.

Thus we live in history, and live as history. We live in history because we live by perceiving patterns in the actual; there is no such thing as “actuality” except as an actualizing process. We live as history because this our *process* of perceiving is itself history. Besides, this process is also that of unifying all patterns of perception, to identify (name) them as *something*, and thus is also history. Our very identity exhibits itself in this unifying-naming process, as history.

In short, history names, naming unifies, unifying perceives patterns, and pattern-perceiving is thinking. Therefore history is thinking through and through. But what does naming means? Why is it important?

A neuropsychologist, Dr. Sacks, told us that Dr. P was a brilliant music teacher who sustained injuries in the right hemisphere of the brain. When Dr. P was shown a glove, he examined it, and saw a continuous surface, infolded on itself, with five outpouchings. He then exclaimed that it must be “a container of some sort” that “would contain its contents.”<sup>2</sup> This is a computer enumeration of qualities. Dr. P was unable to *identify* a glove as a glove.

It requires a perceptive intelligence to let all these qualities coalesce, become tacit, and suddenly erupt into an aha-recognition of “it’s a glove!” Naming is such an experience of perceiving, out of my myriads of qualities, a whole of an identity of a thing.

Many bloody incidents have happened among us. It takes the historian’s perceptive intelligence to *name* this whole series of incidents as the

“Hsin-Hai Revolution,” crucial for the formation of a new republic distinct from Ch’ing Dynasty, or as the “D-Day” that ushered in the end of World War Two. This intelligence is what unites the data into a coherent unity, entity, names it as such-and-such an affair, then describes it in relation with other clusters of such *named* events. This is historical rationality analogous to that synthetic a priori operation of mathematical addition – also historical and necessary, with the difference that in mathematics logical necessity creeps into “necessity.” This perceptual-coherent naming-rationality is being noted for its importance by Michel Foucault in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*.<sup>3</sup>

(iii) If history is rational in rhythmic and naming-perceiving manner, then this historical rationality is retrospective – inevitable, even necessary, and yet abandonedly open.

As above said, history is analogous to music. Let us pursue this theme further. Both of them are orderly in time, ordered by a subtle unity of retrospective inevitability and prospective freedom.

A good musical composition has notes that diachronically follow one after another or go together synchronically – in a certain order. The composer does not need to adopt any order, but once he adopted one, he is locked into *it*, and one particular note has to follow or go with another particular one, in that manner, according to that order.

This diachronic or synchronic order is unknown until adopted, and then accomplished, actualized in time. The order is characteristically prospective. But once known, the order is seen to be inevitable, necessary; there is a sort of rationality, logic, to it in time. This time-logic is what musical theory traces. The historian is thus the musical theorist of the event-music of the world.

The relation among movements in a symphony is much looser, to be sure, but not without some sensible order peculiar to the symphony itself. One cannot switch a movement in a symphony by Brahms with one in a symphony by Mozart. But what does “looser order” mean here? It means that the order is neither quite arbitrary nor locked in as the relation

between notes in the same movement of a symphony.

Among the many compositions by the same composer, one can see an even looser but still discernable relation – we call it the composer’s “style.” Then on a more general level comes the style of the period, the spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*), and one enters history proper. But the structure is similar, a unity of loose free openness with discernible inevitable relation which only “story” can take in. And the story here is “history.”

It is time to take stock and ask a new question. We have seen the retrospective rationality of history as both inevitable (necessary, sensible) and free (open-ended).

Friedrich Waismann said that empirical concept is open-textured, never definitely closed. Jean-Paul Sartre said that perception is always to be learned from infinite profiles and perspectives.<sup>4</sup> This is so because of the historical character of perception. The “open-texture” of empirical concept is open to historical variations: an infinite number of “profiles” are spread and condescended in time.

Rationality of history is more subtle. Scientists tell us that observing phota under a usual microscope with usual lighting (how else could we *observe* anything?) disturbs phota themselves and renders observation impossible. In contrast, history cannot avoid observation by the subject (how else could we understand history?). This is Collingwood’s “re-enactment.” And then, only then, do the bygone events cohere into history. We can say, then, that subjectivity disturbs the objectivity of empirical observation, because the subject has nothing to do with independent facts; subjectivity establishes the objectivity of historical description, because the subject is where events condescend into historical meaning.

How does such historical objectivity be established? By a general (not unanimous) *consensus* of conscientious historians’s investigations and reconstructions. Convergence of historians’s considered opinions constitutes the objectivity of history. There is then an ascertainable objective connection, a web, a sense, a reasonable thrust and significant trend, in history.

This convergence shifts, of course, according to the shift of the climate of historiographic opinions. This is what is exciting – historiography itself is historical. The objectivity here is open-ended but not random. It is alive as the shift of the pattern of the heartbeat of life. One is sick when one's heartbeat is random; one is healthy in one's shift of the pattern of his heart-rhythm according to the situation, as he ages, and so on. So is history, History is the rhythm of the heartbeat of mankind – open, necessary. (Whether history can be “sick” remains a debatable topic, for history is what establishes the rhythm in the first place.)

II. A problem arises here, however. What *sort* of necessity does this historical rationality have? Let me give two formulations of the problem, and see how they dissolve themselves into the dawn of truth that is as primordial as it is historical.

The first formulation is a familiar one and, although a bit crude, should be given; it is clear precisely because of its crudity. History is contingently necessary; and this is a contradiction. How can it even exist? History is contingent; I do not need to take this train now. There are always tomorrows and more tomorrows. And history is a series of necessary happenings; once I take this train, I *have to* go the way the train goes. Once I decide on *a* today, *a* is decided once and for all, and tomorrow will necessarily be the day for another matter, no longer for this *a*. And “another matter” is what follows from my decision on *a* today, for “nothing happens without a cause,” as they say.

And so history is both contingent and necessary, which is a contradiction; how *can* it exist? The problem can also be put in a dilemma: First, one can say that historical events are contingent happenings, unrelated to necessary connections of ideas; history is meaningful and understandable, thus necessarily rational in themselves. And these two characteristics of history *conflict* – history both as contingent and as necessary.

One can say (secondly), however, that the above conflict is put too crudely. On the one hand, no historical events can simply be brute happenings, which are mere piles of meaningless past incidents, not historical facts. On the other hand, rationality in history as “necessary” is put too stringently; “meaningful” must mean “development” that is reasonably

understandable. Thus history is internally reasonable; there is *no conflict* between facts and reason. Hence the dilemma: Conflict or no conflict, that is the question. This completes the crude formulation of the problem.

Crude as it is, the formulation is suggestive. The former horn of the dilemma brings out the openness (contingency) of history that is in *conflict* with its rationality; the latter horn expresses historical rationality and leaves *openness* un-attended. The problem seems not well formulated, provoking its closer examination.

The second horn of the second formulation, especially, focuses on the subtle blending of openness (contingency) and rationality (meaning) in history, called “development.” In history of ideas, for instance, three sort of development can be seen: philosophical, historical, and contingent (socio-psychological).

The philosophical development is allegedly purely theoretical, as to how, for instance, Josiah Royce’s *Religious Aspects of Philosophy* (theoretically) developed into his Gifford Lectures Later, *The World and the Individual*. The socio-psychological development is allegedly purely empirical and contingent, as to how, for instance, Newton’s legendary apple falling on him to incite his discovery of the law of gravity (or that legendary length of Cleopatra’s nose, whose slight shortage would have changed the course of world history). The philosophical development is purely theoretical and the empirical one, purely contingent; but how about the historical development? How do we make of historical necessity? It fits in neither of the two categories.

This problem is similar to our puzzlement about physical causality, which is a subspecies of historical causality. Every event is caused, we say. Is causal connection contingent or necessary? Historical development is a development of historical causality, and has two elements – the (theoretical and) inevitable, on the one hand, and the (empirical and ) contingent, on the other. Retrospectively understood, it is this causal involvement among incidents (intellectual or otherwise) which renders them into development, into history. How do we see the two elements combined into one

“development”?

Gotthold E. Lessing accused Christianity of illicitly jumping over the “ugly ditch” that lies between rational necessity (“the Word”) and historical contingency (“made flesh”). Sren Kierkegaard accepted the challenge and said that Christians bridge the gap in faith by virtue of absurdity; Kierkegaard seems to have accepted the formulation, hence the “paradox of faith” and the “absurd leap.” Kierkegaard solved no problem at all.

Rudolf Bultmann also seems to accept Lessing’s formulation of the problem. For Bultmann, understanding is always in terms of a closed causal continuum (or nexus), which is a causal necessity patterned after rational necessity. But if (historical) facts are understandable only by closed nexus, then everything is in this closed circle, and there is nothing new to be understood. For Bultmann, understanding is asking questions as they are patterned by our assumptions, our “preunderstanding.” But if understanding is merely looking for items in the already closed causal nexus, asking question is an exercise in futility. There is nothing new to understand, and the Incarnation as something radically new in history is a paradox of the “identity of the inner-worldly occurrence with the activity of an otherworldly God.”<sup>5</sup>

Let us come back to our problem related to the history of ideas. Perhaps a main task of the historian of ideas is to tabulate those sets of *Zeitgeister*, as it were, and if possible discern their mutual relations which are *more* than merely contingent and accidental. Of course the “more” here is a mysterious element; is it itself theoretical or contingent? Twist as we may, we seem to have been eternally caught in this historical “rut,” this “ugly ditch,” unable to get out.

When one is unable to solve the problem, a way out may lie in gazing straight at the problem itself. For, as is often the case, the problem is itself wrongly posed. The problem exhibits an instructive mistake.

All thinking starts at perceptual experience (which expands itself into empiricism and occasions the revolt of idealism); thinkers as diverse as Plato, Kant, Hegel, Locke, James, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur, in their



utterly different ways, agree on this point. Specifically, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, and Polanyi agree that this is the pre-reflective realm which originates our reflection, and that the existence of this realm and the origination of our reflection therefrom is realized only *after* we have passed through this perceptual pre-reflective experience and look back on it (reflect upon it).

As we pass through this experience of realizing our origination and passage out of this pre-reflective perception of things, we go through the negation of the things as “not me,” thereby affirm the not-me as my object and affirm the me as the subject alienated from the object, standing over against the object. Once the subject-object dichotomy comes about, reflective abstract rationality gets started, and there emerges the “unbridgeable ugly ditch” which divides rational necessity from historical contingency.

The result is all too familiar. Nothing is more strikingly appropriate in this connection than the image put forth by A. N. Whitehead about “philosophical method.” He said that philosophers starts out of empirical particulars, flies like an airplane to the thin air of general abstraction, only to come down to interpret experience by this set of abstract general principles.<sup>6</sup>

What he did not say is that this ascending generalization is accomplished by analysis (division, counting) of the empirical particulars into their indifferently equal atoms, from which general principles are *abstracted*. Then these abstract general principles are applied to the concrete, by re-assembling (collection, synthesis) the atomic units into the intended concrete compounds. This is theoretical arithmetical rationality at the base of Western philosophy. This is the structure of “rational necessity.”

This abstract rational necessity generates logical analysis that gleans identical elements out of concrete things and piles up the similar elements back into those original things or better ones. Alphabetical system is the system to write a word by successively adding one sound sign after another, analytically, as in c-a-t.

Similarly, an assembly line production comes about by linking inventions together systematically. This link-together is effected by (1) picking

up repeatable, fragmented, identical elements (gleaning, analysis, abstraction), (ii) lumping these elements into one category (gathering, classification), and (iii) arranging different categories into a system (organization, synthesis). Nothing is here special; nothing needs special treatment. Hence, effective control and manipulation.

Now we understand what is problematic about the “problem of history”; history is meaningful yet our abstract rationality cannot handle it; but this rationality arrogantly says that whatever meaningful at all should be manipulate in *this* abstract necessary manner. Hence Lessing’s “ugly ditch.” Lessing’s problem about history is originated in this rational abstract necessity. Logical rationality, we now know, is a derived late comer, originated in pre-reflective perceptive experience. And our experience of perception is part of history.

Lessing’s problem and complaint is therefore something that is “putting the root up and the branches down” (*pun-mo tien-tao* 本末顛到), putting the cart of logic before the horse of history, something analogous to our logic demanding demonstration of the validity of the law of identity that makes possible logical demonstration in the first place. Unity makes separation possible; Lessing questions unity in the court of separation. Lessing assumes separation and asked the whence of unity, not realizing that separation came from unity. And Kierkegaard was not far behind Lessing, either; the Incarnation is not “absurd” at all, but the most natural inevitable thing of all, making possible all our living and thinking — given the premise that God is the creator of all things.

And yet, mistaken as he is, Lessing’s complaint is not absurd if it is interpreted to mean a legitimate demand for the structure and significance of this unity of contingency and necessity in experience, in perception, in history. Lessing’s challenge is significant in that he jolted us toward noting that original native point of unity in which all our thinking takes place, and is nourished.

The “structure” in this context is realized by tracing the process whereby our thinking is constituted. It is through *tracing* this process that

we realize the existential constitutive nature of thinking. All phenomenological ontology aspires to do so; witness Jaspers, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Ricoeur, to cite but a few. They all trace our route of thinking – *from* naive pre-reflective perceptual affirmation, *through* conscious revolt, alienation, and negation of this dream-like unity of pure experience, resulting in a rift and polarity of subject versus object, *toward* the utopian courageous reaffirmation of the two in their self-transcendent unity, and through which the unity of all with and in all.

Jaspers attained the All-Encompassing through a phenomenological analysis of the structure of self-transcendence. Heidegger went the route of analyzing the structure of the *Dasein*. Merleau-Ponty took perception to be the beginning and the recapitulation of all our thinking, both the pre-reflective and the reflective. Ricoeur saw the arising of thinking in the archaeological process of the voluntary emerging from the involuntary. Sartre saw the ontological origin and arising of the world with consciousness and things in the eternal antagonistic intervolvement between the in-itself (if is what it is and is not what it is not) and the for-itself (if is what it is not and is not what it is).

All these tracings, these phenomenological processes – they are history. Phenomenology is historical science, an ontological hermeneutics of history.

III. Our (and Lessing's hidden) problem remains, however. *What* is (the structure of) this pre-reflective historical rationality? One thing is certain: since it is an originative rationality toward what we usually take to be rationality which is mathematical, analytic, abstract, and general, we should expect historical rationality to be *other* than analytical intellect. And we get two clues on what it is: from the poetic, concrete, and perceptual rationality of those who have lost abstract cognitive faculty, and from the concrete philosophy of China that is metaphoric and evocative.

First of all, *what* is historical rationality that is other than conceptual abstraction? It is, in a word, concrete, hence elemental and natural, rationality. This is warmly brought out by those deep people who have lost

the categorical, schematic, functional, and propositional operations of the brain – those who have lost the world as concepts. They are unable to put clothes rightly, put a key to a door, or the right hand into the right glove, or count change, read and write. They are people of many apraxias and agnosias, a mass of sensorimotor impairments, limited in Piaget's conceptual schemata. And they are people of profound sensitivity, experts in deep metaphors and symbols of poetry; they understand the world as concrete vivid completeness.

They are fully alive. And from this concrete sensibility comes the sense of seasons, of times. Dr. Sack's vivid impressions about Rebecca "the clumsy girl" recur:

"The next time I saw her, it was all very different . . . I wandered outside, it was a lovely spring day . . . and there I saw Rebecca sitting on a bench, gazing at the April foliage. . . with . . . none of the clumsiness . . . before . . . calm and slightly smiling . . . [S]he gave me a broad smile, and wordlessly gestured. 'Look at the world,' she seemed to say. 'How beautiful it is.' And then there came out . . . sudden, poetic ejaculations: 'spring,' 'birth,' 'growing,' 'stirring,' 'coming to life,' 'season,' 'everything in its time.' . . . This was what Rebecca . . . was ejaculating – a vision of season, of time, . . . 'She is an idiot Ecclesiastes,' I said to myself."<sup>7</sup>

She perceived the real world of nature, as coherent, intelligible, poetic whole, other than a set of problems or tasks. And this concrete vision enabled her to perceive seasons, perceive history. Concrete perception is the vision of history; those with this perception are beings conducting themselves spontaneously in their own natural way.

And of course spontaneous conduct can be captured only in narratives. Dr. Sacks said that "Rebecca, I felt, was complete and intact as 'narrative' being, . . . organis[ing] herself in a narrative way . . . quite different . . . from . . . the schematic mode."<sup>8</sup> Then, as if to confirm what we suspected – that "narrative being" is historical being; historical understanding comes before conceptual thinking, Dr. Sacks affirmed,

“Rebecca made clear . . . by her own self, the two wholly different . . . forms of thought and mind, ‘paradigmatic’ [schematic, conceptual] and ‘narrative’ (in Bruner’s terminology). And . . . the narrative comes first, has spiritually priority. Very young children love and demand stories, and can understand complex matters presented as stories, when their power of comprehending general concepts, paradigms, are almost non-existent. It is this narrative . . . power which gives *a sense of the world* – a concrete reality in the imaginative form of . . . story – when abstract thought can provide nothing at all. A child follows the Bible before he follows Euclid. Not because the Bible is simpler (the reverse might be said), but because it is cast in a . . . narrative mode.”<sup>9</sup>

And so, concrete thinking is narrative thinking and narrative thinking, historical thinking. Story-telling as an art is made up of two rationalities, the rationality of rhythm and of naming, both of which have been considered before. Both come together to create the flow of events meaningfully. In this sense story-telling is poetic and creative. Whitehead said that “God is a poet,” perhaps because God is the originator of things, and the creator in a rational sense as well. But in the light of what has been said, perhaps more appropriately we can say that God the poet is the historian par excellence.

One more point that is quite important is suggested by Rebecca’s life and others like her. It is the historical power of the arts to shape a person:

“[H]er ill-composed . . . movements became well-organised . . . and fluent, with music . . . ‘I want no more . . . workshops,’ she said. ‘. . . They do nothing to bring me together . . . I’m . . . a . . . living carpet. I need a pattern, a design . . . like . . . [one] on that carpet. I come apart, I unravel, unless there’s a design.’ . . . I [Dr. Sacks] found myself thinking of Sherrington’s image, comparing the brain/mind to an ‘enchanted loom,’ weaving patterns ever-dissolving, but always with meaning . . . ‘I must have meaning,’ she went on. ‘The classes, the odd jobs have no meaning . . . What I really love,’ she added wistfully, ‘is the theatre.’ We removed Rebecca from the workshop . . . and managed to enroll her in a special theatre group. She loved this – it composed her . . . she became a complete person, poised, fluent, with style, in each role.”

And this change comes to

“Idiots, with IQs below 20 and the extremest motor incompetence . . . suddenly, with music, they know how to move.” This “is the power of music to organise – . . . efficaciously ( . . . joyfully!) when abstract or schematic forms of organisations fail . . . Thus music, or any other form of narrative, is essential when working with the retarded or apraxic . . . And in drama there . . . is the power of *role* to give organisation, to confer . . . an entire personality. The capacity to perform, to play, to *be*, seems to be a ‘given’ in human life, in a way which has nothing to do with intellectual differences. One sees this with infants, . . . with the senile, and . . . most poignantly, with the Rebeccas of this world.”<sup>10</sup>

Music, drama, and narrative have something in common: they are art in time, and as such organize us, our entire selves, give us our being, in time, in a concrete aesthetic manner. The aesthetic power of concrete organization of the total personhood is held by history-narrative. The rationality of narratives and of history is related somehow to that of music and drama; all of them compose, integrate, and give meaning to a person – historically, concretely, beautifully.

We see this most naturally in Chinese writings. The so-called “historical literature” includes literary and philosophical writings, and historical literature is both literary and philosophical. This is *what* historical rationality is – concrete, which literally means natural, aesthetically composing (concreted).

IV. The unity of history and aesthetics as seen in “narrative” clues us into the *structure* of historical thinking through that of aesthetic thinking. Chinese historical literature is often compellingly beautiful, fully deserving to be called literary writings. Their persuasiveness comes from two characteristics – they are metaphoric (*pi* 比), and they are evocative (*hsing* 興).

Historical thinking goes by a situational understanding that unfolds in evocation and metaphor: the development is inevitable and open-textured, not necessary and systematically closed. This is to say that (a) Waismann’s claim that our notion of “fact” is open-textured (b) leads us to Chinese his-

torical thinking by metaphoric evocation, (c) whose “logic” and applications (d) facilitate a comparison between conceptual and historical thinking. (e) Thinking via evocation and metaphor is poetry and history (at the base of understanding) in which the Chinese mind is.

a. Friedrich Waismann the mathematical philosopher noted in his essay, “Verifiability,” that empirical concepts are “open-textured,” not closed in situational evidence, that the notion of “fact” depends on “moulds of comprehension” that are “various analogies which a certain mode of expression [that is, language] calls up,” and that differing languages have differing logics; “a ‘fact’ in language A is not a fact . . . in language B.”<sup>11</sup> We must now explore a thinking (Chinese, historical) which *lives* in this open-textured logic – evocation and metaphor.

Concepts are basic to thinking. In the West, concept is obtained by abstract generalization from concrete particulars, as an airplane flight (Whitehead<sup>12</sup>) taking off from an actual confusing situation (blades of grass), noticing a characteristic (green) – grasping it as a concept (greenness), then coming down to apply the concept to the situation (grass is green).

For Waismann the noticing that starts abstractive generalization is made possible by our “moulds of comprehension,” the network of analogies in our language. This network of metaphors describes the Chinese historical mind.

China has no airplane, only plains of concrete particulars; concept is compressed concretesced story of situation, for the hearer to extend metaphorically. The universe is sky-earth (*t'ien ti* 天地); “tao” is road to go, the way things go; principle (*li* 理) is the grain of (the wood of) things as they are.

Contacts with actuality *evoke* Chinese people into thinking this way; the hearer is then ferried from one situation a concept tells to a new one – the hearer comes to understand a new situation in terms of the familiar one that a concept tells of. This ferry-over process is metaphoric extension. The mind is ferried to a new concept, and this situationality, this ferry-

over, this is history. This is understanding that is historical; the Chinese mind understands things evocatively, metaphorically – historically.

Thus the West has calculative logic – *abstract* generalizations from confusing concrete particulars toward universals – a calculative order, “measured and collected” (Plato). China has two modes of thinking, ever staying in the historical thrust of concrete particularity – evocation (*hsing* 興) and metaphoric extension (*pi, fang* 比, 方).

*Pi* and *Hsing* are most conspicuous of the Six Classes (*Liu I* 六義) in poetry.<sup>13</sup> Poetry is not just poems but a poetic way of seeing and expressing, as Heidegger realized to pervade our thinking, and as Plato practiced it. Poetry is at the base of understanding, before logic and literalism take over. It is that felt natural expression of our felt natural response to the actual. The Chinese mind indicates that poetic thinking is evocative and metaphoric.

b. What Waismann says about “fact” explains how evocation occurs:

“‘The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides’ (Pope). Here a fact is something that emerges out from, and takes shape against a background . . . [S]omething that rouses my attention detaches itself . . . and [is] apprehended linguistically; that is what we call a fact. A fact is noticed; and . . . becomes a fact. ‘Was it then no fact before you noticed it?’ It was, if I *could* have noticed it. In a language in which there is only the number series ‘one, two, three, a few, many,’ a fact . . . ‘There are five birds’ is imperceptible.”<sup>14</sup>

“Facts” come about by being noticed – “notice,” “emerge from,” and “rouse . . . attention” are synonymous; facts come by *evocation*, in our linguistic frame.

Three points emerge here. (1) Fact rouses itself in us (“rouses our attention”) as “fact.” Liu Sieh 劉錫 in *Wen Hsin Tiao Lung* 《文心雕龍》 says that *hsing* is “*ch’i* 起,” to arouse, to “evoke.” Any happening may “draw forth” (*yin ch’i* 引起; Chu Hsi 朱熹) any sentiment, any saying. “Touching the scene, feelings are born” (*ch’u ching sheng ch’ing* 觸景生情); “feelings” (*ch’ing* 情) include “[felt] fact, situation” (*shih ch’ing* 事情). Then this “fact” (*shih* 事) is expressed (*chih* 誌) to arouse the hearer – another *hsing* (evocation).



(2) This fact-(a)rousing occurs in language, which reflects our thinking pattern. Our language is our organ of noticing (*jen 認*), of being aroused of communicating our arousals.

(3) Or rather, facts communicate themselves to the poet (in the wide sense) before poetry (what evokes) is communicated to the hearer. Waismann the mathematician-philosopher cited a poet to show how fact emerges in us. Facts and poets are joined in thinking and discourse, before mathematics and science take over.

*Different* scenes can tell the same "fact." Both large headed ewes and stars seen in fish-traps (No. 233, the *Book of Poetry*) tell of the scarcity of foods, which portends the decay of Chou. And the *same* scene can evoke differing sentiments. "There is a lone pear tree" describes the lonely traveller (No. 119), the joyful lover (No. 123), and a soldier's wife panting after his return from expedition (No. 169).

Even phrases evoke. "How lovely her eyes, with the black and white so well defined!" (No. 57), praising beautiful Chuang Chiang 莊姜, was moralized by Confucius (*The Analects*, 3/8). Usually arousing his students (1/15, cf. 8/8), he was here "aroused" by his student's being aroused. A casual phrase, "shih wei 式微" (*Shih Ching* 詩經, No. 36), is "reduced" (decayed) for Legge, "few of us" for Waley, "darkness" for Kao Heng 高亨, "no use" for Kalgren.

What evocative freedom! This Classic of Poetry has poetic dots in the vast ponds of implications, letting the reader (e.g., Confucius) swim in it. The dots usually rhyme – simply and spaciouly in sound and in sense; their singing poetic beauty inspires various interpretations. This is evocations, *hsing 興*, entirely different from the way mathematical logic goes.

But, then, is there a pattern to the seemingly unpredictable *hsing*? Is all this significant?

"Logic" is calculation<sup>15</sup>; the hallmark of deductive logic, and the ideal of inductive logic, is predictability derived from manipulation (calculation) of concepts according to axioms and rules. The necessity of Western logic is a tight, closed one.

Mathematical necessity-predictability is "closed" subspecies of in-

evitability. Another “open” subspecies of inevitability is natural-aesthetic reasonableness, characterized by *hsing*, evocation.

Evocation is open-textured; nothing is foreclosed. Yet it is not random but “textured” with the call of a situation or a saying, and is historically sensible. Our responses to the original call constitute an inevitable historical trend.

How is evocation historically inevitable? *Before* the response one can predict no shape or outcome. Retrospectively, however, we see that it *had to happen that way*. Yet this historical necessity does not exclude other responses to the same original call.

Beauty shows how this is as it should be. A slow passage in music can evoke sorrow, composure, etc., *each* of which claims its necessary connection (texturedness) with that passage, without challenging the legitimacy of other responses. Thus an artwork is *complete* in its inevitable coherence, a heterocosm all its own; yet with its depths of implications its interpretations can only be *incomplete*.<sup>16</sup> This describes the “classic,” whose history of interpretations are a series of footnotes to its peculiar magnificence, a development of its subtle coherence.

c. Such is the “logic” of *hsing*, evocation – its structure and thrust. Contrast with the Western thinking brings out what evocation is. The ideal of Western philosophy is a single, well formed, and universally applicable system, in which  $7+5$  is 12, given well formed definitions of number, addition, and equality – all *closed* to other interpretations and conclusions. The Western ideal is to have a series of premises  $[r^1 + r^2 + \dots + r^n]$  to entail one definite conclusion, *c*. Here the “n” number of reasons are *all* that is required; the entailment is logically inescapable, closed to other interpretations; *c* is the only conclusion possible.<sup>17</sup>

Chinese thinking, however, presents only a few premises,  $[r^1 + r^2]$ , which make an incomplete sense. The incompleteness jolts us into appealing to our own situations  $[s^1, \text{etc.}]$ , making our own inferences, and drawing our own conclusions ( $c^1, c^2, \text{etc.}$ ) which can even be mutually incompatible at different times.

Thus  $[r^1 + r^2 + s^1 + s^2 + \text{etc.}] = [\text{perhaps } c^1 \text{ or } c^2, \text{ etc.}]$  is an *open* series, a standing invitation for us to enter and complete it for ourselves. This is the logic of *hsing*, evocation. Comparative hermeneutics traces evocative logic in culture.<sup>18</sup>

Take “the rapid flight of the falcon” in the *Shih Ching*. Combined with a victory ( $s^+$ ), the phrase (as  $r$ ) brings about military ovation (poem No. 178;  $c^+$ ); combined with a disorder ( $s^-$ ), it (the same  $r$ ) brings about bewailing (poem No. 184;  $c^-$ ).

This process goes on as long as the  $r$  interests us. The “classics” is a writing with tenacious evocative power through history; this power comes from the lure in *experience*. The best writing is an evocative occasion for understanding a key situation, which manifests various implications of *that sort* of situations. This explains how much revered and repeatedly recited some beloved passages in Chinese Classics are, whenever the Chinese thinker wants to prove something; those passages serve as pivotal points in the arguments, analogous to universals and key concepts in Western philosophy.

Furthermore, to notice a situation, then to *draw* therefrom a cultural ensemble, is the task of cultural hermeneutics. Confucius was said to be engaged in it; he “studied the drum-and-string under Teacher Hsiang 師襄, and knew-by-metaphoric-extension (*yü* 喻) the intention of King Wen 文王; [he] saw the unnoticed, understood the manifest . . . Thinking about the near, one knows the far.” (*Huai Nan Tzu* 淮南子, 9/4a, cf. 17/11a, 13/16a) Cultural hermeneutics is a metaphoric operation evoked by the situation.

Continuing situational cultural hermeneutics, one *grows* adept at reading (from) the situations. (Chinese thinking is at home here; it is primarily a moral historical philosophy.) This moral growth is  $c^1$  ( $c^2$  is in the Appendix). All this typifies Chinese thinking – cultural, situational, evocative-metaphoric.

What does all this situational cultural hermeneutics have to do with history? A lot, one would say. To grow, to be in a situation – they are historical. Let us take another example. The complex traffic situation in Taipei bespeaks the cultural complexity of Taipei and, by extension, that

of Taiwan.

The thinking patterns behind the methods of building automobiles and their streets were imported back in the eighteenth century when the Portuguese came to name this island “Formosa” the beautiful. The way people in this island appropriate these — thinking patterns, methods, uses of cars and roads — contributes to the confusing hustle and bustle of the streets. This islanders’s attitude came with Cheng Ch’eng-kung 鄭成功 and his comrades during the nineteenth century. And the catalyst of the combination of the two — the Western pattern of dealing with things and the Chinese manner of utilizing it — came with the Japanese occupation for 50 years, infusing into the island the spirit of enterprise, meticulous planning, managerial coordination, contributing to a general “upgrading of the standard of living.”

Furthermore, the islanders weathered several ravages of natural disasters (earthquakes, floods), human disasters (strifes of international, national and civil dimensions). The people weathered all of them and prospered with a peculiar tender composure, having perhaps inherited the docility of the aborigines who (they say) migrated, to begin the history of the island, from the Philippines and the Okinawas.

Having gone through all these historical backgrounds of various cultural elements that go to constitute the cultural ensemble of Taiwan, we now understand the peculiar confusing orderliness, that noisy calm, on the Taipei streets nowhere else to be seen. To ask about Taipei traffic is to ask for the cultural components of Taiwan, and culture is history through and through. To understand a situation is to look into its history.

In general, hermeneutics of a situation leads to that of its constitutive qualities, what it is made of. And the *names* of whatever qualities the situation has tell of their wherefroms. To understand a situation is to ask of its history — its wherefrom, its how-it-came-about, its whereto. Thus every situation has its cultural depths, and every culture has its multiple historical roots and trends. To understand a situation is to understand its complex history. Situational hermeneutics leads to cultural, then to his-

torical hermeneutics.

d. Comparative cultural hermeneutics catalyzes a self-understanding of two cultures, and betters them. To express a Chinese thought in English is to see two cultures, and to see Chinese culture improved in terms of the West, where the “terms of the West” are “mellowed” by the Chinese culture thus seen – reshaped to the subtle contour of historical actuality.

Moreover, comparison is essential to our understanding, and has contrast and similarity. Confrontation (contrast) with a new situation arouses (*hsing* 興) our attention, and then situational similarity with our previous experience metaphorically stretches (*pi* 比) our mind – we now have gained a new understanding.

Evocation (*hsing*) arouses felt thinking into a flight of imaginative thought. Metaphor (*pi*) pushes the familiar toward the unexpected similar, the unfamiliar. *Hsing* leaps; *pi* ferries. Out thinking needs both flight and ferry, discontinuity and continuity; both are our ways to novel ideas, our thinking. And these ways of leaps and ferryings are ways of history.

Let us compare the Chinese mind and the Western. And we will see how “Chinese philosophy” goes by *hsing* (for the reader to *pi* for himself).

*Hsing* jolts us out of our old perspective; *pi* draws implications out of the new vantage point. Whitehead’s “series of footnotes to Plato,” which the Western philosophy is said to be, is then an historical series of *pis* to Plato’s *hsing*. Since then, philosophers have been striving to gain (as Plato did) one *hsing* for many moves of *pi* 比 – abstractive (*hsing*) universals (*pi*).

*Hsing* is painful philosophical conversion, as in Plato’s Myth of the Cave (itself a *hsing*). Socratic midwifery wants to give birth to potent *hsings* which bring about numerous universal *pis*. The early dialogues are *hsings*, open, inconclusive; later dialogues tend to *pi*, comprehensively and systematically elaborating on the newly found

(*hsing*-ed) insights.

Since then, Western philosophy has been trying to find a single *hsing* for all *pis*; even Husserl, Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Marcel, even Ayer and the Vienna Circle, are at one here. For to say clearly, universally, that *we can never* find an overarching principle behind all reasonings, is to pursue the ideal of one *hsing* for all *pis* – on a meta-level, negatively.

No wonder Western philosophy is littered with Copernican revolutions – many overhauls of *hsings*, many new systems of metaphoric extensions (closed to other sorts). Humans being imperfect, our “systematic comprehensive interpretations” bring us systematic comprehensive overhauls, revolutions.

Chinese philosophy has never pretended to find one *hsing* for all *pis*, it is instead piecemeal, situational, historical, system-less, thus insightful, delicate, elusive, coherent.

The *Book of History* (the oldest extant collection of Chinese public documents, ideals ) has no less than 53 expressions for “law” in the society and “regularity” in nature<sup>19</sup>. These concrete expressions are all non-comprehensive *hsings*, not abstract concepts, for regularity; they came from many contexts, angles – showing a Chinese intimate appreciation of actuality.

As a result, with several expressions for the ultimate principle(s) – Tao, the Great Ultimate 太極, Ch’i 氣, Li 理, Yin-Yang 陰陽, Five Elements 五行 – Chinese thinking has produced no *comprehensive systems*. Speculative thought is less important than thinking to assist moral cultivation, to live well – by epistles, journals, lectures, commentaries, with overlaps, exceptions, contradictions.

Thus Chinese thinking is historically earth-bound, relevant to daily ongoings. Metaphysics is entwined with cooking, cooking with politics, politics with ethnics, and all these with aesthetics.<sup>20</sup> Chinese philosophy is subtle, inviting, wholesome.

Under these circumstances, Chinese thinking naturally tends

more to *hsing* than to *pi* – toosing out one *hsing*, some *pis* as hints, then another *hsing*.

Chinese thinking has no ambition for “systematic comprehensive interpretations.” It may find one *hsing* for some *pis*, then another *hsing* for another (somewhat overlapping) set of *pis*, some of which may become new *hsings* for new set of *pis* and so on. Hence, no “copernican revolutions.”

This approach throws the hearer back to himself, to explore more *pis* to that *hsing*, and to use that *hsing* (and those *pis*) as new *hsing* to arouse more *hsings*. These evocations are “commentaries” (*shih* 釋) where the reader elaborates on, or objects to, the original sayings. The reader claims that he has been following the original; he often strikes out in a new direction, thanks to the original.

*Wen Hsin Tiao Lung* 文心雕龍 claims to classify the heart (*hsin*) of Literature (*wen*) with carefully carved (*tiao*) gems of phrases, ready to fly (*hsing*?) the dragons (*lung*) of implications. This is “philosophy” in China, as solid as gold and jade (*chin hsiang yü shih* 金相玉式, 5/149).

The Chinese writing (in philosophy) says to little and leaves many loose ends to tie; reasonableness is always being aroused in the hearer. The Chinese mind reflects Mr. Hun Tun 渾沌 (Con-fusion) who let the universe originate. In contrast, Western philosophy monopolizes; it wants to say it all –clearly, with no exception. Western philosophy is typically logical; the Chinese mind is predominantly poetic. And, mind you, all these are none other than a quick review of the history of human thinking. To know how we think is to know the history of thinking, to engage in historical thinking.

e. In logic, we go through *reasons* to reach a conclusion; in poetry, evocations (*hsing*) obtain *conclusions* for metaphoric extension (*pi*) to arrange them.

Poetry *argues*, not deductively as logic does but evocatively, using deduction sometimes as a means of evocation. Logic intuitively (poetically) obtain premises, argumentation, and recognizes conclu-

sions when reached; to *recognize* something – premise, conclusion, appropriate argumentation – belongs to poetry.<sup>21</sup>

Poetry is compressed expression of an evocative situation. In this sense, all good writings are poetry. What makes classics as evocative as the situation it expresses, is that it resonates with the depths of actuality, and ferries us to that moment, that scene, at its most evocative; classics is a transparent metaphor.

A good essay is a good poem, a metaphor ferrying us to the intended situation; an argument helps the ferrying, when it is embedded in an essay. An essay poetic when it embodies a lived argument as open-textured as the actual situation it reflects. *This* sort of argumentation is usually not “*p* horseshoe *q*,” but a story, a poem, a letter, a journal – in the style of Chinese philosophy, an historical thinking.

When writing (argumentation) is textured as an actual situation, the writing persuades. Persuasive metaphoric resemblance (*pi*) renders the writing significant; *pi* renders “*hsing*” (興) internally coherent and relevant to actuality.

Actuality arouses (*hsing*) us into thinking (*pi*) it. To think is to mean; to mean is to intend, to stretch forth – by language which ferries us from here to there – from the me to the not-me (description, communication), from the familiar to the unfamiliar (argument, understanding). This ferrying is *metaphor*.

We understand when we see something new to be meaningfully related to our previous experience. We go into the past (what is known) to go to the future (what is to be known). Understanding is then synonymous with historical thinking, of which evocation and metaphor are two aspects.

How is history (or historical thinking) structured by metaphor and evocation? Both are intertwined in a complex and subtle manner.

Sometimes metaphor goes on a small scale, and the big trends show evocative surprises. Day and night succeed, every event has its cause; we understand the pattern – this is understanding in a metaphorical frame of



reference. But every war differs from another one, every revolution evokes our surprised attention – historical trends are ever fresh, unique, evocative.

Sometimes evocation goes on a small scale and big trends show metaphorical pattern. Despite many dynasties and nations, many different periods of war and peace that evoke surprises, we can say casually of them that “Divided long, unite [people] must; united long, divide [they] must (*fen chiu pi ho, ho chiu pi fen*分久必合，合久必分),” or “For everything there is a season – a time to be born, and a time to die.” And so there is nothing new under the sun; we all understand all of the historical events and trends – by metaphorical reference to the past. We understand all of them without going out of the house, as Lao Tzu said (*Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 47), for the same logical-metaphorical principle applies universally.

Thus metaphor and evocation go together and involve each other, weaving a subtle tapestry of history, on personal, social, and international levels. No one knows the grand design of this tapestry, although *I Ching* 易經 and various religions do their best to try and understand it. All we definitely know is that this historical tapestry is as fascinating (full of surprises) as it is understandable (reasonable, inevitable). In other words, it is both contingent and necessary; the sieve of history is evocatively sparse-meshed, yet metaphorically tight, leaking nothing, to parody *Tao Te Ching* (Chapter 73).

We may apply this evocative-metaphoric structure of history to ourselves. Suppose we ask a Cartesian question, Why are we here; how do we know that we are? Descartes answered with an “I think,” and drew controversial dualistic implications – body-mind dualism, God-world dualism. Chinese historical consciousness would answer, “Because I was born, therefore I am.” This is an obvious, down-to-earth common sense answer. Seeming trivial, “I was born” has at least five implications; they are both surprising and persuasively natural.

First, we note that “Why am I? ” is answered here by “I was born,” in terms of historical origination, the beginning of my life.

Secondly, we note that “I was born” is in a passive voice. I am because

of my origination, and I did not originate myself; my existence is an owed one. Although this awareness can bear on religion, as in the ancestor worship, the religious dimension of life really comes about by the historico-ontological shock of the origin of the self.

Thirdly, I was born, raised, and shaped by a plurality of persons, my parents who are part of, and so symbolic of, the parental community; I *am* social-historical.

Fourthly, since I owe no less than my existence to my parent-society, I have an obligation to them. This is the topic not only of usual ethics, but of ontological and historical “imperative.”

Fifthly, I am what I am by being, as well having been, shaped by the tradition. Besides, “being shaped” is education. Before considering education, however, we need to see the above five implications as a whole.

We note that all of the above implications are out of “I was born,” and “was born” is in the past tense; the five implications are those of history. Furthermore, to answer the question of “why” with historical origin not only gives reason for the fact *that* I am; historical birth also explicates (unfold) the what, the contents, the structure, of what I am, which is five-fold, as above shown. No wonders *sheng* (birth 生) is a word as closely related to *hsing* (nature 性) (cf. *Mencius* 6A3), as “nature” is to “birth” (nascence). History, birth, reason for existence, these three are closely interrelated.

To be born is to begin; to begin is to begin a history. History also gives birth to tradition, which is in partial tension with history. For although tradition is part of history, history also comprises birth, which is an eruption, an arising and arousing (evocation) – before, a nothing, now, a something. And tradition is a metaphoric continuity that shapes the present – as it was, so it has been, therefore, it had better be so, now. Thus tradition is related to education which shapes us.

Metaphor (*pi*) is explicated (unfolded) by lodging-*yü* 寓 and analogizing-*yü* 喻. if “pli-” in “explicate” be taken as “ply” or “fold,” lodging-*yü* is a manifold (many-folded, many-plyed) complex of implications, ready to be released (unfolded, explicated) into metaphors, analogizing-*yüs*, that ferry

us (analogizing-yü 喻 may be a homonym of boat-yü 俞) from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and also ferry us to the unfamiliar in terms of (in the boat of) the familiar. And this is a metaphoric *hsün-hsün shan-yu* 循循善誘 which, with an evocative *chü-i fan-san* 舉一反三, comprise “education.” All this is part of historical process

To think about all this, and to think it in this manner, is historical thinking.

### NOTES

1. Yehudi Menuhin said this in his introduction to a video tape where he played Brahms' Violin Concerto with Kurt Masur at Gewandhaus in Leipzig, in 1982.
2. Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, NY: Summit Books, 1970, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, p. 13.
3. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, NY: Pantheon Books, 1972, pp. 7-8. Foucault has their novel emphasis on what I call the evocative (*hsing* 興) aspect of history, the discontinuity, the uniqueness, of the “discourse,” as a “monument” in itself, and discover its own rule (cf. pp. 145-50).  
This tends to neglect the continuity-aspect, the metaphoric (*pi* 比) aspect, of history. To call our attention to discontinuity, the uniqueness, as an essence of history, is one thing. To stress discontinuity at the cost of continuity, is quite another. Unfortunately, except for “discourse,” all words he used emphatically – “monument,” “rupture,” and the like – are hopelessly isolationistic.  
This is not like my “evocation” (*hsing*), which combines relation (metaphor, *pi*) with eruption, and places continuity within discontinuity. The task of history (and historiography, philosophy of history, history of ideas) is not to stress one or another at the cost of the other, but to *combine* both.
4. Friedrich Waismann, “Verifiability,” in Antony Flew, ed., *Logic and Language*, Vol. I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 117-44; Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Psychology of the Imagination*, NY: Philosophical Library, 1948, pp. 1-13.
5. Rudolf Bultmann, “The Problem of Demythologizing” in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader*, Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 254.
6. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: Corrected Edition*, NY: The Free Press, 1978, p. 5.
7. Sacks, op. cit., p. 171.

8. Ibid., pp. 174-75.
10. Ibid., pp. 175-77.
11. Antony Flew, ed., *Logic and Language (First Series)*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1952, pp. 177-44.
12. Cf. Note 5. It may raise many an eyebrow to cavalierly equate the rich diverse Western mind with the analytical and arithmetical. A note about this, then, is in order.

Although “the West” is rather like “game” that has more family resemblance than definable characteristics, the West does have a cluster of characteristics that nonexclusively and imperfectly typify its way of thinking – “nonexclusive” because China does to a much less extent have them, and “imperfect” because the West is much richer than just these characteristics would have us think. But these characteristics do silhouette the Western way of thinking, and clue or “flag” us to it.

The characteristics are all too familiar – the clear, the dramatic, the thick, the analytic, the arithmetical. The clear is opposed to the confusing, the thickly dramatic to the deceptively simple, the analytic to the symbolic, the arithmetic to the intuitive, the exhaustively literal to the shy and allusive. This distinction pervades not just in academic philosophy but in literature and comportment generally. In a word, the West is as discontinuous, pluralistic, exhaustive, dichotomous, as the Chinese is continuous, intuitive, configurative, synthetic.

In the following, at the risk of committing a reductive fallacy, I will take “analyticity” to be a “flag” for the Western mode of thinking, and take analyticity to be describable by arithmetic.

The reason is simple. Although not exclusively originated in the West, it was only in the West that arithmetic and the analytic shook itself loose from the shackle of religion and mysticism and received an interest for its own sake, dominated one major mode of the Western thinking called “philosophy.”

This analytical frame of mind was responsible for the rise, and is now at the base, of theoretical science, organized technology, impersonal mechanical management (manipulation) of everything. This cluster of analytical operations have now spread far and wide in the world and receiving so much awed attention that the distinction between “developed” and “developing” nations is synonymous with the analytically minded and the not-yet analytically minded.

And so, one can say that on average the Western mind is more analytically inclined than the Chinese. If we still feel uneasy about it, we can still say that the analytic can serve as a convenient “flag” for the Western mind. One has to say too

much to say something; to say something is always (or almost always) to commit a reductive fallacy, a *pars pro toto*. If one feels uneasy about shouting, we can say that one of the dominant features of the West, analyticity, can be compared with one of the dominant features of China, the evocative-metaphoric thinking. For further elaboration on the *peculiarity* of Chinese mode of thinking, see Chapter IV.

13. The Six Classes 六義 are the six verbal routes through which our intentions (*chih* 志) are expressed in *shih* 詩, what is commonly translated as "poetry." Of these six, three are about its subject-matter, what K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達, called in *Mao Shih Cheng I* 毛詩正義, "formations of poetry" (*shih chih ch'eng hsing* 詩之形成, cf. James Legge, *She King*, p. 34) — *feng* 風 influences and satirizes, *ya* 雅 is a style of *feng* 風, and *sung* 頌 praises (the imperial) virtues to the god.

The other three classes *fu* 賦, *pi* 比, and *hsing* 興, concern "how poetry functions" (*shih chih so yung* 詩之所用, K'ung Ying-ta); they interest us here, as they also interested that first Chinese literary critic, Chung Jung 鍾嶸. Introduction to his *Shih P'in* 詩品 cited them as the "Three Classes" poetry has. Of these three, *fu* 賦 is regular prosepoem, rhymed essay; it is the other two, *pi* and *hsing* 比興, which are significant, as Liu Hsieh 劉勰 also noted in his *Wen Hsin Tiao Lung* 文心雕龍, Chapter 38.

14. Flew, op. cit., p. 140.
15. On logic as arithmetic, see Stanley Rosen, *The limits of Analysis*, Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 8-10, 152-54, 253-56.
16. Mikel Dufrenne seems to be infinitely fascinated with this inexhaustible depths of an artwork. See his magnum opus, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 26-27, 40, 56, 60, 64, 95, 165, 167, 182, 193, 207, 207n, 217, et passim.
17. I follow Waismann here. Cf. Flew, op. cit., p. 122.
18. I am creatively applying Waismann's description of empirical concepts here (ibid., pp. 118, 120, 122). Waismann serves as my evocation.
19. I have actually counted them.
20. I have gone into some details on these inter-entwinings in my "Chinese Aesthetics" in *Understanding the Chinese Mind*, ed. Robert E. Allinson, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 236-64.
21. Michael Polanyi (in his *Tacit Dimension*, Doubleday & Co., 1966, Chapter One) and Stanley Rosen (in his *The Limits of Analysis*, Chapter One) vigorously argued for this point.

## APPENDIX

Sometimes the formula “r+s” gets complicated — many *rs* and *ss* come to produce a new *S* which, combined with new situations,  $s^1, s^2$ , etc., bring about conclusions  $c^1, c^2$ , etc. One can write about the Taipei motorcyclists often on sidewalks, an *S*; one “interprets” it, reading [ $s^1$ , etc. plus  $r^1$ , etc.] out of [*S*]. Then one draws from all these factors some conclusions,  $c^1, c^2$ , etc. This is cultural hermeneutics.

How would one *read* the Taipei motorists on sidewalks (*S*)? One obviously sees greed for the right of way, disregarding others ( $r^1$ ); this is common human selfishness.

Another factor is a characteristically Chinese disregard of abstract rule, “Sidewalks are for pedestrians”; “sidewalks” and “pedestrians” are faceless generalizations. Love of the uniquely concrete ( $r^2$ ) keeps the Chinese motorists on sidewalk, for an excitement at getting through congestion at this moment.

Selfishness ( $r^1$ ) and love of the concrete ( $r^2$ ) come with four situational factors, to let us understand “motorists on sidewalks”: the crowded city ( $s^1$ ), too few policemen ( $s^2$ ), too many motorists ( $s^3$ ), people too used to it to call for law enforcement ( $s^4$ ).

There are two more factors ( $r^3, r^4$ ). The motorists still need the rule — “no vehicles on sidewalks,” the sanity — to break it to get excited; this is  $r^3$ . And the pedestrians take this dangerously illegal inconvenience as if it were a natural event. This is  $r^4$ , Chinese tolerance, perhaps comes from  $r^2$ . their love of concreteness.

Thus all these ( $r^1, r^2, r^3, r^4, s^1, s^2, s^3, s^4$ ) are *read* out of the situation (*S*) of Taipei motorists often on sidewalks.

Of all above,  $r^2$ , the love of the concrete, characterizes the Chinese mind; the love demands, among others, that the rule be applied on a case by case basis. To them, justice without respect of persons (so much loved in the West) is blind justice, hence a mockery of justice.

The above hermeneutic exercise trains us, we then realize, to part

from the resident's indifference and the foreigner's irritation, to steep in the Western *and* the Chinese cultures, and patiently to discern their differences. The exercise trains us in the knack of comparison; this is another conclusion (c<sup>2</sup>). The first conclusion has appeared (c<sup>1</sup>) above, just before Section d.

### III. HISTORICAL THINKING, THOUGHTFUL HISTORY

There is an order running through both history and thinking, both of which are in fact two interrelated manifestations of that order. This order, which can be put in a twofold description of “historical thinking, thoughtful history,” is tight (“leaks nothing,” as Lao Tzu said), yet the tightness is hidden in history, that is, manifest only within its historical development (“sparse,” said Lao Tzu). First, then, we have to see how historical thinking and thoughtful history are interrelated (in Section A), then see what historical thinking involves (in Section B), and finally see how significant the product of historical thinking, thoughtful history, is for our life (in Section C).

A. First (a) the mutuality of (thoughtful) history and (historical) thinking in history is considered. Then (b) what is involved in thinking in history, “concrete universals,” is looked into. Thirdly (c) what “having a view” is clarified. Finally, (d) what “being in a situation” is considered. By looking in turn at concrete universals, having a view, and being in a situation, we come to understand better what a mutuality of (thoughtful) history and (historical) thinking is all about.

(a) History and thinking are intimately involved with each other as historical thinking and thoughtful history. History is the orderly movement of life – thoughtful history; thinking is discerned as thinking only in its movement, and thinking in process (and that understood as such) amounts to thinking that is historical in nature.



Thus the *modus operandi* of thoughtful history is historical thinking working itself out; historical thinking is thoughtful history reflecting upon itself, its lived understanding, its retrospective living-through. In short, historical thinking, as part of life's movement, cannot help but work itself out into history that is full of thinking, namely, thoughtful history.

That logic – part of thinking – is also historical may require explanation. “Logic” with a capital L (a comprehensive logical system universally applicable to every instance without exception) is an asymptotic ideal to which every logician aspires but never reaches (as in a convergent series of  $1+1/2+1/4+ \dots = 2$ ).

This situation describes the “development” of logical systems. At the moment of discovery (or construction) of a new logical system, some of the things previously incapable of being subsumed under logical explanation now fall into place in a new order, thanks to this new logical system more powerful and universal than those known before. And then more things and aspects are found which are not explicable by this “new” logical system, and a newer, more powerful logical system is required. And the process goes on.

This means that logical system is subject to historical vicissitude (as any contingent fact is), which it is the purpose of logic to turn into an intelligible development. This *turning* of “vicissitude” into “development” – this turning and this development – we have no logic to explain except to describe as the rationality of history at work, the process of historical thinking that constitutes thoughtful history.

Therefore the spatial architectonic of ultimate logical tightness shall not be of the features of historical thinking. Besides thinking is the womb out of which usual logic comes to be, and so the usual logical stringency shall not feature historical thinking. The *order* of historical thinking shall be something musical, logic in developmental process, not stringently, architectonically logical. This order exhibits two modes: historical thinking and thoughtful history.

It is logically possible, that is, abstractly (and perhaps religiously)

imaginable, to go one more step, entering the end-of-time when history and thinking are so united in a utopian order, neither history nor thinking.

But it is then beyond both history and thinking, beyond human existence, and so beyond the scope of this essay. Instead, we see that history and thinking at the *basis* of our existence are so immersed in a primordial order that the order is describable only by a twofold “thinking and history” – historical thinking and thoughtful history. Their interrelation can be understood in the following musical manner.

How do we make of operas where the scene of quarrel is sung beautifully – in unison, in harmony, or in fugue or dialogue form? How do we understand singing the scene of crime and violence? How do we make of the musical presentation of natural disaster? Music is supposed to be a phenomenon of harmony; vice and violence are those of disharmony. How can disharmony be (re)presented in harmony? How does it come about? What is its structure?

One notion answers these questions: history. History is a series of human events, that is, a connection of events we can understand. To understand how disharmonies are rendered into harmony, there is no better way than to look at history. One can even say that harmony manages to express disharmony through history. History turns many a disharmony – disaster, atrocity – into a narrative unity that we can understand, even understanding our inability to understand it. Understanding requires some sort of pattern (configuration), a concrete dynamic, one of which is musical harmony. Understood pattern in time is history. Music is a catalyst (if not one form) of historical understanding.

What is it that enables all sorts of disharmony (moral, ontological) to be harmonized? Is it because harmony feeds on disharmony as in music, and disharmony feeds on harmony as in “honor among thieves”? Chuang Tzu in his sardonic stab is often couched on this mutuality: “saints not deceased, thieves won’t cease” (10/16). What is this mutual feeding, if not the unity, somehow, of history? But how can we understand this historical unity-mutuality of opposites, if it is not somehow expressible

in concrete universals? Yet what does “concrete” mean; what is “universals”?

(b) To squarely look at concrete universals is to engage in historical thinking. “Concrete” means “concreted” or “concreted” by an act of conceptualization. “Universal” is a concept, what is conceptualized – grasped. And conceptual grasping can be pronominal abstraction or adverbial inclusion. Let me explain.

Traditionally we take universals to be nouns and adjectives – chairness, squareness – obtained by abstraction from things and qualities. But we can also have universals as adverbs – taking things *as* this or that, hitting in this *way* the nail of actuality on the head, slicing the cake of reality in that *manner* – as specific styles of including things and features, to comprise the way one lives. The first kind of universals nominalizes and theorizes, the second kind adverbializes and manages. So long as both grasp (in) patterns, both make history.

We are all too familiar with universal as grasping (conceptualizing) in a pronominal (theoretical) pattern. But universals can also be adverbs, manners (patterns) of the act of inclusion – everything taken in (conceived), looked at (perceived), *as* this, in that *way*. Adverb is a directive to action, a pointer to a certain *mode* of behavior toward things. Adverbial universals are action-words, patterns of action that intend the world.

Chinese philosophy tends toward adverbial universals; Chinese equivalents of Western theoretical universals are *fang* 方, *pi* 比 (*lei* 類), and *hsing* 興, all with verbal, adverbial forces – nouns can be used as verbs (Han Yü even wanted to “China” those who enters China), and when verbs are used as nouns (such as *cheng chih* 政治 meaning “politics”) they carry verbal connotation. Taoism patterns our modes of behavior according to the Way things go. Confucianism adds that this Way is also our ethico-political one. Patterning ourselves according to the Way things go makes history. Chinese philosophy is historical, tending toward life cultivation, making daily living into history – thanks to its adverbial universals. But how do we see pronominal universals in historical context?

Nominalized universals are naturally historical; they are stories in a nutshell. All nouns are compressed concrete stories, each story is a journalistic report which begins with a title, followed by a summary of story, then a story itself. Here the title is a noun; the summary is a concrete universal. For example, an “operation” is a title and noun, an “eight hour open-heart surgery” is a summary of story, a concrete universal. And as story is history, so “title” — noun — is compressed history.

Nouns are concepts; grammar describes how these concepts operate in language; logic is grammar of (human language of) how we think in the concrete, syntax of human thinking, of concrete universals, of human history.

Such a continuum of (classification of) human thinking, title-summary-story, can be expanded as follows. Beyond the title one can have abstract “form” (“being qua being”); between the title and the summary one can insert “schema” (blueprint, musical score); between the summary and the story one can insert (“un)foldable story” (book of clothing, computer simulation of airplane flight); beyond the story one can have consecutive details such as in “cinemas” (many movies, shot from many angles, of what actually transpired).

Thus we get an expanded continuum of title-summary-story: form-title-schema-summary-(un)foldable story-story-cinemas. Abstract *form* — Being qua being, for instance — is completely empty of concrete contents, as Aristotle reminded us. A mere *title* gives us only a tantalizing hint of what is referred to — “Symphony No. 40 by W. A. Mozart” tells us something barely classificatory, nothing about its actual exciting contents. Then comes a *schema* of the content, such as the musical score of Mozart’s symphony (or blueprint of a building), showing us the structure of what is in the title.

*Summary* goes beyond schema; summary actually spells out what is involved in the announcement by a title. (*Un*)foldable story is like a book; a book of clothing, for instance, can be opened to unfold the story about clothing, and closed (folded) to assure us that information about clothing is contained between covers. Computer screen can give us the schema

and summary of, say, a specific airplane design (folded story), to facilitate simulation (unfolding of story) of the flight on the screen. Then comes the actual *story* of what happened. *Cinemas* are complexed (manifold) stories come alive; we would get a better picture of what actually transpired if we are given a skillful montage of movie stories from various viewpoints.

The above exercise of imagination in constructing a continuum of our understanding of happenings is undoubtedly very imperfect, leaving room for modifications and improvement. But this construction shows us an important point, that the continuum is that from adverbial percept to pronominal concept. This continuum is what enabled Kant to say that “Concept without percept is empty; percept without concept is blind.” This saying puts the pair in contrast; actually the pair are also continuous and complementary.

Concept (noun) and percept (adverb) are continuous and complementary because both are mutually involved as base and manifestation. On the one hand, no matter how abstract our thinking goes, our concepts will have some perceptual-adverbial flavor; all concepts (nouns) have adverbial bases. Even at the level of being-as-such, our thinking has an exciting story to tell about its structure and qualities as (Aristotle and Heidegger have shown) and about the mutuality of being and non-being (as Taoism has told us).

On the other hand, no matter how far we go in the direction of concrete details (even in the cinematic montage), there has to be some decisions concerning what themes to tell, what details to select, and how to arrange them in what order; percepts are already conceptual, as William James and Merleau-Ponty told us. In sum, contrastive complementarity characterizes the concept-percept continuum.

Now, what both “concept” and “percept” have in common is “-cept” (*capere*), to take and grasp meaning. Conceptual act is a meaningful activity, stretched out in time, telling us a story, comprising a thoughtful history. The concept-percept continuum is historical. Besides, this history is a dynamic story-telling that changes us. To tell a story is to ferry our under-

standing from a familiar situation to a novel one. To conceptualize is then to boldly metaphor (Johan Huizinga). All universals are concrete universals, historical metaphors.

(c) If concept is metaphor, then metaphor is powerless without history. For what does having a “view” mean? A view is rather inane, if not unintelligible, when rendered in a statement of abstract generalization. Legal statutes, for instance, are incomplete without historical precedents to guide their specific interpretations and concrete applications; ethical statements carry such situational phrases as “depending on” or “except for.”

Thus a *view* is a unity of general statement plus the perspective in which the statement is made. “Perspective” is a blend of assumptions and their environment, in short, historical situatedness. This is where historians, anthropologists, and sociologists have their say to philosophers. *Lebenswelt*, *Weltanschauung*, “meaning in use,” horizon of meaning, universe of discourse, all point to this fact. Perspective is the womb that brings forth a statement; perspective and statement together make up a view.

Chuan Tzu has only perspectives – this fact makes his words non-assertive, indirective, and evocative. Music also has only perspectives – this fact makes music indefinable, indefinitely suggestive, expressive without specific expression. Philosophy is the science of perspectives – this fact makes philosophy “useless,” and therefore *useful* in guiding us to an appropriate perspective for a particular situation in which we are free to make appropriate assertions and plans.

It follows, then that (i) there cannot be presuppositionless thinking, (ii) that perspectives can be *classified*, much as moods can, as poised, spontaneous, artificial, manipulative, and the like, (iii) that all religion, ethics, and poetry operate on the shift of perspectives, for every shift produces a new world in which things are rearranged to show their novelty, on which religion, ethics, and poetry have some say, (iv) that the so-called falsification principle works only *within* a specific perspective (e.g., scientific verification, as Karl Popper said), not on perspectives themselves, that the principle is misused when it is used to render religion, ethics, and poetry

meaningless, (v) that some perspectives are more fruitful than others (*i* 意, *ch'uan* 傳 in a specific situation, (vi) that to change perspectives is synonymous with “fooling around,” *hsiao yao yu* 逍遙遊 — play is revolution, (vii) that Plato’s statements, for instance, are put in various contexts (perspectives) and variously looked at by Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Taylor, Ryle, and so on. Classics is a collection of statements (literature) which bears such various viewings from various perspectives.

(d) But what does it mean to be in a situation, to have a perspective, to say something from a certain standpoint, with a set of assumptions, pre-suppositions, etc.? It means to live in a particular world, and so to be alive as a particular (sort of) human being — to be human. Far from being bound by this situatedness, the more aware we are of it, the freer we are to both enter into what we say, and to change our stance at will — free from being enmeshed in one perspective only (being prejudiced). Now, to see all this is to see the following five points:

First, being ossified in a certain perspective often means being unaware of having a certain perspective. This is why a prejudiced person gets angry when pointed out to his cherished perspective — cherished unawareness. He wants to think that he has no perspective, that what he says is universally true. The unreflective scientist or historian often falls victim to such positivism, such prejudice. Thus to think oneself “having no perspective” often implies a refusal to know that one has a deadset perspective. It is an obstinate ossification in one set perspective.

Secondly, “having no perspective,” if not an expression of prejudice, describes mechanical operation of, say, a computer. Computer does not compute (operate in the perspective of mathematics) but merely produces one set of signs when another set was punched in. Computers have no perspectives, and so do not “think.”

Thirdly, to have no perspective must not be confused with universal applicability, to have a perspective in common. To have no perspective is opposed to having one. To have some perspective in common is not only not opposed to, but is a desired end of, having a perspective. To say some-

thing intensely personal, for instance, is at the same time to achieve something deeply human, something we all share, a human universal. Here the poet joins hands with the scientist – they both aspire to attain universality via perspectival specificity.

Fourthly, it is said that unless motivated we would not learn. Knowledge is always knowledge with interest, and where interest ceases (due to hatred in an extreme case), knowledge ceases to be, as Freud's intentional and significant "forgetting" points out. Interest and motivation is perspectival; knowledge – often its expression in general statement – is perspectival.

Fifthly, we know of a person through his sayings; we know a person when we are acquainted with his interest, attitudes, Weltanschauung, perspective, assumptions, etc. Ladies can somehow know a person; men often merely know of a person.

All the above observations point to an inextricable interrelation between history and thinking. For thinking is ever situated, and situatedness bespeaks historicity; thinking is historical or nothing. At the same time, situatedness is pregnant with meaning, assertable in statements, and assertions express thinking; history is full of thinking.

Now we are in a position to engage in a philosophical archeology – to explicate the primal unity of history and thinking, and historical thinking working itself out into thoughtful history. But before that, two points may be noted. First, since the following is about our primal unity of history and thinking, and about that prehistorical unity working itself out in history and in thinking, there cannot be sustained argument (which belongs to thinking proper) or exhaustive historical description (which belongs to history proper). Our explication can only assume a form of "think pieces," *pensees*. Secondly, since historical thinking when carried out constitutes thoughtful history, when we consider thoughtful history the explication will concern the significance (the impacts) of the primordial and existential (*urgeschichtliche*) unity between history and thinking.

B. All things considered, we now see that thinking is historical, history



is thinking, and we *are* historical thinking and thoughtful history. This, though surprising at first hearing, is one of the most natural things that, we now realize, we can say of ourselves. For we do not need to go far. Descartes assures us that we exist as long as we think, and thinking is a meaningful process in time, and meaningful process in time is history.

But ourselves being historical thinking does not mean that the thinking is *just* ourselves, but rather it is all-encompassing, even ourselves. Let us then take a close look at (section B here) this *historical thinking* as to what it has, including its existential root of historical past, and its self-transcending elan toward the future, then as to (section C) what significance for life *thoughtful history* has, against the attacks of hermeneutical circularity, historical relativism, and ontological nihilism.

Three points can be said about historical thinking: (i) It operates by metaphor (historical sequence) and evocation (historical contingency); (ii) evocation confronts us with the problem of beginning, first in its aspect of the past root of existence, and then (iii) in its another aspect of transcending itself toward the future.

(i) Historical thinking operates not by tight logical necessity like that of mathematics, such as, for instance, given  $7+5$ , we *must always* have 12, and never any other number. Instead, historical thinking operates by the “logic” of metaphor and evocation, inevitable and open-textured; historical necessity is somehow synonymous with an empirical one; it is “porous,” as Waismann calls it<sup>1</sup>. Lao Tzu would have chimed in, saying, “The heavenly net [including the net of history] is *huei-huei* 恢恢, sparse meshed, and lets go of nothing.” And we in turn join in and say that this sparse mesh, this open porous texture, of historical thinking is constituted by metaphor and evocation.

Metaphor is that kinship connection we see among things, extending our understanding from the familiar, in a familiar relation, to the unfamiliar. We call this familiar relation, metaphor, by various names — for instance, we say, “Like cause, like effect,” that is, the law of causality in life, or retribution, or karma (*yeh* 業), or *yin-yüan* 因緣. Furthermore, all our

historical interpretations use this metaphorical method of understanding the past experience in light of our own experience. Here we assume the similarity (if not identity) in structure between the past and the present — all of us (ancient, modern) being human, and our world being the same, yesterday, today, tomorrow. We assume history to be continuous in the time-flow of mutual relations among events, among things. This assumed continuity of relations bespeaks the persuasive logic of metaphoric mutuality.

Metaphoric relation in history is of course porous and sparse meshed; historical sparse porosity makes for historical surprises, evoking our attention. It is not *necessary* that Ch'in Shih Huang 秦始皇 or Napoleon arose, and that in this or that particular period of Chinese or French history. What if Confucius became an emperor instead? What if Li Su 李斯 or even Han Hsin 韓信, did, instead of Ch'in Shih Huang 秦始皇? Mencius saw Liang Hui Wang 梁惠王; what if there were no Mencius, or not Liang Hui Wang?

In general, there were one thousand and one alternative possibilities for every single historical happening that took place; out of those possibilities only one was actualized. It was then a happenstance that that particular event happened in that particular manner. This describes the open porosity of historical fact and historical thinking, making a fact a unique one — it could have been otherwise, without rhyme or reason. This has both negative and positive implications.

Negatively speaking, “Without rhyme or reason” evokes the historian’s retrospective wonder, and an exercise in (often negative) counterfactual thinking, thinking in terms of what-ifs and instead-ofs.

How odd of history to have happened *that* way, instead of countless other ways! “How odd of God to choose the Jews,” that particular race in that arid land. What if there were no Greece? No India? No China? Why of all cultures only one survived which has characters instead of alphabets, has so deep an advanced a culture, and is so history-conscious, situated in so vast a land, yet is so poor except Taiwan; why are people in Taiwan so many, so wealthy, and so complex, riddled with environmental

and other problems? Why have the Chinese people seldom conquered the surrounding races except by enculturation of a unique sort?

Again, why the proliferation of Buddhism? Of Christianity? Of Technologies? Of Wars? Each of them need not have happened, and if happened, happened in *that* manner. It is said that the course of world history would have been different had Cleopatra's nose been an inch shorter. History provokes a historical thinking counterfactually. This is retrospective wonder, historical thinking in an evocative mode.

Positively speaking, now that it did happen, and that in that manner, there must be some sequence, some understandable connection, "causal connection" we call it (for want of a better word, I suppose), in a historical series of happenings. This is historical thinking in a metaphoric mode.

This causal metaphorical connection is like the happening of music, and the connection of musical notes. Mozart need not have composed that beautiful *Eine Kleine Nacht Musik*, but now that he did, we have an affable relation with it, and also see a charming internal connection in it; given that sentiment and that note, this note has had to happen in this key and in this manner.

Similarly, the event of Ch'in Shih Huang 秦始皇 need not have happened. But given Ch'in Shih Huang and the trend of history, we have a certain relation with Ch'in 秦 Dynasty. We also see an interesting internal connection among the events surrounding him, as to how Ch'in Shih Huang had to arise in that period in that manner, and to be followed swiftly by Liu Pang 劉邦, and that in that matter. This internal connection that we understand is the metaphorical understanding in historical thinking.

And so, retrospective (often negative) counterfactuals and retrospective (positive) connections – a surprise and an aha, an evocative and metaphorical thinking – these two constitute our historical thinking. They weave the tapestry of our history we call "destiny," *retrospectively*. This hermeneutical weaving is more than pure speculation; it is a reenactment (as Collingwood said), an imaginative hermeneutical experiment, an experiment in reconstruction of the trend, the ethos, the spirit, in the series

of happenings of the times. This is historical thinking, resulting in thoughtful history.

We have seen a metaphorical continuity of history – a system of homogeneous relations, a network of causality, of analogy showing their mutual symbolizations, showing that they express the same central core, the same mode of historicity bearing on economic structures, social institutions, customs and attitudes, technological and political practices.

We can also see that metaphorical historical continuity is a negation of evocative counterfactual thinking. If Cleopatra's nose were an inch shorter, the world history would have been otherwise (counterfactual); *but* (negation of counterfactual) her nose was as it was, and so (metaphoric connection) the world history went as it did.

If the notion of "fact" in "counterfactual" be interpreted widely to include the ongoing trend of the times, then "counterfactual" would include not just the impossible and the not-happened "facts" but the unexpected ones as well. Foucault wrote a whole book on this historical discontinuity – questions of "threshold, rupture, break, mutation, transformation," and "different domains," "division, series, limits, levels, shifts." He significantly titled the book, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. History concerns the beginnings, and historical thinking in its mode of evocation considers these "ruptures," these radical beginnings.

(ii) These beginnings are of three kinds: the new era out of revolution, the primordial beginning of history, and the utopian future that transcends history. All these beginnings are envisioned and understood by evocative historical thinking.

First, we have the historic beginnings in the new eras of revolutions – cultural (the Renaissance), social (the Industrial Revolution), or political (the new dynasty, nation-state); all this is familiar to us. We can see them as a concrescence of the primordial beginning of all times and the transcendental beginning at the utopian future, the second and the third kinds of historical beginnings. This historical breakthrough is the locus where the other transhistorical beginnings are gathered to exercise their effects.

The radical primordial beginning of all history can be understood by considering what it means to begin. No one can exist, much less create, in a vacuum. Every person, every activity, has its beginning, its historical root and background – parents, culture, language, thought form. We must have begun-to-exist-sometime-ago, and “(to have) begun-to-exist-sometime-ago” is history. We have history to be ourselves.

Immediately we are plunged into a strange situation, however. For what about that “beginning,” that historical root itself? *It* must exist, on which everything depends to exist, for “nothing comes from nothing”; besides, everything must exist, and “beginning” is a something. And yet it cannot exist, for everything that exists must have its parental beginning, and so if the beginning existed, then it would have been no (absolute) beginning, for *it* would have had its beginning. And so the beginning both exists and does not exist; it must exist as a myth, then.

No wonder the Founding Fathers of our history, Huang Ti, Fu Hsi, and so on, exist as myth. Every culture has its own cultural myth of its beginning. No wonder also that every totalitarian regime has its myth – Nazism, and others like it. No wonder politics need to mythologize; every nation makes a passionate ideology out of its own constitution, idolizes (mythologizes) its own history – San Min Chu I of China, the Founding Fathers of the USA.

This brings us to ourselves. We exist, even in our Cartesian doubt. But existence is by definition standing-out of nonexistence – something not existent before, a beginning of something new. Thus, at every moment we exist as a new beginning. Every present moment is a beginning of new existence.

Yet we agreed that nothing can exist in a vacuum; everything has its own historical root. And so beginning is required and cannot exist – beginning is a myth. Our present existence is a continuous series of beginnings, and so *we* exist as a myth.

This means, among others, that the reason why Huang Ti 皇帝, for instance, cannot exist as a veritable historical figure yet we cannot get rid of

him is because we are Huang Ti!

As Augustine said, there is no present; every present moment is passing from the future (the not yet) to the past (the no more). Therefore, the present that passes from what is not (yet) to what is not (anymore), is not, either. And yet we have to be here-now (the present) to say all this about the non-existence of the present. The present has to exist to be talked about, about its nonexistence.

The famous commentator Tuan Yü-Ts'ai 段玉裁 said that "to exist" (yu 有) is "what cannot *yu* and yet *yu* (*pu k'e yu erh yu* 不可有而有)." It expresses an ontological shock as we meet whatever exists; why is there anything rather than nothing? (*Wei shih-mo pu-shih i-ch'ieh chieh k'ung?* *Wei shih-mo mei-yu mei-yu tung-hsi?* 爲什麼不是一切皆空? 爲什麼沒有「沒有東西」?)

We answer, Because it (whatever exists) has its beginning-to-exists. Why is there a beginning? Because *it* in turn had *its* beginning, and this beginning is a beginning to begin, that is, a yet-to-begin, a not yet beginning, a non-being that is charged with profound ontological agitation; this may well be what Chuang Tzu meant by the *wei shih* 未始 [not] yet [to] begin. It is a nonexistence (*wu* 無) that brings about existence (*yu* 有).

And *wu* satisfies both of our conflicting logical requirements. Since *wu* is a nonexistence we cannot ask what its beginning is; how can non-existence begin? Beginning can only mean beginning to exists; "beginning" belongs to the realm of existence, not of nonexistence. And yet since yet-to-begin is the power to *be*, it answers our query on why there is something rather than nothing.

The power to be in things excites us as nothing else does. We exists as human persons and also have the power; we differ from other sorts of beings in that we know we can not-be —we *can* cease to exist, we say. Our power to be has been given by our parents, who thereby gave us ontological imperative urging us to have that "courage to be," as Paul Tillich puts it. This courage is a historical courage, then, to answer our ontological imperative: We ought to inherit history, that having-begun-to-exist, thereby exist as ourselves.

History is our beginning, it itself *is* (exists as) a myth (the nonexistence

of the yet-to-exist), and makes room for us to begin ever anew as new existence that is ourselves and *not any other*. We are free to exist as ourselves, to come-out-of that myth of history, to lay-hold-on (*yu 有*) ourselves. In the process of coming-out and laying-hold-of, we *are* history.

But we have said we must have begun-to-exist-sometime-ago; we must *have* history. We now know that we have history because we are history, going from nonexistence to existence, a new and self-renewing existence. We are *sheng-sheng pu hsi 生生不息*, and this continual *sheng* is history. History is a *sheng 生* – a *hsing 興*, an evocation from nonexistence.

But evocation is also a beginning of our thinking. This is proof then that our thinking, philosophy, is historical through and through. Be that as it may, be, at least three interesting implications can be gleaned from the above meditations about evocation and historical beginning.

(a) First, since historical beginning is a nonexistence (that brings about existence), and “nonexisting” implies “without existing impediments,” this free character of the beginning contains Janus-like double features to every historical incident. Examples from life show us that a behavior is ethical which initiates historical effects:

“*Ch'iang 搶* (forcibly to rob)” is ugly; “*ch'iang chiu (shang huan)*” 搶救 (傷患) forcibly competing against one another [as if to mutually rob] to save [the injured]” is beautiful. Stealing is ugly; doing good in stealth is sagely. Injustice is ugly; going the second mile is becoming perfect like the Father in heaven. Waste is ugly; generosity which “wastes” on the unrequiting, and perhaps underserved, is holy. Suffering is ugly; suffering borne for others is redemptive. Desire is ugly; panting after righteousness (as the Psalmist sang), desiring virtue as desiring sex (as Confucius said twice, 9/18, 15/13), or sharing satisfaction of sexual desires with others (as Mencius advised Liang Hui Wang, 1B5), is excellent, Self-abandonment (*tzu ch'i 自棄*) is ugly; self-loss (*sang wo 喪我*) is *the* road to overhearing the exquisite heavenly piping.

Does all this mean that ugliness is not to be shunned but to be exploited, that ugliness is beauty upside down, that pollutions and industrial wastes (which poison life and environment) hide unexpected treasures, that

history is full of ugliness which is a treasury of unexploited riches? How about “uninteresting as a rock, dependable as a rock”? How about Uncle Hsai 賽翁 who lost his horse and gains his fortune? Does history have two sides to every event? Shall we “walk double” (*liang hsing* 兩行) as Chuang Tzu said we should?

All this is because every event is a new beginning — of two opposing aspects and directions, because every beginning is that not-yet-to-begin-to-exist, that nonexistence freely arousing (evoking) events to go *either* way (nonbeing is a free going-to-be), the beginning of history. To go after them one by one is the business of history, of historical thinking.

(b) Then, since the historical beginning is a nonexistence that brings about existence in *either* direction, this beginning explains the paradox of maturity. We can look at it from two different directions.

(i) If to mature is to attain our ideals out there, to internalize them, it is *also* to prevent our ideals from becoming cliches, to keep the ideals ever fresh, ever desirable out there beyond us. Maturity is constituted by these two qualities, which yet are opposed, for internalizing something makes it impossible to keep it desirable — familiarity kills freshness, if breeding no contempt. To mature is indeed arduous.

Now, the greatest of our ideal is to truly *live*, in which internationalization is no problem (we *are* living), or at least so we think. For when we think there is no problem living, that may be the problem, the problem of taking living for granted. To keep life from becoming cliches (we have difficulty doing so), Socrates arouses us with the weapon of “ignorance.” This is the gadfly that stings us into realizing the freshness of living, so as *not* to take life for granted.

Thus to mature is an arduous task, symbolized in the tension between internationalizing the ideals and keeping them forever beyond. For the ideal that has lost the salt of stinging freshness is a mere cliché, and is no longer an ideal. Without ideals, maturity is no maturity. Striving to attain (internalize) the ideal, the process of maturing goes on only by having an ideal as a beyond, a fresh goad. All sages in the world sting us with this tension. Chuang



expressed this tension with *pu yen chih yen* 不言之言 a non-saying, saying things without saying them -- things not needing to be said (but not taken seriously).

Maturity is a process, a history worthy of its name, history as a process of forever at the beginning of things, going either way – internalizing the vision of the future *and* keeping it ever fresh. Our ideal lies in our future, our yet-to-be. History is a forward-looking process, the forwarding process of our life – toward the ideal. To internalize it is to make our future our present, our own (past); to keep it fresh is to keep it at a distance, in the future. To mature is to unify the two; *we* are the unity of the past and the future. This unity is a dynamic process of going to the future, forever assimilating it; this unity is history. Maturity is historical; history is for subjectivity.

(ii) From an almost opposite direction, we can also see that maturity is a historical notion. Confucius has an interesting saying, “To like (*hao* 好) it is not as [good as] to enjoy (*lo* 樂) it” (6/20). We have taken (in the above discussion) the “not as” as an opposition – between the liking pursuit of keeping the ideal ever beyond, and its indwelling internalized enjoyment. This interpretation makes maturity a forwarding historic arduousness. But the “not as” can also be taken as a description not of opposition but of stages of progress, of maturity – liking the ideal, then enjoying it. Let us consider maturity in this light.

Liking must be the joy of pursuit; enjoying must be the joy of quiet indwelling. Hot pursuit is an attaining activity; enjoyment is attained composure, where agitated obsession, imprisoned addiction, has no place. “The wise enjoys water; the humane enjoys the mountain” (6/23); the human wise can quietly dwell in and enjoy nature, which can be neither stolen nor pursued after.

Although we can agree with Confucius that to enjoy the ideal is higher than liking it, we also note that in the final analysis maturity means *both* in one, a joyous attaining and attained enjoyment; maturity means this natural unity. No wonder the *Analects* has as many entries on liking (45) as enjoying (43.) Confucius must have loved both notions equally.

Liking something means to take to something; enjoying something is rich in no less than three diversified meanings. Pronounced *lo* 樂, it overlaps in meaning with liking; as *üeh* 樂, it is music, which has an affinity with *iao* 樂, the indwelt enjoyment, for music is enjoyed by being dwelt in, as Confucius did for three months, unable to know the taste of meat (7/14). Naturally both Confucius and Plato took music to be a persuasive shaping power of personality. In any case, enjoying is indeed richer than liking.

And we find all this only in *historical* retrospection. For one who knows he is mature is no longer mature, as one who knows he is proud or humble is neither, and one who knows he is sinless is a pharisee (Luke 18:10-14) – only the saints (who *knows* that he is not) can perfectly repent, they say. Chuang Tzu has a story which concludes his Chapter Twenty on spontaneity:

Yang-tzu 楊子 travelling to Sung lodged at an inn. The innkeeper had two concubines, one beautiful, one ugly. The ugly one [he] valued, the beautiful one [he] neglected. Yang-tzu asked the reason, the innkeeper's boy answered,

“The beautiful one [thinks] herself beautiful, we do not notice her beauty. The ugly one [thinks] herself ugly, we do not notice her ugliness.”

“Take note, my disciples,” said Yang-tzu. “Act wisely while let go of self-wising act [i.e., without self-awareness], and you will not go without being loved.” (my translation)

In this realm to know it is to destroy it; maturity belongs to the realm of spontaneity which can be made aware of only retrospectively, after one is *out* of it. Hence maturity is a topic in the field of history, a historical notion.

No wonder “progress” (continual *beginning*), a notion related to maturity, is talked about only by the historian, or the thoughtful person as historian. “Progress” could have been substituted for “maturity” in the above description. One knows who is smugly self-satisfied that one has/is progressed stops making progress. Progress is also a historical notion.

(c) Finally, since the historical beginning is a nonexistence bringing about existence, the character of an existence can be seen only through the

*process* (history) of its being brought into existence. This applies instructively to our discernment of the difference between the Western thinking and the Chinese.

All of us being human, *what* “we” have “they” have also – any school, any ism, any trend, any sentiment. The difference comes when we compare *how* a group of people emphasize and develop (or de-emphasize and neglect) what they have, with how another group do to something comparable that *they* have – the same theme of “nonbeing,” “flux,” the same sentiment, school of thought, or logical stringency, literary exuberance, scepticism, pragmatism.

Again, we detect the character of a culture when one aspect of a scholar is de-emphasized and another aspect emphasized – for instance, *how* the Western philosophers usually deals with Plato’s poeticity, Whitehead’s flight of literary imagination, in their technical terms, their terse apothegms. Both are logicized and made into a scholasticism in the West.

Now, this “how” is history. In short, we can see the China-West differences only in their respective historical processes.

All this is how history can help discerning, thinking, and living. To miss all this is to die. To despise history is to despise all this; it is to despise oneself. And then one cannot live any longer, for one who does not treasure oneself cannot take care of oneself.

We have also seen that evocation begins history, and metaphor continues it. Understanding all this occurs by referring something unfamiliar to something familiar; we understand when we see something new (evocation) to be meaningfully related to our previous experience (metaphor). We go into the past (what is known) to go to the future (what is to be known).

But our previous experience is our history. Going into the past to go to the future, this process of going-and-understanding is a historical process. Our mind process, as arousing (starting, evoking) and deepening (metaphor) of *understanding*, is a historical process.

(iii) So far we have considered history as the root of our creativity –

our beginning. “Beginning” truly so called is to begin at the root, in order to begin to go beyond today toward tomorrow. History as our beginning must then include our future as well. We can now look at history from the point of view of the future.

“Stepping out of the present” is the title of a radio musical at the New Year’s Eve. “Stepping out” describes the counterfactual thrust of time, the self-transcending elan of history. The “present” is always “stepping out,” perhaps because the present is loaded with undesirables (as the prophet is not esteemed in his hometown, so usually no one craves for the present), and this in turn is because to exist *is* to step out (of the background into a distinct existence).

Stepping out has only one route – to step out of the present. Stepping out of the past is redundant; the past is by definition what has been stepped out of. And we have no way of stepping out of the future; the future is where we step out *toward*. In any case, this stepping out, this process of outing, is history; historical thinking is our conscious counterfactual thrust – countering the past, stepping out of the present. This is life, that self-transcending elan, history.

And this elan of countering what is and what has been in history – is what enables both Apel and Gadamer<sup>2</sup> to make the *possibility* of approaching truth contingent upon our ideal (Apel) or actual (Gadamer) intersubjective consensus as a regulative principle of historical quest.

Consensus is a process of common understanding. Understanding is a verb, an act in time. Common understanding is a historical process, an understanding-in-time *in* which openness to a plurality of various understandings develop and cross-fertilize. Gadamer developed “situational phronesis” from Aristotle.<sup>3</sup> “Situational” here has to be a historical one; “historical situational” is an adjective that enveloped and characterizes a lived understanding, which has a twofold significance.

First, “historical situational” obviously implies an inherent enfoldment, involvement, with the situation. We miss the true nature of knowledge if we say that knowledge has “application” value, or we must “appro-

priate” (Ricoeur) knowledge; application (or appropriation) implies two separate items, absolute knowledge on the one hand, and an actual situation to which knowledge is to be made relevant, on the other. But knowledge and understanding is by definition (by the very meaning of the term) that *of* a situation; knowledge has an inherently practical import. Knowledge is a situational involvement; understanding is an inherently historical activity.

Secondly, this “historical situational” environment is a developing community of conscientious critics. There is supposedly a difference and debate between an (epistemological) regulative principle of an ideal consensus, with the last historian seeing the final truth (Apel), on the one hand, and an historical, developing understanding with an unrealizable goal (Gadamer), on the other.<sup>4</sup>

However legitimate the difference may be, it is only fair and crucial, to note that these two may well be variations of two dimensions of the same historical process – regulative ideal versus developing ideal. For development and goal (which regulates development) imply each other; a goal-less development is as meaningless (if not self-contradictory) as an absolute goal without development. This is why Apel is obvious and powerful.

And yet, development *can* be development without knowing whether the goal is definite, reachable, or whether the goal is one or many. Perhaps this uncertainty is what we mean by historical contingency or openness. Gadamer is discernful. This is what makes the pragmatic character of historical understanding existentially frustrating, even poignant – Gadamer’s discerning way is not an easy one. At the same time, this is what makes historical understanding so evocative, manifesting the counterfactual character of the Confucian-Taoist Utopia.

This historical evocativity is a third alternative to the regulative and the developing ideals, and is a Chinese equivalent of Kantian regulative principle, yet at the same time inherently *historical*. The Chinese Golden Ages are a historical yet nonfactual ideal, often even counterfactual. Here we see

how ideal truths and utopian counterfactuals are enveloped in history.

For to *ask* (and even despair) about historical truth presupposes truth (as not yet there, or as impossible), in the light of which uneasiness about our attaining there is aroused. We worry about truth only within truth (as Josiah Royce also noted). And truth is often counterfactual, evoking us with its absence in the undesirable past and present, arousing us to press toward the future, forwarding the process of history.

How can we see the distortions of the past generations? By our *new* interpretations in time, in history. New interpretations of a document jolts us out of previous interpreters's perspective, enabling us to see *their* distortions. And new interpretation can make us see the past mistake because we recognize our own preconceptions (*Vorurteile*); Gadamer himself recognizes that his own interpretation of Greek philosophers is influenced by Heidegger's question of Being. This recognition frees us from uncritically thinking that *our* interpretation is not a reading-into the Greeks; this recognition also liberates us into alerting to (and unmasking) the *Vorurteile* of previous interpreters. And this freedom (to see ourselves) is the space where Greeks *can* appear as themselves.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the historical movement of interpretations is a casting of new light on the shadows cast on the text by the old interpretations; our new light is not a new shadow on us as long as we are aware of our own interpretations as *our own*, with our own *Vorurteile*. And this self-conscious, self-transcending movement in time is history, thoughtful history.

This is a strange self-transcendence, a recognition of our place, a historical thinking. For by looking at ourselves (objectifying and so transcending ourselves) we firmly put ourselves *within* the historical flow of interpretation. Thus this self-recognition is a getting in *and* out of history at once; this is historical thinking, a true hermeneutics of the situation and of the historical document.

This point perhaps defuses the debates between Apel-Habermas and Gadamer. The former criticized the latter's claim – that the tradition is *constitutive* of understanding – as equivalent to historical relativism unless

supported by a transcendent regulative principle, an *ideal* community of rational critics. This is the debate between open historicism, lost in factual relativism, and closed historicism, lost in abstract dogmatism. The debate arises only in a static abstract environment, a Nietzschean historical objectivism, a false antimony between one *closed* circle of the inaccessible past, and the mind residing in another closed circle of the present.<sup>6</sup>

We now see that this sort of debates is irrelevant, for we now recognize the possibility of the dawn of truth through self-critical recognition of our own *Vorurteile* that exposes the hidden *Vorurteile* of the previous interpretations. We see an *open* historical horizon that moves, expands, and changes the later horizons as it is changed by them.

Mind you, all this is a consideration of the critically (historically?) *moving* hermeneutical context which renders possible the emergence of new interpretations. This movement is historical thinking, which is not a making of norms that guarantee correct interpretations, but the historical moving environment that makes possible the appearance of such norms. The tradition is like grammar which needs no agreement or disagreement. The grammar-like tradition is an environment where normative disagreements can be made.

C. But why do we even bother to do all this? Because this is the stuff of which we are made. We call it “thoughtful history.” Without this stuff of thoughtful history (I use history as a verb, with all the implications above indicated) we are lost and uprooted – a “lost mariner” (Dr. Sacks.)

The significance of historical thinking working out into thoughtful history, can be considered from six angles, as follows: (i) To know oneself is to know one’s place in history to become as we are, human; (ii) this human living comprises historical self-interpretation; (iii) Chinese culture is historical – personally, socio-politically, cosmic-futuristically; (iv) the meaning in history is all-encompassing, and all revolts against history are also history; (v) false historical interpretation itself makes history, and so is life’s absurdity; (vi) circularity, relativity and nihilism, all come together to constitute history, our life.

(i) Positively speaking, Socrates' proposal of self-knowledge amounts to knowing one's place in the scheme of things, so as to conduct oneself properly. This is the categorical imperative for living as human. Instinctively, automatically, animals and the inanimate exist ("live") "properly" – they simply are *as* they are. We humans must become so consciously, that is, thinking, historically – ever beginning repeatedly, sometimes succeeding, but often failing to live up to being "human." To be human is not a fact but a task, a becoming humanness (*jen*).

For the humanly (humane) "existing" stands out from nonhuman existence by our "knowing" ourselves and striving to "properly conduct" ourselves; here is free latitude (knowledge versus ignorance, proper versus improper) and a survey over ourselves, so that we can "conduct," govern, even shape ourselves into ourselves. For this purpose we are endowed with absolutely pliable body-and-bodily-time (*shen, shen shih* 身·身世) so as to become as we are.

Well, "quite pliable" but not "absolutely," one should have said. For one has to know one's place, and one's shape, in the scheme of things; one has certain delimitations. "To know one's place and shape in the scheme of things" is to put the matter in spatial terms. We have clarity and danger in doing so.

Clarity is there for the feel for totality and for one's factual shape, and "shape" is a delineation, a delimitation – one is thus and *not* otherwise. But spatial description has two dangers: making of oneself in *too* clear a term, breeding deterministic resignation, or arrogance; the whole matter is made static, lacking growth, development. For the "scheme" here is really the scheme of time, not in space *only*; time flow includes space, and is a precarious shift of spatial realms.

But description in terms of space makes things clearer, with one's only two eyes, only to the front. This means that one can only look forward. One has only two historical eyes, only in front, and thus one can only proceed (not retrograde), in two ways.

First, we go retrospectively to history, not to go back but to go for-



ward again to reach back *there*, to relive the past forward, to reenact it and renew it. To proceed in history is to reach – backing into the past *in the present*, living forward as we used to – to the future, literally in the light of how we have lived before.

To thus live historically is to live humanly, as we actually do always – as when we understand something new (future), and conduct ourselves properly at present, in the light of something familiar (historical). This (as we saw) is to live by metaphor. We know and behave properly by historically reliving what we have been through. We *use* this relived knowledge to go forward, now that we know our place in the historical scheme of things as we wish, properly to conduct ourselves.

There is of course a tension between “as we wish” and “properly.” The tension intimates our peculiar human nature. For “properly” is a connection (metaphor) to what we learn from our historical reliving; “as we wish” is a new evoked (by this reliving) self-transcendence toward the future self-making to which we are destined. We freely, creatively, accomplish our historical allotment. Historical thinking is a unity of both the creative freedom and the allotted destiny *in* the subject. The subject is the central point of the unity of historical thinking, thoughtful history backward and forward.

What would happen if we do take seriously our historical reliving and behaving, properly practicing historical thinking? Santayana warned us that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. We can respond that those who do respect history also repeat it, but differently. We retrace, ponder, learn, and we are the richer for it; we creatively prolong thoughtful history we inherit.

We who have gone through Confucius, Ch'in Shih Huang, a series of bloody dynasties, glorious cultural revolutions (such as the May Fourth), countless famines and wars (Opium War, World Wars), are more mature, more understanding. We are rendered more cautious and more daring. We are more cautious because we know better on how to avoid what we ought to avoid; we are more daring because we know better about how to deal

with what we should not avoid when we choose it, and are better able to see how if we do *a*, or are in *a*, we may get or get to *b*.

At the same time, we are now more accommodating, looking forward to future surprises. For what we learn from history is just that – surprises. How odd of history to have chosen the Chinese for concrete thinking, historical thinking, perseverance, proliferation both of people and of culture! And so, now, no matter what surprise happenings we meet, we can be more confident that we will weather it, ride on the tides of the times. We can *hsi yüan* 惜緣 and *hsi fu* 惜福, that is, treasure historical connections and their surprise blessings.

(ii) To relive and reenact the past experience is to interpret it. Human life is a series of such experiential interpretations. This is Socratic self-knowledge. And such self-interpretations are themselves our living activities, part of our living, and the most precious part of it, for they collect, re-collect, themselves to constitute our personality

Such self-interpretations are historical thinking, resulting in thoughtful history. For historical interpretations conducted by a culture collect themselves into its personality we call “tradition,” which is itself also part of history, and that the most precious part of it. A human life has its personality in its historical reliving; a culture has its “personality” in its tradition, its thoughtful history. When we want to understand a person we look at his story, his history; when we want to understand a culture we look at its tradition, its history. Culture without its history is a contradiction in terms.

To understand life is to interpret the self, thereby to understand-interpret existence; this historical understanding is, we retrospectively realize, a self-revelment of existence through human existence which is human self-interpretation, as Heidegger and Gadamer have been tirelessly saying.

(iii) China is a culture *rich* in history and historical consciousness. This fact means at least that Chinese culture is rich in self-understanding on a time scale, in historical self-interpretation. How does it do so? At least on three levels – personal-historical, socio-political, and cosmic-futuristic.

(a) The first is on a personal level—in Ts'ü Yüan 屈原 who wrote *Ch'u T'zu*, 《楚辭》 in Su-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 who wrote *Shih Chi*, (《史記》) and to certain extent in all writers, such as Han Yü 韓愈 who wrote *Sung Meng Tung-yeh Hsü* 《送孟東野序》

They had undergone tremendous personal turmoils. They had to vindicate themselves in a most telling and lasting manner. They appealed to the greatest of human hermeneutics—historical interpretations of the entire culture. They executed a historic task of historical hermeneutics, thereby enfolded themselves in the total sweep of the cultural history of their race. It is thus that they justified themselves in history, and let no less than history itself render a verdict on the powers that be which unjustly abused them. They are more than victorious, inflecting on their enemies wounds that are deadlier and longer lasting than their temporary physical defeat.

(b) Chinese historical interpretations occurred, secondly, on a sociopolitical level. Interestingly, the emperors (most of whom tyrants) tried desperately (investing much on the *shih koan* 史官, the historians) to let it be widely known, even throughout history, that they had conformed to the mandate of the tradition. And all this while, the historians under them (Confucian political martyrs) told them repeatedly that they had *yet* to conform to the historical mandate.

Thus although both the emperors and the historians were opposed to each other, they both agreed remarkably on the historical imperative to conform to the moral-political standards handed down to them from old. To say that political expediency made the emperors take historical mandate seriously misses two points: that political expediency is thus governed by historical mandate, that the importance of handing-down good names to posterity far in the future outweighs mere political expediency.

What is revolutionary about those martyr-historians is that they produced nothing new — they insisted that they were no innovators. They just honestly faced up to the categorical imperative of our common thoughtful history of the tradition, and found the spirit of the age, and practices of the emperors, invariably wanting.

What is also amazing is the fact that the tyrannical emperors took historical documentation of their deeds so seriously that they even executed their helpless subjects, the historians, who honestly wrote down whatever happened; far from being seditious, they were executed for fulfilling their duties. Thus both the conscientious historians and the tyrannical emperors *agreed* in regarding history and its hermeneutics worthy of committing lives to it – whether the emperors's (at least outwardly) or the historians's.

(c) The third level on which the Chinese cultural hermeneutics is executed is on a cosmic, futuristic level, in the arena of history.

The Chinese people love to express should-have-beens in terms of might-have-beens, and should-bes in terms of may-bes. They imaginatively reconstruct the past into future ideals, merging counterfactuals into simple hypotheticals, or describe past mistakes in order to challenge the present to create its own “counterfactuals,” as it were, to the past.

Thus did emerge stories of Golden Ages of sagely kings and devillish rascals. (One of the excitements of present-day historical criticism is to ascertain whether what circulates as history is a factual account or a counterfactual disguised as history.) Confucius, we remember, had much of the idealized past as his stock object lesson. Mencius had his share in fabricating an idealized past (7A22), in which the center of Utopia is *wu-shih ch'i shih* (not losing its timeliness 無失其時). And Mencius had his hero in Confucius who was great on account of having accomplished a grand collection of the past events (*chi ta ch'eng* 集大成), and who was himself the timely one, and by implication the great, among the sages (5B1).

And the Taoist writings are especially prone to such ploys. The imagined past known to be false comprise counterfactuals. Treasured counterfactuals make up myths. Myths projected to the present and the future comprise Taoism, the crucial undercurrent of Chinese culture. The whole of satirical Taoism thrives on a skillful manipulation of counterfactuals into stories and arguments, which in turn yarn of the never-never-Land (*wu ho yu chih hsiang* 無何有之鄉) that had better come true, shocking the factual world into realizing its own senselessness.

All in all, history thus *used* (factually by political martyrs, counterfactually by the Toists and the Cónfucians) is an active point of orientation for guiding present activities. Our thinking is a historical thinking, coming from facts, deeply enmeshed in the actuality of history. Countering actuality, our thinking in terms of history challenges the world of this life. This historical thinking does not bind the world but provokes (*hsing*) it to reassess itself, examine itself in the light of history – factually and counterfactually.

If Socratic self-critique (and hermeneutics) is part and parcel of philosophy, then Chinese historical consciousness is as inherently philosophical as its philosophy is properly historical. And in the end one sees that these two activities are but two sides of the same coin, the coin of human values, human nature – one must call it historical thinking developing itself into thoughtful history. It is biting wholesome. Socratic self-examination made in terms of historical thinking is truly cultural, comprehensive, long-lasting, and is to be exercised constantly. This is literally to execute a Mencian historic task, both rebellious and reverential. This is to *make* history.

The human community exists as that of historical thinking. Man is man by virtue of fulfilling the historical imperatives of achieving meaning on a historic scale, in a historical context.

(iv) The meaning of history is all-encompassing; the falsification principle cannot put its teeth into it. For as long as we are humanly conscious, no matter what we do we cannot be above being historical. Let us consider how this is so.

We need the tradition to create tomorrow; creativity depends on the very breakaway from the tradition. We try to smash history to go out of the time-space frame (religion), to open out into the Platonic realm of truth (philosophy) – they are all part of history. Moreover, getting out of history to consider history, our very consideration (our thinking) shifts, and this very shifting constitutes history. Thinking is hermeneutics and hermeneutics, history.

After all, the I, the actual, the rational, they are all verbs, all under-

goings; the unity of these three is also a verb called the world. David Hume in his conscientious observation bumped into bundle of movements (time): they are at the core of the I and things ("sensations," perceptions), constituting the world.

And verb is movement, whether conscious or unconscious. And movement is understood to be time-structured as "from the here and now to the there and then," which exhibits the twofold structure: (a) the "from-to" directionality and (b) the inequality of here-now and there-then, and "inequality" itself has the structure of a denial ("in-") of equality, unified in the rationality in action, time-rationality, historical thinking.

In the world without thinking there is then no movement; movement is time-ly structured and structuredness, a rationality. Thus rationality is historical; the world is seen to be thoughtful history. Where there is no historical thinking, no movement exists, and things are meaninglessly static, as Buddhist philosophers ceaselessly admonish us. *Pace* Zeno and Plato, Parmenides and Spinoza, thinking is moving, and the moving (basic) explains the no-moving (derived), rather than the other way around. This is one implication among many of the epithet, "Man is the Spirit of myriads of things," being one of the Three Geniuses (三才) of the Heaven and Earth immersed in constant changes expressed by the Five Elements and the Eighty-Six Hexagrams.

(v) From this basic perspective, it is tiresome to quibble over what is true and what is false in historical interpretation and reconstruction. True or false, we are historical. If our interpretation is "false," we make history of falsely interpreting a part of history. If we were to *shih erh wu ch'uan* (make events without making tradition 事而無傳), then the very making of such *shih*s (making events) makes a historical tradition, as Chuang Tzu himself did by this his apothegm; his "*wu ch'uan*" and the realm created by this notion gets transmitted (*ch'uan hsia* 傳下) through more than 2,300 years to present. This transmission *is* history.

And Camus's and Sartre's "absurdity" is a cipher for our historical situation in which no matter where we turn we find no meaning, and turn-

ing to one thing contradicts turning to another. We have all too many conflicts of obligations (as in medical and business ethics); but turning we must and we do, and somehow we go on. Even that famous prince Sheng Sheng (申生) falsely accused by his jealous stepmother Li Chi (儷姬) with whom his father Hsien Kung of Chin (晉獻公) was obsessed – in Year Four of Hsi Kung, in the *Tso Chuan* 《左傳》 – even that Shen Sheng had to do something. And by hanging himself Shen Sheng made himself famous throughout history. Even pondering on this (as Lü Tsu-ch'ien (呂祖謙) did in his *Tong Lai Po I* 《東萊博議》) makes history. So did Ts'ü Yüan, Su-ma Ch'ien, and writers of countless variations on the *Kui Ts'u Lai Ts'u* (歸去來辭) of T'ao Ch'ien (陶潛).

Life is full of dilemmas, absurdities, atrocities. These are what evoke historical thinking and make thoughtful history. What set our teeth of reason on edge incite and provoke shouts in agony (*pu p'ing tse ming* 不平則鳴). And it is these shouts (*ming* 鳴 in the *pu p'ing* 不平) that are stuff of which thoughtful history is made. There are more things in heaven and earth than we have ever dreamt of, as Hamlet says; history is this “there are,” this absurd atrocious “there are,” out of which Hamlet had to make tragedy. But tragedy or comedy, history is both the stage on which they are made and the series of tragicomedies themselves.

This is not to say that history solves or even dissolves absurdities of life, although history sometimes does do both. This is to say that absurdities come about only on the basis of thinking in life, historical thinking; absurdities are derived from thinking in life, and thinking in life makes thoughtful history. Absurdities, tragic or comical, live, move, and have their beings in history. History is all-encompassing.

(vi) The unity of metaphor and evocation in historical thinking confronts three historical aporias: circle, relativism, and nihilism. How does historical thinking interpret them appropriately, in a non-circular, non-relativistic, non-nihilistic manner?

Historical thinking is retrospective and prospective; it is a circle. Events happen to initiate an interpretation, that is, production of a new connection seen by later generations. But how history is *to be* interpreted

remains an open question, left up to the later generations. History is shaped as thoughtful history by such hermeneutical shuttlings back and forth in time.

Furthermore, *we* the interpretaters are *in* history. In interpreting the past we *add* on to history, thereby change it. A new element in a picture changes the entire configuration; each addition in history changes the entire configuration of history. Thus is the circle – (a) the past giving us something to interpret, and our interpretation shapes the past, making history, and (b) we the product of history add on to history, changing it. All this is implies in what historical hermeneutical *circle* means.

This is *relativism* truly so called – in which arbitrariness shed its rootlessness and becomes mutual enfoldings between the past and the present, both thrusting toward the (counterfactual) future. Merleau-Ponty (in *The Visible and the Invisible*) talks about the “chiasma” between the seer and the seen; the chiasma also occurs between the past and the present – toward the future.

The movement is anything but arbitrary; it has both the root, the historical origin, and the inevitability that is not predetermined but open and free. Historical progression is thus coherent, inevitable, and open-textured. Nothing can stop this movement; in it almost anything is possible. Retrospectively, however, even accidents and absurdities somehow get incorporated as intelligible stages in this historical progress. To trace this process is historical thinking.

But the incorrigible relativist-*nihilist* may insist that there is always the suspicion that the entire historical operation so described is merely relative; history is bunk, a hoax, an illusion.

In response, two points can be raised.

(a) On an immediate level, we can remind him of his own historicity, that his saying makes sense as long as his act of *saying* is itself a part of the meaningful process of history. To cut himself off from the meaning of human history, as his saying amounts to, is to cut off his own root and support, the very context of meaning in which his saying has teeth.



One gets the standard of validity from the total sweep of history. Its rejection commits one to a bottomless pit of meaninglessness. This amounts to his radical situational historical contradiction – he denies the very possibility of the validity of his denial; to cut himself off from history cuts his saying into no saying.

(b) Can we cut beneath this existential level? I think we can. Chuang Tzu has adumbrated the cutting in his famous butterfly dream.

On awakening from his dreaming to be a butterfly, he no longer knew which is real, the butterfly now dreaming to be himself, or he having dreamed to be a butterfly. Since dream is unreal, and since he cannot decide whether he/it is dreaming or not, he cannot decide which story – history – is a real one: the history of the butterfly dreaming, or the history of him dreaming. And, to make the matter worse, these two are both incompatible and inseparable, internecine and interrelated.

History then has its root an Heisenberg-like undecidability. Does the undecidability bespeak uncertainty but not unreality, or does it do both? If we take the former, we have the story, the meta-historical circle that caress both histories – Chuang Tzu's subjective dream, butterfly's objective dream. And this meta-historical circle persists for 2,300 years to our day. It is history that is real. What if we take the latter? Far from having ontological nihilism, we will obtain the human meaning of history, or rather historical meaning of humanness.

What does this historical *meaning* of humanness look like? It is said that all human achievements are but scratches on the sand; the tides of time wash them away. Su Tong-p'o (蘇東坡) poetized on it in his famous phrase, "the migrant geese's footprints on snow (*sueh-ni hung-chao* 雪泥鴻爪)"<sup>7</sup>; we are footprints on the vanishing snow of time, made so casually, ever so fleetingly, by the migrant geese of history. Chuang Tzu chimes in: "Man's life . . . is like a white colt passing a chink on wall; in a moment, it is gone" (22/39), A. C. Graham's translation).

Everyone agrees. The entire Buddhism is built on this agreement; even the vigorous Bible agrees.<sup>8</sup> We sigh a deep sigh over our historical evanes-

cence. And then, strangely, by the very sighing we betray the eternity of this truth. Blaise Pascal says, on the level of space, that we are the most fragile of reeds in the universe, and yet by knowing so, we stand apart from every fragile thing. On a more vital level of time, the saying, the poem, the sentiment of fragility and evanescence at the base of religion, *stays*, by virtue of our very sighing affirmation. We recognize our ephemeral *t'an hua i shein* (曇花一現), and a puff of dream of our existence strangely persists throughout the ages.

The passing-away of human achievements, one *recognized* as such, stays on. This recognition is our historical thinking making our thoughtful history. This is the point where the fragile evanescence of human passings passes on to us, stays on in us, who also pass on. This uncanny awesome *unity* of evanescence and eternity, this thoughtful history achieved through historical thinking – this unity is the meaning of history, the meaning of human destiny. Look how long that particular notion of evanescence has stayed – for thousands of years since Buddha and the pre-Christian Old Testamental era, since Chuang Tzu, Su Tong-p'o and Pascal.

Such recognition is not without its important contents. Our life transience comes from its self-transcendence, the fact that the present gathers the past (achievements) to inaugurate the future (prospect). This means that the present is always unfinished, unfinished even in respect of the past; some past is always forgotten, dropped out of sight (and mind), and the future may or may not recapture and recommence it. Incomplete past-gatherings makes us use the future; imperfect past is the reason for the coming of the future.

This is by the nature of the case, the case called “history.” A present which has, per impossible, managed to gather up the pasts *completely*, with all their meanings of the world, would be a present with no future; such a present has room for nothing new. The present without future is a dead one. Hegel's vaunted *In-itself-for-itself* describes death. Sartre dubbed it an impossibility in *Being and Nothingness*.

All this amounts to characterizing life as a perpetual beginning – the

present perpetually flowing from the past to the future. This self-transcending flow of life bespeaks transience. We tend to bewail life's transience. We do not realize that precisely by virtue of transience we are *alive* at present. Thanks to transience, our present is endowed with radical openness to alternative directions, rich implications, and indefinite possibilities. All our present struggles make fighting sense – transforming our limitations, carrying them further into the future – precisely because of our historical transience. All our accomplishments are made on the basis of, and made into, historical transcendence-transience.

Thus growing supports growing old as growing old gives way to growing; transcendence and transience wax and wane into each other to interweave the tapestry of history. This Way of evanescence recognized and expressed in life is history, and it continues to stay with us – a strange phenomenon indeed. History is how we attain the permanence of impermanence, the triple immortality of establishing virtue, accomplishments, and worlds (*li te, li kung, li yen* 立德·立功·立言). Even carefully to say something is to collect out thinking to established history, to attain the immortality of thoughtful history in our mortal historical thinking. Beyond this, nothing can be thought *about*. Our thinkings as well as our deeds must be historically engaged.

#### NOTES

1. *Porosität* in Friedrich Waismann, "Verifiability," in Antony Flew, ed., *Logic and Language*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 119. Waismann says that "open-textured" is an English rendition of his original German coinage *Porosität*.
2. *The Critical Circle* by David Couzens Hoy, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, pp. 107-30.
3. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1975, pp. 278-88.
4. Hoy, op. cit., pp. 111-12, has a clear description of this debate.
5. Cf. Hoy 114; I developed his theme of Vorurteile in my own manner.
6. Cf. Gadamer, op. cit., pp. 270-71.
7. Su Tung-p'o's poem was a gift to his brother.
8. The Bible gives many passages to this effect, from the Genesis account of our dust

constitution (3:19) though its wisdom literature (*Job, Psalms, Proverbs, the Ecclesiastes*) to various prophets.

## APPENDIX

Objectivity is a misnomer in the human world. The notion of objectivity comes from the empirical world where two events are seen (and “seeing” is always from outside, objective) to connect, where the observer can assess and compare two things; comparative objective assessment is always from outside, detached from the “interests” (if any) of the events and things.

In the human world, this detached observation is impossible. All we can see is a person discerning others to somehow differ from another group of persons. Thus an objective assessment in the empirical sense is impossible in the human world. What we can do is to appeal to the discernment gained through years of our own experience (going-throughs).

But this is neither an empirical objectivity, which is meaningless in this context, nor a detachment from the interest of two persons to be judged, both because humans are somehow related one to another (humanness means mutuality) and because if, per impossible, the third party attained such detachment, then by this very fact he is rendered not deserving of judgment – for judgment implies relatedness, not detachment. He would know nothing about the persons to be judged, and so would be incapable of judging them.

We can at most have more or less mutually satisfactory agreement about the matter in question, in the so-called “consensus of considered opinions among experts, that is, persons experienced.” This is called “fairness,” something different from empirical objectivity. Thus to import empirical objectivity into the humanities is to make a category mistake. In the empirical world only being objective (detached) is possible; in the human world, only being related is plausible. What in the empirical world is detached observation is to what in the human world is conscientious agreement.

And there is no absolute truth in either case. For one can never cut “error” in either case, and “absolute” literally means “detached” from observation and agreement. Moreover, even “error” is not detached from truth, for “error,” seen as error, is possible only from the standpoint of truth. To see oneself in error is already to approach truth.

By the same token, one can never say one has done an excellent job – to say so opens the way to pride that is far from truthfulness. One can only say one is satisfied and pleased (and grateful) with the result; the result is seen to be more satisfying than before. That is all one can say. Thus humility is sensible here. One can be cautious (that is, humble) about someone else's opinion that is considered, experienced, and *may* differ from one's own satisfactory assessment.

To put it another way, objectivity makes sense only where there exists an "outside"; in the human world, there is no outside. Therefore "objectivity" should be banned from the human world. Fairness is among humans; there is no fairness in the empirical world, where there are no human insides.

If one says that objectivity is useful as a metaphor in the human world, I would reply that it is a seductive and dangerous metaphor. It is seductive because it all too easily fosters an illusory security in the minds of experts; it is dangerous because it will soon reduce humans into items to be empirically observed and manipulated. One can only investigate with fairness and humility, not with objectivity.

If one still insists that "outside" is essential for "validity," then I would say that "outside" in the human world exists in time and among those honest scholars. Then we have historical "objectivity" and scholarly "objectivity." But because of the aforementioned dangers I would still prefer fairness in history and fairness among scholars. This is to say that we want universal validity (or applicability) in our judgment. Universality is obtained in objectivity in the empirical world where there is only an outside (at least for us humans). Universality is obtained in (historical and scholarly) fairness in the human world where there is only an inside (at least for us humans).

### INCONCLUSIVE EPILOGUE

The ancients said, “All things change (*panta rhei*),” and again, “All are birthing and being born, without ceasing (*sheng sheng pu shi* 生生不息).” This is their *naturata*, nature. Man’s nature, especially, is to become; to be a man *is* to become human. Man’s *natura* is in *naturing*, in *naturans*. Becoming something is a changing, of itself, into something, every second; our becoming is our birthing ourselves, again and again, day in and day out, into culture, forwarding it. Man’s nature is *naturing* in *enculturation*. And that is history.

We call change “time,” birthing “nature,” and becoming human, “history.” These epithets are abstractions that hide the vivid pulsation of the rhythm of becoming human. We objectify (entify) even “becoming human” and then “thought” and “history” spring up a separate objective disciplines to be researched in ivory tower. Change is then stifled, life arrested and we mummify ourselves in objective thinking, a contradiction. For as thinking objectives is no longer the live act of thinking, so thinking about objects fixates and kills the ever changing vitality of these objects into objects of thinking; objective thinking destroys its very objective, to recapture and relive the lived experience of things. This is a fatal failure of thinking when the object sought is human experience itself. In these pages I have sought to restore to thinking the breaths of life that primordially pulsate themselves into “human nature.”

But the breath of life is both a breath – a breathed – and a breathing.

What makes objective thinking possible – what makes death and ossification possible – is this pole of history called sedimentation. Whatever takes place now takes its eternal place in history; historical eternity is the atmosphere in which thinking takes place. Having gone through an appreciation of Wu Tao-tzu (吳道子) I am from now on, in whatever I do, a person-having-gone-through-Wu-Tao-tzu. Having been through the June Massacre of 1989 at the Tienanmen (天安門), where the Peking government tanks literally crushed student sit-ins, all of us are different persons. Having been torn apart by the tragic splintering of youthful freedom, we are more chastened, more cautious, more full of pathos. These incidents are now engrave, indelible in our nature, never to be forgotten – a historical part, an ingredient, of our nature.

But these traces and scratches are part of human nature as a continuous naturing; the indelible scratches are traces actively tracing out a new path toward the future. History is this unity of eternity and movement riveted together onto the river of time. Now, have we engaged in a mixing of metaphors? But how can we help it? History is the vital self-transcending elan that keeps us by keeping adding on and changing us. Our thinking is historical through and through, and our history is never a string of meaningless bits of facts, but interwoven with thinking, counter-thinking, and after-thinking. History is a forward thinking movement with a backward look, a retrospective propulsion. This movement is life.

The unthinkable feat we can perform is that we can (and often do) drop out of this life-movement – and we die, either in objective thinking in ivory tower, or in reckless exploitation of people and environment, as if the scars of exploitation would disappear from time, as if people and environment were things without historical depths. We *are* history, and to drop out of history is to de-bone ourselves into death, in living death. The bone that sustains history as truly history is thinking that is not objective but historical, thinking with history as its discerning atmosphere in which it breathes. To participate – to thoughtfully breathe – in history is to become historical and come truly alive. For history is human life.



What has been in these pages passionately demonstrated is this our historico-ontological imperative, “Participate thoughtfully in history! Historize thinking!”

Note well, however. The movement of history is the movement of life of ours, our nature moving. And this movement of our nature is our natural movement, our life itself moving. This differs from superficial self-conscious agitation of our minds, eyes, and hands — although, strangely enough, they, too, are an inextricable part of history, very unsightly, un-historical ingredient of history. Even our sighing disappointment at the world having nothing that stays is a mistake, a prejudice — we do not need to worry; history sediments itself. But history sediments *itself*, requiring none of our interferences. It is the interference that is unhistorical, turning itself into a monstrous unhistorical part of history.

To participate in history is not to agitate but to become one with this mighty current of natural movement. It is not accidental that Confucius, standing on the river bank, said, “Going, going like this! Day and night without ceasing!” (6/16, cf. 17/1) — being deeply moved as he was at the moving current of the water of history. The current is not pushed; it is the very push that pushed itself. It is life. There is a deep truth in Chuang Tzu’s vision of “acting without a trace, making events without noting them down.” (12/82-83) Leaving no mess or trace, life moves on without noisy chronicling. This is history. To write down that “acting without a trace,” to make a note of the ideal of (returning to) unnoticeable natural movement, evolvment, development — Chuang Tzu’s “pen” must have trembled with the trembling of life. He wrote without writing, a true expression of history.

To take note of this unnoticeable current of history is to be thoughtful in history, effecting thoughtful history by historical thinking. Being thoughtful in life results in thoughtful history. Becoming as you are is to become natural, which is to take part in natural movement of human life — and this is to participate in history.

Everything and every event becomes history. What does it mean, then,

to be unhistorical, to drop out of history? It is to worry that we cannot step into the same river twice, to fuss about the evanescence of all things, to try and arrest the river. And all these only hurt ourselves, for all of these acts are against our nature. History being our natural movement, acting against our nature is to drop out of history by acting against it. Unnatural movement is also movement due to our nature, to be sure, but it is the movement against nature, and is self-contradictory and self-destructive, amounting to what Mencius called “self-abandonment” (*tzu ch'i* 自棄). The tragedy is that this self-abandonment results from our immediate superficial instinct to preserve (things and) ourselves.

Or else, to be unhistorical is to try and make history, try to be histrionic, to self-aggrandize, again, to self-preserve. This is to try to make traces out of our behavior, to make a tradition out of our events. All these, we will find, are writing on the sands of time. And so we worry and we fuss. We do not realize that we do not make history; history makes itself through us, through our self-forgetful commitments to whatever comes as a task at hand. History comes, results, as we live on as ourselves – this is what it means to become ourselves, to partake of history.

The grace of history that saves us, however, is that all this unhistorical behavior also eventually becomes history. We cannot escape nature, or rather, naturalness. There has to be a non-self-conscious layer backing up our conscious, even self-affecting, activities. That all our jittery conscious hustle and bustle also constitutes history is an ever-abiding reminder that there is always a chance to come back to this ever-present naturalness, even in our most unnatural strivings. To become as we are is to become history, which is to return to being natural and unpretentious, neither trying to arrest the river nor striving to push it, but to discern it, accept it, feel it, and take part in it, as Confucius did on the river bank. Then we can be acting without a trace, eventful without jotting them down. In our not trying to be “historic,” we become historical.

“All things change” – that is our legacy of an adage from ancient Greece. But to say so remains – to ever arouse us to take part in the change

in/of our life, and change-in-our-life is history.

Creativity is transformation of the status quo, contributing to the change of all things. (Self-)transformation is part of what being alive means. As being creative is part of being alive, so to be alive is to transcend the past, which implicates historical change. Change makes creativity possible, creativity immortalizes change, and all this defines being truly alive. “All things change” is the reverse of another legacy of ours – from ancient China – “All are birthing and being born, without ceasing.” All things change, but to immortalize this truth is to plunge ourselves into history, which is human change – change of our nature, our natural change. Again, nothing further can be said. It must be lived.

Yet how can we live *thoughtfully*? In what sort of thinking do we engage ourselves, when we truly live historically? To plunge into this question is itself to live thoughtfully. We find in the following that this truth is what has been practiced by thoughtful Chinese people for several thousand years. There is an inescapable route leading us from history to thinking to Chinese philosophy. We must tread this path (*tao*) if we are to live as human at all. We have seen, however schematically, what it means to live thoughtfully and historically. Now we have to go into how we do so, by looking at Chinese philosophy with the clarity of Western discernment.

## PART TWO: LITERATURE, THINKING, HISTORY

### PROLOGUE

The way and territory of Chinese philosophy is traversed in the following manner. Chapter IV established the peculiarity of Chinese philosophy in comparison with the Western. To take in such a Chinese manner of philosophizing enriches philosophy and makes it relevant.

In Chapter V we consider the core of philosophical thinking, the universals, as to how they concretely manifest themselves in Chinese philosophy in literature and in history. In Chapter VI we examine one of the clear historical manifestations of Chinese concrete thinking in Mencius.

In Chapter VII we test the sailing of this concrete thinking on its tough reefs – tragic dilemmas in ancient China. This is also where we learn how to live as truly human through concrete thinking from the breakage of ourselves as well as all things rational around us.

In Conclusion we wrap up *all* of what we have considered so far – history, thinking, and Chinese philosophy. We think about what significance they have our life as human.

#### IV. SOUND, SIGHT, SENSE

It is hard, even hazardous, to compare Western and Chinese ways of philosophizing; they are two entirely different cultural traditions, more different than, say, the Indian tradition is from the Western tradition. An almost one to one correspondence can be discerned between an Indian school of thought and a Western school. The Chinese tradition has so different an outlook that we can almost expect to find in it what we cannot find in the Western tradition and, conversely, expect to find in the Western tradition much that we cannot find in the Chinese tradition.

Hajime Nakamura's (中村元) *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* (東洋人の思惟方法)<sup>1</sup> compares four ways of Oriental thinking, patterned according to the Asian demographic regions of India, China, Tibet, and Japan, by naively watching four different reactions to one common stimulus—Buddhism. This method leaves unexamined what the notions of their “reactions” and his “watching” mean; perhaps he takes both notions to be as his common sense takes them to be, and they are homogeneous in implications throughout his book. But what if someone says that his observations, in *his* common sense, are those from a Japanese standpoint?

In the following pages I undertake a comparison between the Western and the Chinese ways of thinking (of philosophizing) by watching and examining their interactions and, in the meantime, seeing how such watchings and examinings change in their methodological implications. In other

words, comparative philosophy involves not comparison of contents treated by different cultural approaches to life and actuality, as many comparative philosophers have tried and failed, but comparison of the very methods of their treatment, their different types of the logic of approach. Since one cannot use logic to treat types of logic, one must philosophically discern and describe how they differ in the very thrust and structure of their methods. One must use descriptive hermeneutics in comparative philosophy.

First, three typical Western descriptions of what Chinese philosophy is are judged to miss the *Chinese* philosophy (Section 1). This missing reveals the Western mode of thinking as objective, analytical. The Chinese language clues us in to the connotative Chinese way, resonating and reflecting the actual ongoings of things. Resonance and reflection are not denotative but connotative, in Yin-logic, not in Yang-logic (Section 2). Then how these two ways of thinking bear on actuality is examined, by examining their respective concrete operations – analytical correspondence, and arguing by punning. The latter mode is defended against the former's attack. The latter also tends to a "Cook" (庖丁)-like spontaneity, whose description requires situational transposition (Section 3). Finally four examples are used to show how fruitful our Yin-Yang *combined* approach is to actuality. Then we suddenly realize that these pages (however imperfect) have been written throughout from such a combined perspective after all.

Put simply, the following pages claim that a patterned history of ideas, a typology of philosophical systems, and a simple denial of "philosophy" to Chinese thinking, are three mistaken understandings of Chinese philosophy (Section 1). They come from a methodological insensitivity to two distinct *ways* of thinking – the Yang-logic of explicit analysis and the Yin-logic of connotative presentation (Section 2). The latter way is absolutely accurate to actuality (Section 3). Yet such a presentation needs conscientious analysis to clarify itself. We must come together to thrive as one human community of differences (Section 4).

I

Three approaches have been used to compare the Chinese and the Western traditions, all well-meant and all sadly misguided. The first is patterned after the history of ideas. The second is to typologically impose Western categories on Chinese philosophy. In reaction to both, the third claims that China has no philosophy and/or no ethics.

The first approach is a familiar one; endless lists have long been compiled on who said what in China. But unless their philosophical significance is shown, the lists are no more than a simple chronicling of cultural matters.

For instance, we might ask the following questions: What relation does Confucius see between "respect" ( 敬 ) for the elderly and "respect" ( 尊 ) for the worthy, and how does Confucius differ from Socrates (in *Euthyphro* and *Crito*) on the matter? How significant is the fact that the term "respect" ( 敬 ) later turned synonymous with "seriousness," and why does the Western history of thought show no such notional change? Why has "seriousness" (*spoudaios*) in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the notion perhaps akin to the Neo-Confucian "seriousness," never been a sustained philosophical issue in the West? What is in Confucius which later made for the Confucian orthodoxy, a governmental institution, in the Western mode of which Plato's ideal of the philosopher-king never took root?

Furthermore, why did the Moist systematic logic fall by the Chinese wayside, while the Aristotelian logic thrives as it grew (and changed) to be the pillar of Western philosophy? Why did a Humean scepticism and a Kantian critical philosophy fail to *develop* in China? And we might also ask how the Moists logically managed to combine pragmatism with religion, and why Lao Tzu the mystic (but not Chuang Tzu) came to be developed into the Legalist political philosophy — two pairs of unusual combinations to Western common sense.

All these queries are windows to look into how *different* Chinese thought is from Western thought. These questions are, however, not even raised in the usual picture of Chinese philosophy, which is a tabulation of

who said what and who influenced whom, capped with vague terms like “pragmatism,” “legalism,” and “ethics.”

The second approach is a typology. Aristotle gave the West an impressive battery of categories to classify *all* views and reality. Richard McKeon took over, followed by such luminaries as David Dilworth and Walter Watson with various typologies of “world philosophical systems.” Although not directly connected with Aristotle and McKeon, thinkers such as John Koller, Donald Munro, and Chad Hansen belong to this genre, armed with Western categories like “humanism,” “relativism,” “scepticism,” and “epistemology” to describe various Chinese philosophers.<sup>2</sup>

One wonders *how* these distinguished scholars came to classify a particular non-Western philosopher under this or that Western trend or category. They perhaps assume that, after all, people think the same thoughts with different languages. “It has rained” says “Hsia yü lah” ( 下雨了 ); “ $7+5=12$ ” and *modus ponens* apply everywhere in all possible worlds.

Also look at how effective Western technologies are in the non-Western world. As nothing is methodologically simpler than to write up a history of technology in China,<sup>3</sup> so is there no problem writing up a typology of philosophies applicable both to the West and to China – a Chinese Plato, a Chinese Dewey.

They have sadly forgotten the difference in the *manner* of thinking – between seriously arguing and embodying argument, that is, between having a system and being systematic, between being cognitively rational and being concretely reasonable, as soon will be elaborated.

We must similarly compare the critical spirit of aphoristic, cultural thinkers such as Rousseau, Voltaire and Goethe, on the one hand, with the critical spirit of systematic argumentative thinkers such as Spinoza, Kant and Carnap, on the other. The “critical spirit” of the first triad differs in temper and atmosphere from that of the second. Although the idea that Spinoza, Kant and other systematic thinkers represent the “orthodoxy” or the “main stream” did not take root until late nineteenth century, the fact that the West has so *many* systematic thinkers, who did come to be en-



throned in orthodoxy among the contemporary (especially Anglo-Saxon) philosophical circle, does indicate something about the philosophical temper in the West. The contemporary Western mind typically divides the second triad as *real* philosophers from the first; such a way of thinking is what will have trouble understanding Chinese cultural milieu which profoundly affects the mode of thinking in China. But a consideration such as this is never raised, much less discussed.

No wonder the typological approach is blind to the difference between the (Chinese) pragmatic spirit and pragmatism as a (Western) theory of truth. Nor can the approach handle the problem of why “respect,” (敬) “flux,” (化) “nonbeing” (無) – the three pivotal notions in China – never became philosophically prominent in the West. “Flux” as a mixture of being and nonbeing was dropped after the pre-Socratics; “nonbeing” was merely a backdrop against which to discuss “being” – Hegel and Whitehead treated “flux” exclusively in the context of being. In any case, it is in such a philosophical milieu that Western categories were produced; it is, then, hazardous to classify Chinese philosophers according to such Western categories. Appendix III at the end of the paper has further comments on this fascinating approach.

Feeling the inadequacies of the above two approaches, historical and typological, those sensitive to Chinese peculiarities say that China has no philosophy (Arthur Wright), and no ethics (Henry Rosemont, Jr.).<sup>4</sup> After all, the technical terms “philosophy” and ethics” came not from China but from ancient Greece, as explicit systems of abstract analysis. China has at best something analogous to philosophy and ethics, but none in exactly the same sense and rigor as those of the West.

This true enough observation means little, however, unless we follow the beckoning of the actual content of philosophy. On the one hand, culture involves thinking, and Chinese culture does have something philosophical that is shared by Western philosophy, which is thinking at its most coherent, comprehensive, and fundamental level.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, this basic thinking has many styles, which bespeak many cultures.

Poetico-aphoristic Voltaire, Nietzsche, and Buber failed to capture their orthodox niches in the contemporary Western philosophical tradition. Moist logic and scientific spirit failed to enjoy the prestige of orthodoxy in China. This indicates the overall direction of each tradition.<sup>6</sup> Plato was indeed poetic and to a less extent aphoristic. He has been admired throughout the Western history of philosophy not, however, for his rhetoric but for his argument; in fact, such an un-Platonic (or is it Platonic after all?) division of the rhetorical aspect from the argumentative belongs to the genius of the Western mind. Since then, a great effort has been expended either (rarely) on the *unity* of both aspects, or (more often) on Platonic rhetoric as rhetoric. Appropriately the definition of “philosophy” as a rigorous science for its own sake originated in the West.

The method, however, should not restrict the content but follow it. The content of philosophy is basic comprehensive thinking. Rigorous analysis and scientific methodology are an important part, but only a part, of philosophy, and should not restrict but promote philosophical depth and comprehensiveness; philosophy as rigorous science *for its own sake* must therefore be scrapped from the definition of philosophy. Philosophy should instead be a shorthand expression of doing philosophy or, better, being philosophical, a way of living rightly, discernfully.

That being philosophical is more than doing philosophy can be understood by considering the impossibility of theoretical ethics, prompted by the lack of such a discipline in China.

Confucianism, for instance, is ethical through and through (even in its metaphysical speculations), but it has never developed theoretical ethics in the Western sense. The reason is unwittingly furnished by Taoism, in which ethics is specifically impossible. For spontaneity is impossible in self-consciousness. When I *say* I am spontaneous I am no longer so, because I can only *be* spontaneous; when I say something I am conscious of that something, but being self-conscious erases spontaneity. To be conscious of my being good is like saying how kind and modest I am; my *saying* so somehow evaporates my being so.

Ethical deliberation and performance ultimately stem from the Humean sentiment, that feeling for kindness, or the Kantian sense of duty, that love of duty for its own sake. But, then, feeling ceases to be feeling if thought *about*; and such a moral sense is categorically direct and urgent – we simply must act morally. The constraining directness of the categorical imperative somehow differs from the casual directness of our inclination (which Kant said is morally irrelevant). It is the former sort of directness that constitutes the peculiarly *human* spontaneity (whose component natural inclination perhaps is). Or rather, although spontaneity may seem akin to inclination which Kant thinks is morally irrelevant, spontaneity shares forthrightness with the categorical character of Kant's moral imperative. And such forthrightness is that on which we act as humans, not that *to* which we argue.

In short, being direct, forthright and categorical, morality has a lot to do with spontaneity which disappears when thought about. Thus consciously to cognize and systematize ethics destroys its ethicality; cognition analyzes and separates the thought from the thinker, whereas I can only *be* ethical, that is, directly and forthrightly be human. As long as humans are spontaneous, ethics as a systematic analytical discipline is impossible – so insists Taoism. Although moral sense theorists like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson raised a similar point, the history of Western philosophy came finally to relegate them to obscurity before such a luminary as Kant.

We cannot demonstrate the correctness of the categorical imperative, any more than we can theorize about our act while we are acting spontaneously. For I am human only to the extent that I am either kind or unkind, modest or immodest. And spontaneity is humanly actual; morality is the actual human at its truest. As spontaneity is unspeakable, so morality is untheorizable. And so Kant's *theory* of morality forever misses morality.

G. E. Moore said something to a similar effect in his celebrated attack on hedonistic ethics as the so-called naturalistic definition or fallacy. He said that “‘Good’ is happiness” is not a definition of “good” because the sentence still leaves “What is ‘good’?” open and unanswered. My above

argument partly answers what 'good' is, partly shows why Moore's argument carries some weight, and partly carries his argument further by attacking Kant's logical-categorical consistency which initially seemed immune from Moore's attack.

This does not deny, of course, legitimacy of concrete moral deliberation, nor does it mean that thinking about moral principles never cultivates our ethical discernment or never helps our concrete decision. This means, instead, that it is self-defeating to quest for ethics as a theory, *for its own sake*, about moral deliberation.

In short, "ethics" as an autonomous discipline defeats itself; "ethics" is really a shorthand expression for understanding "being ethical," a *human* life-experience, the very actuality of which evaporates when analyzed or thought *about*. Similarly, expanding from our consideration on ethics, the Tao (philosophical principles) cannot be tao-ed, knowledge of life is ignorance, and acts of our whole being do not act.

This is why Chu Hsi the "systematic" Neo-Confucian wrote no long systematic treatise and the "poetic" Chuang Tzu is, taken literally, silly if unintelligible. Their philosophy is hardly the usual "philosophy," for they have no sustained argumentation. Yet we cannot deny their writings "philosophy"; their contents are philosophically comprehensive, their insights are philosophically instructive. They are practicing philosophy of no conventional philosophy.

And so, either we must redefine philosophy to accommodate its Chinese version, or we beg the question by predefining the term "philosophy" and then excluding China from it. For Walter T. Stace, to say "Man is not free because being free means being unrestricted, and there is nothing unrestricted" is like saying "There is no man because man is to be defined as a five-legged animal, and there is no such animal." We should instead first watch how the word "freedom" is actually used.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in order not to beg the question, we must first see what Chinese-and-Western philosophical thinking actually is.

2

We will then notice that all philosophers think according to logical principles, but each does so differently from the other. Philosophic thinking had at least three modes: analysis, explanation, and evocation. Contradiction is the enemy of analysis; irrelevance, that of explanation; and breakdown of communication, that of evocation. Analysis and explanation say things directly; evocation does not. Analysis is clear thinking in the West. Explanation is a Neo-Confucian and Buddhist way of manifesting actuality. Evocation is a Taoistic way of saying without saying, stating one thing by implying another, implicitly stating the significant silence of actuality. This is their verbal way of intimating the Tao that cannot be tao-ed.

These three styles of philosophizing can be reduced to two. On the whole, the Western rigor seldom analyzes such imprecise topics as the culinary arts, and Confucian propriety would avoid litigation which violates negotiatory respect among persons. Western "logical analysis" fits in with clear legal and scientific reasoning, which also flows into medical ethics (as studies of adversarial compromise between the patient and the medical personnel) and democracy (as legal pushes and pulls among equal individuals). This is an explicit Yang-logic. Chinese "explanation" and "evocation" respectfully facilitate culinary arts (as embodiment of the harmony of things) and historical understanding (as respectful reading and learning from the past experience). This is a suggestive Yin-logic.

The above dichotomy applies even to borderline cases. Yin Kai-kuang (殷海光) with his logico-analytical mind has, however, written many passionate essays on cultural and political matters. Mikel Dufrenne is perhaps one of the most aesthetic writers of our time; his massive work on the phenomenology of aesthetic experience about the cosmic significance of beauty is, however, august, careful, and systematic.<sup>8</sup> In Plato, logic is so much the language of his poetry that many books have been written exclusively on and against his arguments. In contrast, in Chuang Tzu (莊子) the so-called "Chinese Plato," poetry is the language of his philosophy. As will

be described soon, Chuang Tzu's language shimmers with different layers of meaning and different lines of argument as the reader's situation shifts.

Such writers as Marcel, Ortega, Buber, Heidegger, and Santayana, are more literary and phenomenological than most Western philosophers. Chuang Tzu is, however, even *less* speculative, analytical, and egoistic than they. Whitman's "Song of Myself" is very similar to Chuang Tzu's poetic sentences, yet Whitman's love of himself differs from Chuang Tzu's self-forgetful meanderings. Wittgenstein in his mystical, aphoristic aspect is an "oddity" in the West, requiring "logical demythologization," as it were, in various "commentaries." Kung-sun Lung the so-called Chinese "logician" is, however, even less mathematical, analytical, ontological, and more aphoristic and enigmatic, than Wittgenstein. Derrida's deconstructionism reminds us of Chuang Tzu's iconoclastic approach to Confucian orthodoxy. But Chuang Tzu has much less solemn jargon, logical contortions, and is more nimble, humorous, and light-heartedly natural, than Derrida. Such is the difference in philosophical sentiment and basic attitude, the Yin-logic and the Yang-logic.

"Logical analysis" is the operation of *logos* (see Note 26), which originally meant (1) gleaning, (2) gathering, and then (3) counting-accounting. Gleaning is abstraction and analysis, tearing the similars out of actuality. Gathering is classification, piling up the similars. Counting-accounting is systematic organization, arranging the similars in order, coordinating one order of the similars with another different order of another similars. The last stage of counting-accounting is built on the first two, without which it is impossible.

Alphabetical system is such organization. It is "the system to write a word by successively adding one sound symbol after another, analytically, as in c-a-t."<sup>9</sup> An assembly line production by linking inventions together is another example of systematic control and organization. And a model for organization of knowledge in science is linear systematic rational system.

This link-together is effected by (i) picking up repeatable, fragmented,

identical elements (gleaning, analysis, abstraction), (ii) lumping these elements into one category (gathering, classification), and (iii) arranging different categories into a system (organization, systematic synthesis). Terry King (a cellist) said that every note in music is special; here nothing is special, and so the operation effectively facilitates control and manipulation. As Robert K. Logan in his *The Alphabet Effect* correctly pointed out, this logical mentality is what made possible the development of systematic sciences in the West. It is this mentality that has produced the above three approaches to Chinese philosophy.

In contrast, being “suggestive” means being connotative. And the Chinese language produces this aural effect by being musical and painterly. Although not the cause of thinking, a language system is a clue to understanding the thinking pattern of a cultural tradition.<sup>10</sup> Philological observation of a language may logically clue us into philosophical patterns in a culture. Considering the Chinese language helps us understand Chinese philosophy. Again, the purpose of going into something like “linguistic analysis” of Chinese is in order both to underline the typological errors of imposing the Western mode of thinking onto the Chinese, and to elaborate on the peculiarity of the Chinese philosophical thinking which complements the Western.

The Western languages operate by alphabets, proliferating in many syllables per word, facilitating grammatical syntactical changes (by merely changing spellings, syllables), and making for logical analysis. The Chinese language operates by characters having one sound per character, and one sense per sound (sometimes one sense per character). The language is painterly, having not declensions but intonations for syntactical connotations, facilitating empathetic poeticity.

Being monosyllabic, the Chinese language can afford to have “particles” (*hsü tzu* 虛字) to comb the sentential flow and emphasis. Being also monosemiotic, one meaning per sound (often per character), Chinese characters easily combine into rhyming picturesque conjoinments and couplets, composing poems whose poeticity flows into ordinary idioms and sentences.

As Chu Tzu-ch'ing (朱自清) reminded us,<sup>11</sup> three factors contribute to our appreciation of the Chinese writing: (1) the painterly images of characters, (2) the musical flow of their intoned pronunciations and (3) the imports (and sentiments) both images and music deliver.

The final factor of imports is shared by all languages. The first, pictorial shape of the Chinese characters enhances its lexical meaning. The second, musical flow peculiarly facilitates the recitation of Chinese phrases and sentences. After going into the visual literary beauty in the following, the musical flow, being peculiarly Chinese, will be elaborated.

Let us take painterly images first. The following common conjoints are pictorial: "shan shui" (山水) ('mountain, river,' depicting "landscape," "prospect"), "ching-hua shui-yüeh" (鏡花水月) ("mirror-flowers, water-moon," painting "insubstantial"), "niu-t'ou ma-mien" (牛頭馬面) (picturing "grotesque," "hideous"). Wang Po's (王勃) essays can be enjoyed being thickly studded with such picturesque imageries as "one-up-on-another (層), small-jagged-speaks (巒) rise (聳) fresh-blue-green (翠)." Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (梁啟超) said that he enjoyed Li Yi-shan's (李義山) poetry even though he did not thoroughly understand all of it, thanks perhaps to the visual images (as well as the rhythm.<sup>12</sup> The enjoyment is not without reason; a painterly connotative language represents reality more accurately than the "plain factual description," as is also claimed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of ambiguity.<sup>13</sup> Let us observe actuality in a Chinese way, to see how this is so.

We cannot trap and analyze the wind and weather, the "breath of the heavens" (天氣); we can only be present at the right place and time to *feel* its impact. Yet being unanalyzable is not being random; a clear pattern (*ko*) (格)<sup>14</sup> can be discerned. Chinese philosophy typically has its own wind-pattern (*fung ko*) (風格), bone-pattern (*ku ko*) (骨格), and breath-pattern (*ch'i ko*) (氣格); they make up an aura of actuality.

Such is the so-called "poetic truth"; few people note how absolutely accurate it is to actuality. A common poetic phrase, "pine wind" (*sung fung*) (松風) presents the actual wind. Its alluring ambiguity transposes our encounter with the wind, draws us into itself and lets us roam freely; we



can say “the wind through the pines,” or “the pine-scented wind,” or “the pines waving in the wind,” and the like, and then find that the phrase (*pace* Wailim Yap (葉威廉)<sup>15</sup> says more as well. The phrase nods to us and lures us on for more implications, embracing us in the actuality of the “pine wind.” No one is able exactly to pin this down, but no one denies its compelling actuality, its clear “logic.” In variously trying out possible English translation to the phrase, “pine wind,” we come to see how different the analytical-sequential weaving of the Western mode of logic is from the configurative-resonant juxtaposing of the Chinese mode.

And here is a dramatic example. I had always thought William Blake’s famous lines compact enough: “To see a world in a grain of sand, /And a heaven in a wild flower” (nine/seven words), until I came across Chu Tzu-ch’ing’s (朱自清) translation (in his essay, “Short Poems and Long Poems” (短詩與長詩): “Ih *shah* ih *shih*-chieh (一沙一世界), /Ih *hua* ih t’ien-kuo (一花一天國)” (“One sand, one world-sphere, /One flower, one heaven-realm”), symmetrical, five/five characters, rhyming in the simplest possible “ih,” “one” (as well as in “sh,” “u,” and “i-a” with “i-e” in the first line, and “i-u” with “i-u” in the second line). What economy, what resonance! Chu (朱) added, “Such describes the thought-feeling world (意境) of short poems.” I would add, such describes the way of Chinese writing and thinking, its configurative resonance. The configurative character has been described; description of resonance follows.

The sonic flow of intoned pronunciation is manifested in the following common couplets: “ts’en tz’u (參差)” (sounding “unequal”), “ching-t’ien tung-ti (驚天動地)” (“startling heaven, moving earth,” thundering “astounding, epoch-making”). “Wind” is voiced like the wind, wide and moving - “fung (風)”; “t’ien (天)” rings heaven, a high covering, wide open for all to see; “ch’i ts’an (悽慘)” tolls dark miserable feeling. All these are sound-sense correlations which present situations and feelings.

Furthermore, “ih,” “one,” can be pronounced differently in four intonations according to where the character occurs in a phrase (or a sentence); Kuo Shao-yü (郭紹虞) devoted three pages to twenty-five modes of match-

ing two simple onomatopoetic characters, “ting ( 丁 )” and “tong ( 當 ).”<sup>16</sup> Rhyme-flow defines the word-order, preventing us from saying “ma-t’ou niu-mien ( 馬頭牛面 )” for the usual idiom, “niu-t’ou ma-mien ( 牛頭馬面 )” (“ox-head, horse-face”), rhyming in “u” and “m” sounds, bringing out the vivid rhythm of the language.

In general, a “word” can be made of one monosyllabic sound (one character) or many polysyllabic sounds (duplication and triplication of characters), because a monosyllable is too sudden in sense and in sound. Few words having exactly identical denotation and connotation, an indefinite variety of combinations expresses an indefinite variety of sentiments.<sup>17</sup> They are compound words (same sound doubled, different sounds added) in musical flow (similar sounds rhymed, intonations adjusted). The Chinese language is then both monosyllabic and polysyllabic. It is monosyllabic because its component characters are monotoned and monosemiotic; it is polysyllabic because its characters are easily combined into words, phrases and sentences.

The tone is part and parcel of the meaning. A tone-change in a character means its meaning-change, much as adjectival “per’fect” accent-shifts into verbal “perfect’,” or the tone rises to end a question. Obviously, every language has some connection between sound and sense, but not as close as the Chinese; *no* Chinese word is intelligible unless put in a particular intonation, which lets the sentences flow, rhyme, and resonate contextually.

Sound and sense intertwine into a meaning-music; punning sometimes is a way of arguing. As Fukunaga Mitsuji noted ( 福永光司 ),<sup>18</sup> Chinese thought often exploits a peculiar semantic principle, “Like sound, like sense,” to explain a notion or to prove a point — for example, “Li ( 禮 ) is li ( 履 )” (the essence of proper-ritual for conduct is in its practice), “Li ( 禮 ) is li ( 離 )” (such essence is in discrimination), “Li ( 禮 ) is t’i ( 體 )” (Li is the substance of all conduct). Liu Hsieh ( 劉勰 ) constantly used this ploy in his *The Literary Heart and the Carving of Dragons* ( 文心雕龍 ), but he is not alone; the custom pervades all Chinese writings. The Chinese essays chant, poetize; poetization is internal to lexical meaning, even to logical

argumentation.

Finally, the chanting picturesque character is enhanced by *hsü tzu* (虛字) or "empty characters," characters empty of meaning; they are punctuation (and often prepositions) for the sentential tone and flow out of the language's monosyllabic units. The "empty words" (so-called "particles") produce the rhythm, putting the right emphasis on the right place for the right sentiment. All this helps the musicality of the Chinese language.<sup>19</sup>

Linguistic musicality is usually taken as meaningless intonation; this is why "particles" are called "empty words." But the musical impact does move our whole being in a *particular* direction. The noted violinist Fritz Kreisler's words recur:

"Every musical note is a living thought current. [As] electrical waves in air can carry a wireless message over thousand miles, [so] . . . musical wave . . . act and react on our nervous system . . . adjust . . . the atoms and ions of our natures. . . . The spell of music is . . . universal . . . When I heard a Chinese music was revealed to me."<sup>20</sup>

Music is the language of deep pathos, meaningfully vibrating our beings. Musicality is so much a part of the Chinese language that it is the only language treated in a dictionary of music. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* has a section on Chinese "speech tones and music." It says that

Tonal inflection of individual syllables is a phonemic element in Chinese speech . . . The musical contour of the tone for the same word . . . during the past 1,500 years is so regular that it is possible to establish the abstract tone class for the great majority of words . . . [Conversely] the enjoyment of music . . . is . . . assumed to be based on extra-musical elements. Thus . . . all instrumental works . . . have programmatic or allegorical titles. . . . [The language is particularly conducive to operatic rendition.] The Peking opera presents life in an artistic language . . . that has been accepted by the people. It is effective because it selects the essence of reality . . . "<sup>21</sup>

Let us look at the fluid musicality of the Chinese language from another angle. In the Indo-European languages it is difficult to perform such

verbal acrobatics as palindromes, concrete poems and puns. Palindrome is a word or a sentence reading the same backward and forward, as in “Live not on evil.” Concrete poem uses letters or words to create patterns, shapes, and pictures of what is referred, as in a poem by e.e. cummings depicting stillness by saying,

“n  
Othl  
n  
g can  
s  
urPas  
s  
the m  
y  
SteR  
y  
of  
of  
s  
tilLnes  
s”

In a pun two words sound similar, as when Jesus said, “Thou art Peter (petros), and upon this rock (petra) I will build my church.”<sup>22</sup> And yet, although these verbal acrobatics are difficult in the Indo-European languages, in Western music things of this sort come easy; we see many musical pieces in the genres of circle canon (“round”) and perpetuum mobile; round is a canon in which each singer returns from the conclusion of the melody to its beginning, repeating it ad libitum, and perpetuum mobile proceeds from beginning to end in the same rapid motion. And, combining both circle canon and perpetuum mobile, we have “mirror composition” which can have either a retrograde form or an inverted form of its mirror reflection. Both the melody and its inversion are acceptable; two players can play the same composition, one from the start, another backwards.<sup>23</sup>

The Chinese language can afford to have the so-called “go-round poem (迴文詩),” which can be read starting anywhere in any direction (see Ap-

pendix I); this is equivalent to rolling all the above linguistic-musical acrobatics into one in a natural and easy manner, a kaleidoscope and “kalosonoscope” in one. This fact shows how peculiarly fluid and musical the Chinese language is, comparable to canon in the Form of a Rose (see Appendix II) in music. No wonder the music of Chinese language resonates us to its connotations; rendered into English, the Chinese sentence often turns either bald (when only the content is attended to), or florid (when the nuances are also brought out). Either way, the original chant, the snug unspoken persuasiveness, is gone.

Far from being superfluous, linguistic musicality accurately conveys the actual sentences, and precisely presents the actual situation. In ancient days the message was conveyed in rhyme for its memorization, to prevent adding and dropping of words. Today, rhythmic succinctness (as in advertisements) helps strike the message home to the hearer. Objectively musicality hits the actual happenings in just the right manner. Happenings come connected historically, not logically. A musical connection captures actual-historical happenings more aptly and convincingly than a logical one does.

Another noted violinist and musician, Yehudi Menuhin, said

“Music, like language, has developed its own structure, grammars and vocabularies. It had to move in a way that corresponded with the human way of thinking and acting. To me the structure of music is part of the structure of nature, of the very vibrations themselves, the system of overtones.”<sup>24</sup>

In other words, music is structural vibrations both of ourselves and of nature. Being musical, the Chinese language comes closest to resonating actuality, inner and outer, individual and universal. It is no accident that Menuhin’s words and, in fact, what is said above on the Chinese (linguistic) musicality describe what is stressed in the ancient classic, the *Book of Rites* (禮記) (“on Music (樂記)”). The following passages are particularly relevant:

“Music rises from the human heart when [it] is touched by the external world. When the heart is touched by the external world, the heart is moved, and . . . finds its expression in sounds. These sounds echo . . . one another and produce a rich variety, and when [they] become regular, then we have rhythm. [This] is called music . . . Music illustrates the primordial forces of nature . . . Heaven represents the principle of eternal motion, while Earth represents the principle of remaining still, and these two . . . permeate life . . . Therefore, the superior man tries to create harmony in the human heart by a rediscovery of human nature, and tries to promote music as a means to the perfection of human culture. When such music prevails and the people’s minds are led toward the right ideals . . . , we may see the appearance of a great nation.”

And David Hawkes echoes the sentiment when he said,

“One of the most interesting features of Chinese verse is that the connection between music and poetry was far closer and more persistent than in the West . . . [E]very new verse form which emerged derived its existence from the evolution of some new song-form, and that this in turn was the result of some new musical development. No doubt this is to some extent true of Ancient Greek poetry; but it continued to be true of Chinese poetry for an immensely longer period of time. . . . [W]e should expect the striking metrical differences between the *Shih Ching* ( 詩經 ) songs and the song-style poems of *Ch'u Tz'u* ( 楚辭 ) to have had a musical parallel.”<sup>25</sup>

Now, Chinese language has been said to be both pictorial and musical here we must say that the pictorial is to be subsumed under the musical. For the pictorial Chinese characters are less plain pictures of things than actuality *in* the making, the thrust of whose movement the characters echo. The pictorial characters are more music than pictures. Music is to be undergone to appreciate; painting is surveyed ready-made. Similarly, Chinese characters picture the undergoing of the happening of things more than represent a thing out there.

Even the Chinese painting is less a picture than a musical score of actuality. The score is not music but an indispensable sign that evokes our entering in the making of music; the Chinese painting is not actuality but

an indispensable beckoning to us into actual things existing, coming out as things, by tracing with us the trust of appreciated actuality.

The score is not read but heard by a trained reader-listener. The Chinese painting is not seen but traced and evokes the vital breath-pattern of actuality in the spectator who is trained in a certain tradition of painterly strokes. And Chinese characters are compressed Chinese paintings. They enable us to trace and feel the musical thrust of actuality in the making as actuality. Chinese characters are pictorial in a musical sense.

### 3

Now we can go one bold step into the Chinese mind, Such a cosmic meaning-music in the Chinese language enables the Chinese mind to argue by punning which the Western mind usually considers invalid, if not in bad taste also. Punning is allegedly the lazy mind's pastime activity, disregarding facts and logic.

This accusation is valid if its assumption is correct, which says that punning is a pure munching on words, irrelevant to facts and logic. Following facts assume that truth lies in factual correspondence; following logic assumes that validity lies in abstract universality.

Two responses are in order, first on logic, then on facts, (a) *Logos* is counting turned accounting.<sup>25</sup> China developed "accounting" in the painterly-recitative world of characters and literature, and ended up not having an explicit logic. The West developed "accounting" into logic, abstract reckoning, and ended up producing rift and tension between what is and what is thought.

Now, logical universality is in tension with factual correspondence. We cannot prove that  $7+5=12$ , an abstract manipulation of number-concepts according to mind-concocted rules, *works* in the practical world. Why does pure mathematics apply to empirical facts? How is it that we cannot be as logical in the practical world (commerce, management, negotiation) or the aesthetic world (fashion, cartoon, interior decoration), as we can be on paper? A vast number of the Western philosophical "prob-

lems” are artificially created, as Wittgenstein said, but he did not say that they are created in *this* fashion, from Plato’s learning and recognizing (the doctrine of recollection) to Kant’s critiques of the limits of our reason, to the modern problems of the privacy of pain and the possibility of personal communication.

Let us take  $7+5=12$ . It belongs to Kant’s genius to find that  $7+5=12$  is a synthetic a priori judgment (see his *Critique of Pure Reasons*, B15-17). The operation of addition is purely formal; it is a priori and necessary, without any help from our concrete experience. Yet the operation is synthetic related to the world of experience in the following three ways (one of which Kant saw).

First, as Kant said, the notion of “12” is not logically implied in any of the notions that go before “12” – neither in “7,” nor in “5,” “+,” or “=.”  $7+5=12$  obtains (is valid) only by actually going through the operation of addition. Addition is a priori; the *operation* and its result are synthetic. This is the logical connection with actuality.

Secondly, as we operate it,  $7+5=12$  clicks in on us (synthetic) as logically valid (a priori). We are convinced and feel comfortable with the result. As we go from “7” and “5” to “12,” we click into mathematical understanding. This is the subjective connection with actuality.

Finally,  $7+5=12$  applied to pens and apples; something purely mathematical (a priori) applied to actual *objects* (synthetic). Locke said that “*a* is *a*” provides a reason for things’ impenetrability. Causality seems to be patterned after logic. This is the objective connection with actuality.

The problems begins here, however. We know *that* the above three connections are true in fact; we do not know the logical (ontological?) reasons *why* it is valid. Nor do we know whether this synthetic *character* of logic is itself logical or merely contingent, that is, whether such connection to actuality is itself logically necessary both to logic and to actuality – a priori, or is merely factual, that is, synthetic. (The latter problem is usually relegated to philosophy of science, a typically Western classification.)



Such problems as these are insoluble because we make logic “a priori” – abstract, separate from facts, then stipulate that logic be valid in fact. Our logic must first be cut off from facts; logic we say is purely *our* a priori manipulation of signs. Yet we also insist that this logical operation of ours must somehow logically, universally, and necessarily apply to facts; otherwise logic is “empty” (of significance?). And so, a priori and factual – between these two requirements there should be a logical-factual (ontological?) link, but neither Hume’s custom, Kant’s transcendentalism, Hegel’s phenomenology, nor anything else in philosophy in the West, is a logically convincing link, for none of them has proven that the rational (logical) is the real (factual). As Lin Yutang (林語堂) said with his tongue in cheek,

“Both [the English and the Chinese] peoples have a profound distrust of logic and are extremely suspicious of arguments that are too perfect. We believe that when an argument is too logical it cannot be true. And both countries are gifted more at doing the right thing than at giving happy reasons for doing them.”<sup>27</sup>

But, then, if abstract logic cannot be proven to validly apply to reality, revealing of truth by the Chinese way of arguing by punning cannot be accused of being logically invalid.

(b) We allegedly obtain factual truths by empirical investigation, which is a process of negotiation between our experienced facts and our demand to make logical sense out of them; our observation adjusts and is adjusted by our hypothesis. When the negotiation succeeds and the hypothesis is matched by our observation, we proudly christen the matched hypothesis “theory” (allegedly containing “factual truths”).

But can we be sure that the “negotiation” has really occurred? Sadly, never. David Hume honestly confessed to our dishonesty of pasting “causality” over such uncertainty. No amount of argument can dispel the sinister possibility that the allegedly successful negotiation with facts is merely something in our mind. For we can never disprove that “facts” are what we experience as such, not sheer facts out there, or our negotiations

are what we experience as such, not negotiations in touch with the objects out there. Again, “empirical investigation” is our subjective notion we believe to be objective; “correspondence with facts” turns out to be a mere Western cognitive preference.

And so, if the truth of factual observation and the validity of logical universality are now suspect, on beliefs in which the Western accusation of arguing by punning is based, then arguing by punning is not as invalid or distasteful as it first looked. The accusation is now defused.

As to our positive “proof” of the Chinese arguing by punning, Chinese punning is not a manipulation of signs to map and look *at* things, but a discovery of, and moving in, verbal harmony, both in sound and in sight. The logical connection aims at its correspondence with facts; the musical connection corresponds and resonates, capturing historical happenings aptly and convincingly, drawing the reader *into* the actuality presented by the music. In the music of Chinese language the hearer rhymes with actuality and moves with things.

Furthermore, Su Tung-p’o (蘇東坡) said, “In poetry is a painting (詩中有畫)”; Chu-Tzu-ch’ing (朱自清) responded, “In the sentences is a painting (文中有畫).”<sup>28</sup> Presentation of imageries is factually convincing, and painterly shapes of the characters enhanced by their pronunciations, appropriately intoned, bring visual presentations to life. In China, to write is to paint — to paint with aural-visual characters.

Sound and sight are thus constitutive of meaning in Chinese literature. Sounds and sights are also constitutive of historical actuality. And so the sounds and sights of Chinese literature draw us into historical actuality. Here arguing by punning amounts to discovering a particular match among aural-visual presentations of actuality, thereby a particular match among facts via linguistic connections.

Heidegger said that Greek and German grammars are the replicas of reality; reality has nouns (things), adjectives (modes of things), verbs (activities), and adverbs (modes of activities), and so on. We cannot say that Chinese grammar is the replica of reality, because there is no Chinese

“grammar” in the Western sense. Instead, Chinese sentences move with and within actuality, plainly and persuasively. In terms of the Western grammar, we can say that Chinese nouns are verbs; Han Yü (韓愈) once said, “[anyone] entering China is China-ed (入於中國則中國之)” as we “virtue what we virtue (德其所德),” and an ancient Chinese Dictionary (說文解字) said, “Ten eyes candle [the] hid[e] (十目燭隱).” Adverbs are verbs, as when Han Yü (韓愈) said, “Words not already-ed yet (言未既).” Adjectives are also verbs, as the *Huai Nan Tzu* (淮南子) says, “To same [the] now and [the] ancient (同今古).” The same word (*shih*) (是) can be a noun (“correctness”), an adjective (“this”), a copula (“is”), an adverb (“therefore”), an interjection (“indeed”), a verb (“to correct”), and a particle to smooth the sentential flow. Heidegger may have difficulty proving the reality-replica-character of Greek and German grammars; Chinese sentences present reality as a matter of fact.

This is not to say that Chinese sentences never make mistakes,<sup>29</sup> but rather that Chinese sentences do not need to labor on the legitimacy of arguing by punning – Chuang Tzu even punned by playing with argument (especially in his Second Chapter). All this is legitimate because the Chinese culture has no conscious rift between language and reality, no linguistic revolt against nature as in the Indo-European world. Human independence marred Heidegger’s pronouncement. Chinese presentation (by sounds and sights) of our experiential undergoing gives a go-ahead to the Chinese way of arguing by punning and punning by arguing.

It is this experiential undergoing that gives an actual lived understanding. Here to demand an explicit logic, grammar and explication is to demand trapping the wind in the box. The inner logic of actuality can be understood not by analytical translation but by implicit situational *transposition*.

This is most apparent in the book of *Chuang Tzu* which presents actuality obliquely. It is as absurd to explicate the book as it is to say, “We must be spontaneous,” and then argue for its necessity. I tried my hand at transposing Chuang Tzu’s atmosphere onto the twentieth century English, in my little book, *Chuang Tzu – World Philosopher at Play*.

More than seven people have reviewed it so far, formally and informally. One of them said, “. . . like the cognitivist readers at whom Wu aims his . . . critique, he too ends by telling us ‘what Chuang-tzu had in mind.’ ”<sup>33</sup>

This reviewer neglected Robert Neville’s sensitive distinction in his *Foreplay* to my book. Neville said that

“since the meaning of his [Wu’s] position come from what it negates, and since what is now to be negated, technocracy, is not only different from Confucianism but as abhorrent to Confucianism as it is to Taoism, a contemporary application is less interpretation than transposition . . . Professor Wu makes a careful case for his transposition of Chuang-tzu into a contemporary voice.”<sup>31</sup>

Hesitating at this reasoning, I yet admire his rejection of interpretation in favor of transposition. In my *Chuang Tzu – World Philosopher at Play*, I have tried to transpose Chuang Tzu by retracing his route and represent his environment in our contemporary English language and thinking.

Transposition is essential because a major problem of the West is the supposition that reason comes to “solve problems.” To take life as a problem is itself a problem, and Chuang Tzu came to solve *this* problem. Then Mr. Neville perceptively adds,

“This way of putting the point of Professor Wu’s book, of course, is self-referentially absurd . . . But then how else can one say what a book is about? Chuang tzu’s thought needs Chuang-tzu’s language of indirection for expression . . . And . . . the argumentation [of this book] is self-referentially consistent.”<sup>32</sup>

Transposition *present* Chuang Tzu (莊子) only in the “language of indirection,” Yin-direction, in a connotative Yin-logic.

How precise the Yin-direction is can be seen in the fascinating story of the Cook (庖丁) that began Chuang Tzu’s crisp Third Chapter, “Principles of Nourishing Life (養生主)”; it bears quoting extensively:

“A cook, for Lord Wen Hui (文惠君), is loosening an ox.  
At the touch of his hand, at the leaning of his shoulder,  
At the stepping-on of his foot, at the pressing of his knees,  
Zip! Zip! – (the bone leaves the meat) Zing! – the knife performs through  
the ox,  
hitting the tune,  
Matching the Dance of Mulberry Forest,  
hitting the collective symphonies of Ching Shou (經首).  
Lord Wen Hui said, ‘Ha! Good! How could the skill arrive at such height!’  
The Cook, letting go of the knife, replied,  
‘What your servant is given to is the Tao, beyond skill.  
In the beginning, . . . I saw no things that were not oxen;  
Three years later, I came never to see the whole ox.  
Now, your servant, with spirit meeting, not with eyes seeing, have the senses  
and knowledge stop and the spirit desiring, walk – . . .  
The fine cook yearly replaces the knife; it has been chipped.  
A band of common cooks monthly replace the knives; they have been  
broken.  
Now, the knife of your servant is nineteen years old.  
It has loosened thousands of oxen, and the blade is like new from the  
grindstone.  
Those joints have spaces, this knife blade has no thickness.  
With no thickness to enter spaces, for the knife’s leisurely roaming about,  
there must of course be more than enough ground.  
This is how, with nineteen years of use, the knife blade is still like new from  
the grindstone. – . . .’  
Lord Wen Hui said, ‘Good! I have heard words of the Cook.  
I have obtained the nourishing of life in them.’ ”<sup>33</sup>

Here the “ox” can be said to represent the world’s things and events.  
If the “senses and the knowledge” are analysis, then those other “fine” and  
“common cooks” are an explicit logic, and the story describes the live im-  
plicit logic at work – the senses and knowledge ceasing, the thickless knife  
dancing, sliding through spacious hollows, tracing their inherently-so, going  
along with the spinal energies, until the ox loosens itself apart and falls as  
the soil returned to the ground.

The story clearly says that we must go along with things and events, and in the going along we come to understand their bone-pattern, their “logic,” the ways things go as they do, of themselves. This is the “Way” of the skies and the fields, the Tao of the heaven and earth, the principles of philosophy truly so called.

In going along with things we cease analysis, which inserts our own ideas; it is a disturbance. We reap false clarity, we “break” our “knife” of true understanding. Stopping the explicit logic, entering the ambiguous on-going of things-and-events, we practice the Yin-logic, an implicit system.

Chinese philosophy is shaped by the Yin-logic, and is less a noun than an adjective, being “philosophical” and “systematic”; it is reflected in the concrete flow of the thinker’s actual living – in his letters, poetry, epitaphs, talks, journals. To go through philosophico-biographical writings is to undergo-retrace an odyssey of life, to understand how things are put together in the way a particular “philosopher” lives his life. Burton Watson said of the *Chuang Tzu*,

“In the end, the best way to approach Chuang Tzu, I believe, is not to attempt to subject his thought to rational systematic analysis, but to reread his words until one has ceased to think of what he is saying and instead had developed an intuitive sense of the mind moving behind the words, and of the world in which it moves.”<sup>34</sup>

In the end, all Chinese philosophers must be read likewise.

#### 4

And so we have two ways of philosophizing, the Western and the Chinese, the explicit and the implicit, the Yang and the Yin. And these two manners of philosophizing must come together.

Left alone, the Western manner of philosophizing tends to become ruthless analysis and calculated precision, intent on eliminating any hint of loose connotation and subtlety. Left to itself, the Chinese manner of philosophizing tends to amorphous literary beauty and endless textual criti-

cism. It is not that the West does not have rich and deep literature. It is that the West does not mix literature with philosophy, and that this separation is not good. Many mixtures are now thrown into limbo (Buber, Marcel, Shaw, Voltaire, etc.). Plato, Hume, Russell, Santayana, Whitehead, Bergson, Quine, Blanshard, are good writers; their beauty is not taken with *philosophical* seriousness. Both Philosophy and literature suffer by not coming together.

But it is not good to have confused mixing, that is, mixing without being aware of mixing. China tends to have no systematic probing, but only insights splashing all over. We must ask, count, and arrange. Confusion (亂) is bad; con-fusion (混沌) is good. The Western quest for precision and systematicity can only clarify Chinese philosophizing; Chinese depths of perceptive humanness can only benefit Western philosophy. And such Yin-Yang unification takes place, more or less convincingly, whenever we present Chinese philosophy in English or philosophize in a Chinese fashion in English.

This essay, however clumsy, is an example of such a unification. And to say so bears directly on the main theme of unification. This essay started with wondering aloud about Nakamura's (中村) strategy of cultural comparison – to observe four different cultural reactions to one common stimulus of Buddhism. Nakamura did not examine the famous third-man argument which asks, whenever a classifying system is produced, where that system itself fits in the classification it had produced. Plato has produced the distinction of knowledge and opinion; is Plato's system to be called "knowledge" or "opinion"? Kant has produced the trichotomy of the empirical, the logical, and the transcendental; is Kant's system itself "empirical" "logical," or "transcendental"? Similarly, Nakamura has produced four reactions of four cultures; where does his observation fit? The problem in *this* context is insoluble, because Nakamura (as well as Plato and Kant) *withdraws himself from* the points at issue; *he* is an ideal observer who is not part of the problem. The system is closed, a completed project; his own "system" is one more item thrown besides the already closed sys-

tem, crying for being fitted into that system. This is the first difficulty.

The second difficulty is this. Being a Japanese seems to leave something unfinished in the description of the Japanese reaction to Buddhism, and to tinge the entire description with Japanese color. Yet if he does incorporate his own observation as part of the Japanese reaction, then his system would lack the objectivity it requires. He can neither incorporate his system into his system, nor can he not incorporate it. This is his second difficulty.

And so Nakamura's difficulty is twofold. He is either within his comparison scheme, or he is out of it. If he is out of it, the third man dilemma applies; if he is in it, then this scheme is from a Japanese standpoint. How about this my essay?

I am already thrown *in* the heat of the West-China debate; I am immune from the third man dilemma. But how about my Chinese bias? As long as I have been proposing and practicing the community of differences, I think I am immune from it, too. For I propose a Chinese-like community of differences, a Yin-Yang unity; I described and argued for it in a Western fashion. My proposal itself is a unity of China and the West.

When I said this essay is a clumsy example of inter-cultural unification it proposes, the essay admits of taking part in its proposal, and the third-man dilemma is resolved. Then, the essay starts with continuing the critical debates over what to make of *Chinese* philosophy, and describe what it revealed in three ways of making sense out of Chinese philosophy; all this is a typical Western manner of philosophy dealing with Chinese mode of thinking, and that in the manner acceptable to the Chinese mode.

In short, I practiced a comparative description hermeneutics on Chinese philosophy. This is to jump into the Western-Chinese interactions *already* in progress. From such participation the essay comes out yearning for the Yin-Yang unification of both the Western mode of thinking and the Chinese mode; I cry out as a human being aware of the need for both. *And then* I realize that this my very doing so is part of such realization. My starting point is already part of my object of observation. I am in (and out



of) the stream of East-West interactions and the ideal of their unification.

Such unity can be accomplished in two ways: (a) a Western strengthening of the Chinese Yin-logic, and (b) a Chinese infusing of life-reasonableness into the Western Yang-logic.

(a) Things are best understood with implicit logic, which yet must sometimes be picked out of oblivion, examined and clarified. Philosophy is Socratic therapy; as the medical doctor should learn anatomy and physics which do not heal but *help* heal, so the Chinese philosopher should learn analytic conscientiousness from the West to become philosophically perceptive. Two examples may be cited.

First, we may say that three situations must be excluded from the Taoist "spontaneity": (i) impulsive action on the spur of the moment, (ii) physiological reflexes and uncontrolled panic, and (iii) boredom of the assembly line worker. The English notion of "spontaneity" may include them, but the Chinese *tzu-jan* (自然) (self-so), *t'ien-jan* (天然) (natural-so), and *t'ien-fang* (天放) (nature-let-go) do not.

Chinese spontaneity is self-forgetful involvement, the depth of human sanity blended with rationality and neuromuscular activity as required by the situation. In the chess player's careful calculation, the painter's creativity, and the cook-dancer's disciplined operation, there is no room for impulsive action, physiological reflex, uncontrolled panic, or the boredom of routine mechanical work.

We feel, however, that *tzu-jen* (自然) or *t'ien-fang* (天放) does somehow involve physiological reflex and impulsive action, yet without their usual casual rashness. We feel that there are two opposite aspects in spontaneity: a tossed-out casualness and an intense devotion. Casualness pulls devotion from boredom or recklessness; devotion protects casualness from panic or sleeplessness. But how such relaxed concentration obtains, in what inner unity these two aspects come together, remains a mystery. Taoist spontaneity is a part of us, yet far from being exhaustibly explicable.<sup>35</sup>

And then we suddenly realize that our improved understanding, how-

ever inadequate yet, has resulted from going through a painstaking analysis of *t'ien fang*. This is an example of Chinese discernment benefitted by Western philosophy.

Our second example is the Taoist's paradoxical way of expression. Suppose I feel I am forever unable to catch up with chores and deadlines. No matter how fast I go I feel as if I am "goofing" and "doing nothing" compared with mountains of things yet to be done. Suddenly I might feel that, from the perspective of things yet to be done, I am doing nothing, although I am constantly doing at full speed. I can then say to myself, "All right, I am now goofing without goofing, doing and doing nothing (為而不為)." So thinking, without relaxing my speed, I am suddenly relaxed; a perspective-change has effected a real change in myself. This is the first point, the origin of the Taoist paradoxical way of expression.

Now, someone may object to the descriptions, "goofing without goofing," "doing and doing nothing (為而不為)." The descriptions are unnecessarily anti-rational. We can just say, from a point of view of the unfinished task I am doing nothing; from the point of view of my effort, I am doing everything. Divide and clarify; do not cry "Wolf!" of paradox.

I can agree that one *can* say so. But saying so differs from saying "doing and doing nothing," which is compact, vivid, evocative, concrete, non-divisive, as is the situation itself. The latter expression is a truer reflection of the situation. The former perspectival description is the philosopher's objective statement; the latter paradoxical expression is of my own immediate experience. This is the second point, my dialogue with philosophical reaction to paradoxical expressions.

Finally, the above two points, expression and examination, would not have happened in Chinese soil. It is peculiarly Western, yet applied hermeneutically to the Chinese-Taoist way of putting things. Without the Chinese way of expression, perhaps there would have been no such except in remote corners of poetry. Without the Western hermeneutical analysis, perhaps such an expression would remain buried from rational understanding.

(b) And the Western thinker should benefit from Chinese philosophy.

In his *Metamagical Themas* Douglas Hofstadter, a computer scientist, said that the computer is the epitome of logic-as-reckoning, which explains the structure of our mind's workings but would fail to retrace or reconstruct how our mind actually works, because our mind goes playfully, while logic operates mathematically.<sup>36</sup> This thesis strikes at the root of Western philosophy, in which mind and mathematics have been the major synonymous topics.

Hofstadter's thesis has been stated by Blaise Pascal and Hubert Dreyfus.<sup>37</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre even said that "stories catch time by its tail . . . Stories tell lies,"<sup>38</sup> for stories retrospectively recount; they are not true to the actual situation. What is new in Hofstadter's thesis is that it is presented by the computer expert himself.

But Hofstadter's clear thinking of a computer-mathematician, as with Pascal's and Dreyfus', may have overstated the case. Chinese common sense reminds us that, though different, mathematics and our mind are both rational; our house of rationality must have a more complex structure than William James' mansion, where many rooms of special disciplines share a common corridor of common sense. For the "corridor" pervades those many "rooms"; no architect can put such a situation into the house plan.

The situation of our rationality is thus as follows: (i) The human mind and mathematics are both rational, (ii) but different; the one plays, the other counts, (iii) though mathematics is *one* of many ways of explaining the mind's workings. (iv) Thus we have many ways of being rational, each not reducible to the other; there are formal explicit ways of *using* mathematics, and there are informal implicit ways, as in storytelling where points in the plot must be counted and arranged. (v) And yet these ways should freely come together to do justice to actual situations.<sup>39</sup>

For instance, a mere poetic feeling cannot make us understand the bone-movement, which can be studied with the Western X-ray or ultrasonic photographs and handled by biomechanical engineering. But all these scientific analyses hurt more than help the bone-broken patient unless they are *used* to empathetically discern the actual movement of the bone

in the live body. And it is here that Chinese philosophy can help.<sup>40</sup>

All in all, to live rationally and perceptively, we must realize that we have many ways of being rational (iv) and thereby become adept at freely using mathematics (v). And we accomplish this twofold fact neither by Chinese thinking alone nor by Western thinking alone; our Chinese philosophy must go through the fire of the West to become meta-Chinese philosophy, or Chinese hermeneutics in comparative philosophy.

Comparative philosophy is a project of the one human community of rational *differences*. We must become perceptive of the uniqueness of each style of philosophizing, and grow adept at integrating different philosophical traditions. We do, after all, learn how to walk by walking with those who walk, before *analyzing* the physiology of walking; when we do both the walking and analyzing we are more complete human beings. Here, as elsewhere in life, we either thrive together or perish insulated.<sup>41</sup>

## NOTES

1. Hajime Nakamura (中村元), *Toyo-jin no Shi'i-Hoho*, (東洋人の思惟方法), 4 Volumes, Tokyo: Shunshu Sha (春秋社), 1962, etc. [English tr.-ed. by Philip P. Wiener, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan*, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1964]. I have two reactions to it:

(a) His own tacit assumption in examining various types of thinking resulted in a purely negative evaluation of the concrete Chinese thinking. He simply assumes that abstract logical thinking, which involves abstraction of universals from the concrete beings and pure logical manipulation of signs, is good; it is, in fact, our thinking proper. And so whatever rich variety of descriptive vocabulary we have (as in China and Japan) belongs to the *primitive* culture, to be later developed into our "civilized" colorless nouns and concepts (such as in India and the West).

This assumption can already be seen in the Introduction, where *all* his description of language, thought, mode of thinking, cultural pattern, and the like, are exclusively in terms of Western categories

Since in his opinion, India and Tibet are more similar, than Japan and China are, to the Western mode of thinking, China and Japan suffer most in the book. Six

to the twelve sections on China, and the clinching section on Japan (the final fifth section on shamanism is unimportant), castigate thinking in China and Japan.

(b) Contrasting the Chinese thinking with the Indian, Nakamura summarily relegates the former thinking to primitivism. And the contrast would have remained essentially the same were the Indian thinking to be replaced by the Western. These points indicate that the Indian thinking is similar to the Western, and that the Chinese pattern of thinking is more different from the Western one than Indian.

This is to say that one cannot learn from Nakamura. He has many insights and implications that help one probe into the peculiarities of Chinese culture and its thinking. Nakamura's book itself, however, tells us neither *what* is the basic pattern of thinking of Chinese culture, nor how *peculiar* this pattern is as compared with the Indo-European.

2. Cf. My review of John M. Koller's *Oriental Philosophies*, Second Edition, NY: Macmillan Company, 1983, in *Philosophy East and West*, June, 1986. Also cf. my review of the same book, First Edition, 1970, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, September 1971. For Donald J. Munro, see his *The Concept of Man in Early China* (1969) and *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China* (1977); for Chad Hansen, see his *Language and Logic in Ancient China* (1983), all published by Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
3. As Professor Seymour Sargent (of University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, Wisconsin, USA) also reminded me, the situation is not as simple as it looks. Whether or not geomancy is geography, alchemy is chemistry, astrology is astronomy, or acupuncture is medical technology, is as difficult to answer as is whether the Jewish taboo against eating pork is ecological policy, medical prudence or religious ritual. Science and technology is as imbued with cultural presuppositions as any *human* activity.

Someone may insist that the technological *aspect* of geomancy, alchemy, astrology, can be abstracted and analyzed for its own sake; this aspect is scientific and universally applicable.

We must remind him that (1) abstracting technological scientific activity from other cultural activities, is *itself* a cultural activity (a peculiarly modern Western one, for other cultures do not do so), that (2) such cultural aspect, however, *can* be universalized (after all, we are all humans living in the same world), that (3) science-and-technology is not the only human cultural aspect that is universal, that this paper serves to bring out one more aspect – poetic suggestiveness – that is also universally applicable to actuality, and that (4) these two cultural universals

(scientific-technological and poetic-suggestive) should come together to form a whole humanness.

4. Arthur Wright explicitly said so in H. G. Creel, ed., *Chinese Civilization in Liberal Education*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959, p. 141, but David S. Nivison (on p. 144) also agrees to the view. See also pp. 135, 154, 159. Henry Rosemont, Jr. said in Honolulu, summer of 1983, that China has no ethics (as Aristotle started it), and drew fire from Wing-tsit Chan. Rosemont's view is being quietly adopted in many campuses throughout USA. Harvard University, e.g., has no courses in Chinese philosophy in its Philosophy Department.
5. Professor Seymour Sargent suggested another response to the third ploy: (1) by definition, "philosophy" is a peculiarly Western discipline, and so China has no philosophy; yet (2) as studying Kant just in relation to Spinoza and Carnap is to miss him, so studying philosophy in narrow technical sense is to miss philosophy. (3) Real thinking operates on a broad cultural level, and "comparative philosophy" is a misnomer if not self-defeating ethnocentrism. Not comparative philosophy but comparative culture should be pursued.

I failed to take this interesting route. For philosophy is by nature basic, coherent, comprehensive thinking (the definition most Western philosophers would be prepared to defend); philosophy therefore has transcultural imports, for which we do not need to go to "culture." All this may raise Professor Sargent's eyebrows; it corrects the technical *definition* of "philosophy" as a rigorous analysis of concepts, and the definition cannot, by definition, be corrected.

Definitional debates are, however, one of the proper philosophical projects. Philosophy thinks about everything including itself, its own definition; it is radical self-reflection.

Thus unlike "what is physics?" which is not a problem in physics, "what is philosophy?" is one of the central philosophical problems since pre-Socratics till today (cf. Henry W. Johnstone Jr., ed., *What is Philosophy?*, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1965 where Russell, Carnap, Cornforth, Black, Dewey, Husserl, McKeon, Collingwood, Heidegger expressed their views; Arthur C. Danto, *What Philosophy Is*, NY: Harper & Row, 1968). For a more recent anthology of essays on "philosophy as I see it," see Charles J. Bontempo & S. Jack Odell, eds., *The Owl of Minerva: Philosophers on Philosophy*, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1975. Gabriel Marcel's short pssay in it (pp. 119-22) seems to capture the negative aspect (analysis, technical reason, technocracy, acceptance, reascent) of the present essay.

As for the content of definition. Philosophy is arguably something comprehensive, and would miss itself were it to take rigorous analysis as its *only* legitimate pursuit, as Professor Sargent himself has noted — already a scepticism in the realm of definition. We note that such a switching of definition — taking philosophy as rigorous analysis *or* as basic comprehensive thinking — results in reshaping of the very structure and methodological assumptions of philosophy as it is unavoidable in cultural comparison, a project of mutual thoroughgoing rectification.

Incidentally, my comparative-philosophical reorientation is paralleled by Wilfred Cantwell Smith's comparative-religious reformulation of the Western definition of "religion" (from a cognitive body of institutional dogmas plus a personal relation with the transmundane deity), to personal faith, an adjective describing our life-attitude. Cf. his *The Meaning and End of Religion*, NY: Macmillan Company, 1963, NY: New American Library, 1964.

6. The Western logico-aphoristic Mo Tzu (墨子) called Zeno of Elea was developed into the logicians of Aristotle and Carnap, and like of both of whom do not exist in China. The logic of Wang Ch'ung (王充) and Hsün Tzu (荀子) are primitive when compared with Aristotle's. And Kierkegaard's ironies and Nietzsche's aphorism are cutting, violent, logical; Chuang Tzu's are implicit, natural, and open-ended. Ironies and aphorisms tend to pervade Chinese philosophical (even legalist and military) writings; those of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein are often logically explained away by the Western philosophers (see my "The Cavern and the Burglar — Plato Compared with Zen," *Commentary*, The National University of Singapore, September, 1983). Socratic ironies disappeared in Aristotle and Kant. And so on.
7. Walter T. Stace, *Religion and the Modern Mind*, Philadelphia: Lippincott Co., 1952, p. 249.
8. For Yin Hai-kuang (殷海光), see his *Recent Works of Yin Hai-Kuang* (殷海光近作選), Hong Kong: Yu-lien Publishing Company (友聯書報發行公司), 1969, and his *The Prospects of Chinese Culture* (中國文化的展望) (two volumes), Hong Kong: Wen-I Book House (文藝書屋), 1969. For Mikel Dufrenne, see his *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (English tr.), Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973, which has won high approvals from James J. Y. Liu in his *Chinese Theories of Literature*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975.

I would have used Gilbert Ryle's convenient coinage, "formal logic" and "informal logic," were it not for the fact that the term "formal logic" is redundant and "informal logic," a contradiction; for "form" is of the essence of logic.

Besides, the phrase tends to emphasize "logic" more than "informal." The emphasis subtly takes "informal" as "implicit, suggestive," therefore "imprecise, inaccurate." This false inference reflects an attitude that takes formal intellectualism as precise and accurate; this is a fallacy of misplaced abstraction, an obverse of Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness. ("Informal logic" appears in Gilbert Ryle's *Dilemmas*, London: Cambridge at the University Press, 1964, pp.111-29).

9. O.Karlgren, *Philology and Ancient China*, Oslo, 1921, p. 38, as quoted by Robert K. Logan in his *The Alphabet Effect*, NY: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1986, p. 110.
10. Kuo Shao-yü (郭紹虞) said that Chinese literature is made of a delicate intertwining of the spoken language and the script, and that the entire history of Chinese literature can be divided into stages according to how such intertwinings took place. See his *Yü Wen Tung Lun* (語文通論), [General Treatise on Chinese Language and Literature], Taipei: Hua-Lien Ch'u-pan She (華聯出版社), 1976, (reprint), pp. 66-75. James J. Y. Liu said in his *The Art of Chinese poetry*, The University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 6, that "word" differs from "character," and that (on p. 14) word must have existed before character; otherwise the Sixth Graphic Principle (六義), phonetic loans, would not have occurred — unless a word with its own sound had already existed, none could have borrowed the character for it for another word with the same sound.

This is the place not to debate on whether the written or the spoken language came first, or which language is the basis of the other, but to say that the Western tendency to logical analysis is reflected in the Western grammar and syntax, that the Chinese mind works in ways other than analysis, and is reflected in the language pattern which has no (explicit) grammar and syntax (as the Western languages do) — that therefore perhaps we can see the cultural differences in clues afforded by the peculiarities of the Chinese language.

I think language-pattern is neither a cause of nor a substitute for thinking-pattern, as some linguistic analyses may suggest (Cf. Robert K. Logan in his *The Alphabet Effect*, NY: William Morrow & Company, 1986). Language is just an expression of thinking, although thinking could in turn be influenced (shaped?) by its expression. This essay goes into the Chinese language simply for clues on the Chinese manner of thinking.

Recently Yü Ying-shih (余英時) unabashedly said that language (and written language) can reflect cultural characteristics (18), that the language and notions



utilized in the Classics have so much categorial function for their later developments that the latecomers cannot avoid using them to describe, interpret, and change the world (60), and that the Chinese language in particular has such a roughly consistent and traceable development that it has, from the Shang Period till our modern days, a common developmental system — the way of writing has not changed much, nor can we detect too much discrepancy between the official language of literati and the colloquialism of common folks (170-71). See his *Chung-kuo Su-hsiang Ch'uan-t'ung te Hsien-tai Ch'uan-shih* (中國思想傳統的現代詮釋) Taipei: Lien-ching Ch'u-pan She (聯經出版社), 1987.

Incidentally, Fujido Akiho (藤堂明保) complained that Chinese language has too many synonyms (in the introduction to his *Kanji Gogen Jiten* (漢字語源辭典), reprinted by Taipei: Chung-hsin Shu-chu (中新書局), 1972, pp. 15-17). I disagree; Chinese language may have many synonyms; but not *too* many.

The so-called synonymus are judged so *after* the words have been formed, independently of one another, from different situations in different directions. Thus, perhaps meaning the same thing, they nonetheless has different connotations, each suited for use in a situation that is inappropriate for other words.

In other words, synonyms show different connotations, aspects of supposedly the same (actually roughly similar) meaning. These "synonyms" are not totally redundant; they show the "family" (Fujido's (藤堂) own words) resemblance in notion. The proliferation of "synonyms" in Chinese language shows its earthy, concrete, situational, and autochthonous character.

11. Chu Tzu-ch'ing (朱自清), *On [What/How] Both the Refined and the Common Appreciate* (論雅俗共賞), Hong Kong: Kang Ch'ing Publishers (港青出版社), 1979 (reprint), p. 11.
12. *Ibid.* Cf. Liu Hsieh's (劉勰) *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (文心雕龍), Chapter 46, "The Physical World [lit. Things and Colors (物色)]" cf. its English translation by Vincent Yu-chung Shih (施友忠), Taiwan: Chung Hwa Book Company (中華書局), Ltd., 1970, pp. 348-54. Hsü Fukuan (徐復觀) also cited from many sources in both the West and China on the unity of painting and poetry, in his *Chinese Aesthetic Spirit* (中國藝術精神), Taiwan: The Student Press (學生書局) 1966, pp. 474-84. For further thoughts on the painterly aspect of Chinese poetry and language, see my "Chinese Aesthetics" in Robert E. Allinson, ed., *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989.

The intimacy between painting and poetry has been so familiar among literari

and painters that one wonders whether poor philosophers are the only persons blinded (by their own analytical acumen) to such an obvious truth. Plutarch (46-120 AD) reported Simonides (556-468 BC) to have said, "Painting is silent poetry, and poetry painting that speaks." (*De Gloria Atheniensium* III. 346). The quotation was noted by Hsü Fukuan, *ibid.*, 474. Horace (65-8 BC) said, "Ut pictora poesis" (As a painting, so in poetry.) (*Ars Poetica*, 1.361). Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) said that poetry is blind painting, painting is mute poetry; he accorded the higher rank to painting, angrily fighting with men of letters who gave claims to poetry. (see Karl Jaspers, *The Three Essays: Leonardo, Descartes, Max Weber*, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1964 [English translation by Ralph Manheim], pp. 40-43). Whereas Leonardo and men of letters insisted on the supremacy of one or the other of the two, the painterly and the poetic, Wang Wei (王維), Su Tung-p'o (蘇軾) and others in China fused both. That is the difference between the divisive Western mentality and the fusing Chinese.

13. See, especially, his *Phenomenology of Perception, The Primacy of Perception, The Visible and the Invisible, the Prose of the World*, among others.
14. "Ko" (格) is pattern as an outgrowth (as of new branches); "pattern" is a paternal (external) ko (格). A gentleman is a man of *p'in ko* (品格) or *fung ko* (風格), but not a man of pattern or patterned man (though we do say "she is a pattern of virtue" and "a pattern father"). This may be another example of how Chinese sentiment and expression differs from the West. (*Ko* (格) has some other meaning that do not concern us here, such as to come, to exhaust, to change, to prevent, to kill, or an ancient form of punishment, or being stubborn.)
15. Wailim Yap (葉威廉) says that the phrase does not say so, but is purely noncommittal; I say it may well say so, and says more. See his excellent though repetitive "Activities of Communication and Hermeneutics in Chinese Classical Poetry," (中國古典詩中的傳釋活動) in *UNITAS: A Literary Monthly* (聯合文學), Taipei, June 1985, pp. 168-81.
16. Kuo Shao-yü (郭紹虞), *Yü-Wen T'ung-Lun* (語文通論), pp. 3-40, 70-72, 76-77, 114-54, 208-213-15. This view on the chanting-singing character of Chinese literature agrees with Liu Hsieh's (劉勰) view in his classic on literary criticism, *Wen-Hsin Tiao-Lung* (文心雕龍) [The Literary Heart and the Carving of Dragons], especially the Thirty-Third Chapter on Voice Rhythm (聲律), and the commentary to it there which cites many supportive ancient texts. Cf. the 1960 edition published by Shang-Wu Yin-shu Kuan (商務印書館), pp. 552-56.
17. Kuo Shao-yü (郭紹虞) painstakingly cited thirty-two ways of coupling characters,

making compounds, and rearranging them, and some forty-seven styles of combining them into rhymed phrases and fitting the phrases into poetry. Cf Note 12 for references.

18. Fukunaga Mitsuju ( 福永光司 ), *Sōshi* ( 莊子 ), Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Sha ( 朝日新聞社 ), 1977, 1.57. This is the familiar principle of “The sound covers the meaning” ( 音以蔽義 ), “The sound must be united to intention” ( 聲必兼意 ), or “Every or “Every form and sound of a character must be united to its intention” ( 形聲必兼會意 ).
19. Incidentally, James Liu (in the very opening of his lucid *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, 1962, p. 3) was adamant about Ernest Fenollosa’s view that the Chinese language is all pictograms and ideograms, without any phonetic elements.

Liu said that pictograms are in the minority of characters, most of which do not picture ideas any more: they have changed from their etymological meanings to something equivalent to the Western alphabets. I can see that, for instance, “ieh” ( 也 ) has changed from the original “snake” into “also,” and some particles are originally meaningful characters. Logan would have learned much from Liu; Logan simply said that Chinese language is nothing but pictorial, in his *The Alphabet Effect* (cf. Note 8).

Although a needed corrective to Fenollosa’s over-enthusiasm, Liu’s point does not help us understand the peculiarity of the Chinese language. First, to the extent that the characters have turned into phonetic elements, the Chinese language has become the same as Indo-European languages.

Moreover, the letters of the alphabet — pure phonetic signs — were originally pictograms, but who thinks of A as ox or B as a house? The complete severing of phonetic signs from pictorial symbols is perhaps due to the Western analytical-abstractive bent of mind. In contrast, Chinese uses of characters as phonetic signs perhaps required conscious effort (as in Nieh-p’an ( 涅槃 ) for Nirvana). Alphabet-characters are more unwieldy than alphabet letters; characters are after all more images than signs. To use images as signs causes awkwardness.

Besides, no one can deny meaning-reflection peculiar to Chinese pictograms or meaning-resonances peculiar to Chinese intonations, and that in *all* Chinese writings (essays and casual phrases included). Finally, characters are sight-sound-senses (if they have meanings), or sight-sounds (if they are phonetic elements). It is *this* peculiar unity of sound, sight, and sense that this essay purports to bring out, without meaning to deny that many characters have turned into phonetic elements.

To repeat. Many Chinese scholars warn us of the almost insuperable difficulties of tracing the *origins* of meaning in a character. Merely to mention the Six Graphics Principles and their crisscrossings, together with the ongoing excavation and discoveries of ancient oracle bones and bronze pieces is enough to frighten us off from the “game” of meaning-tracing via character formation.

And yet, difficulty of somehow tracing the relation between the character-shape and meaning does not spell its impossibility much less a denial of the relation itself, which is more significant than the alphabetic character in Chinese. For alphabets are pure phonetic signs, but using Chinese characters for phonetic purposes makes unwieldy monstrosities, which show how foreign the role of phonetic signs originally is to Chinese characters. Leaving the difficult task of etymological backtracing to experts, and shedding sanguine Fenollosism, one yet cannot afford to lose sight of the hermeneutical significance of the *inherent* semiotic-symbolic relation between the character and its meaning in the Chinese culture and mind.

20. Fritz Kreisler, “Music and Life ” quoted in Louis P. Lochner, *Fritz Kreisler*, Neptune City, NJ: Paganiniana Publications, Inc., 1950, 1981, pp. 201-207.

Incidentally, after saying that sentential musicality has nothing to do with lexical meaning (*Refined* (雅俗共賞), pp. 6, 11, 13, etc.), Chu Tzu-ch'ing (朱自清) also ends up saying that musicality does have an inner connection with sentential meaning in that the music concentrates and integrates the meaning, to which music gives punch, punctuation, and an aid to memorization (pp. 15, 71, 79, etc.).

21. See Willi Apel, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, pp. 155-56.

The Quotation continues significantly, “and, through condensation and heightening, presents a new kind of reality that is bigger than life.” This ending may contradict the sentence immediately preceding it, “It [the music] is effective because it selects the essence of reality.” If they contradict each other (“selects” versus “bigger”), the contradiction is significant because it shows both the power of music to communicate the real (“essence of reality”) and the possibility of misusing the power and mistaking what is communicated (“bigger than life”) as what is real.

22. All these examples are taken from Tony Augrade, *The Oxford Guide to Word Games*, London: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 102, 152, 205.
23. See *Harvard Music Dictionary*, s.v. “round,” “perpetuum mobile,” and “mirror composition.”
24. Yehudi Menuhin in Yehudi Menuhin & Curtis W. Davis, *The Music of Man*, NY: Methuen Inc., 1979, p. 28.

25. Lin Yutang (林語堂), *The Wisdom of Confucius*, NY: The Modern Library 1983, pp. 251, 260, 261. Cf. his interpretation in his "Government by Music," (以禮樂治國) *Between Tears and Laughter* (啼笑皆非), NY: The John Day Company, 1943, pp. 65-75. David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* (楚辭): *The Songs of the South*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1959, p. 5.
26. For the etymological meanings of "legien" and "logos" as the "to gather, to glean," then "to collect, to catalogue," then "to count, to account, to narrate, to reflect," then "mathematics, reasoning, reason inherent in the cosmos," see Gerhard Kittel, ed., *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967, IV: 71-91 (by H. Kleinknecht). The order of *logos* is the order of analysis described in the main text; cf. Notes 7 and 8 above.
27. Lin Yutang, *With Love and Irony*, NY: The John Day Company, 1934, p. 5.
28. See "Gleanings in the Mountains and Fields," (山野綴拾) in *The Collected Works of Chu Tzu-ch'ing* (朱自清全集), Tainan, Taiwan: Ta Tung Shu-chü (大東書局), p. 6 (no date).
29. As noted in Note 21 above.
30. Miriam Levering in *Religious Studies Review*, July, 1984, p. 234.
31. In his "Foreplay" in my *Chuang Tzu – World Philosopher at Play*, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company & Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1982, p. x.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.
33. My literal translation: cf. Burton Watson, *The Collected Works of Chuang Tzu*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1968, pp. 50-51.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
35. Angus C. Graham has recently reflected on spontaneity in his *Reason and Spontaneity*, NY: Barnes & Noble, & London: Curzon Press, 1985. This is not the place to enter discussion with him, but to point out that whatever insights Graham may have, he would have had to be versed in *both* the Western and the Oriental cultures before his argumentation can be rich, to the point, and comprehensive.
36. Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Metamagical Themas*, NY: Basic Books, 1985.
37. See Pascal's famous "mathematical mind" versus the "reason of the heart," and Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do*, NY: Harper & Row, 1979. I have treated Dreyfus in the context of indirection in my *Chuang Tzu – World Philosopher at Play*, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company & Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1982, pp. 48-53.
38. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, NY: New Directions, 1949, pp. 56-59.
39. Incidentally, many ways of being rational (iv) is derived from mind and

and mathematics being both rational (i) and different (ii); many ways of using mathematics (to be freely combined) (v) is derived from mathematics as one of many explanations of the mind (iii). For the “self-forgetful” unity of human intelligence with artificial one, see my *Chuang Tzu – World Philosopher at Play*, pp 53-56.

40. On how Chinese philosophy helps medical sciences, see my review of Ted J. Kaptchuk's *The Web That Has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine*, in *Philosophy East and West*, January, 1986.
41. That noted poet, sinologist, and reformer, Wen I-to ( 聞一多 ), predicted in 1943 (in his “The Historical Trend of Literature,” ( 文學的歷史動向 ) quoted in Chu Tzu-ch'ing ( 朱自清 ), *Refined*, ( 雅俗共賞 ) p. 98) that , on contacts, the four world cultures (China, India, Israel, Greece) will so mutually absorb, change, unite and dissolve that the resultant one world culture will retain none of their individualities. He then added approvingly, “this is the inevitable route of the development of human history; none can, nor does anyone need to, change it.” (*The Collected Works of Wen I-to* ( 聞一多全集 ), Peking: Hsin Hwa Shu-tien ( 新華書局 ), 1982, 1:201).

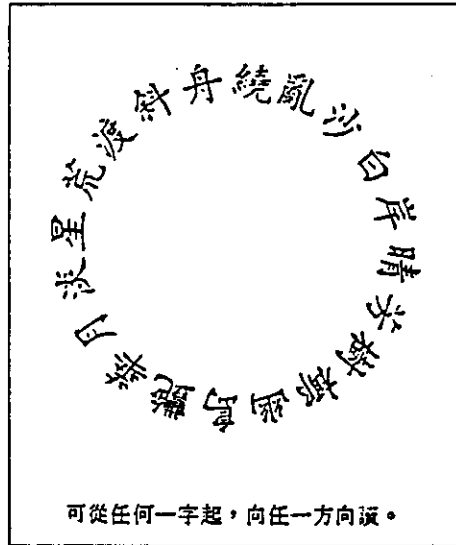
The present essay ended in a *different* note. No one can say whether it is factually inevitable for such one amalgamated whole to come about, but it remains a question whether it is desirable.

APPENDIX

The most famous peripatetic poem (迴文詩) (go-round poem) is Hsüan Chi T'u Shih (璇璣圖詩), composed by Lady Su Hui (蘇蕙) of Chin (晉) dynasty - a square of 29 characters on each side, comprising 3,752 poems:

琴	流	楚	激	絃	商	秦	曲	發	聲	悲	摧	藏	晉	和	詠	思	惟	空	堂	心	憂	增	慕	懷	慘	傷	仁		
芳	東	步	階	西	遊	王	姿	淑	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
蘭	休	林	陰	騎	桑	懷	蹄	思	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
凋	翔	飛	巢	雙	鳩	土	進	透	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
茂	流	泉	水	激	揚	卷	順	其	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
熙	長	君	思	好	傷	鄉	身	苦	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
陽	愁	歎	容	仁	君	榮	身	加	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
春	方	殊	離	均	深	我	兼	何	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
墻	食	心	瀆	物	日	乎	愁	我	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
面	伯	改	漢	品	潤	集	悴	我	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
殊	在	者	之	步	飄	生	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁		
意	誠	恐	曙	親	飄	施	思	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	
恐	故	遺	問	難	天	非	辜	神	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
故	霜	廢	遠	微	地	怨	何	幽	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
新	冰	故	離	喬	貫	其	備	曠	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
霜	齊	子	我	同	誰	均	難	苦	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
永	潔	志	惟	新	陰	一	專	所	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
齊	子	我	同	誰	均	難	苦	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁
潔	子	我	同	誰	均	難	苦	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁
志	惟	新	陰	一	專	所	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁
惟	新	陰	一	專	所	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁	仁
清	真	微	精	寄	身	經	飛	昭	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
純	真	微	精	寄	身	經	飛	昭	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
望	微	雲	浮	光	離	哀	應	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁
誰	雲	浮	光	離	哀	應	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁
思	輝	光	離	哀	應	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁
想	輝	光	離	哀	應	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁
懷	悲	哀	應	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁	仁	仁
所	春	傷	應	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁	仁	仁
親	剛	柔	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁	仁	仁	仁
親	剛	柔	有	愈	少	窈	窈	伯	南	周	風	興	自	后	妃	荒	經	離	所	懷	愴	歎	嗟	仁	仁	仁	仁	仁	仁

A recent example of peripatetic poem is furnished by Chou Ts'e-tsung (周策縱) in Wailim Yap's article (cf. note 24). It amounts to forty poems.



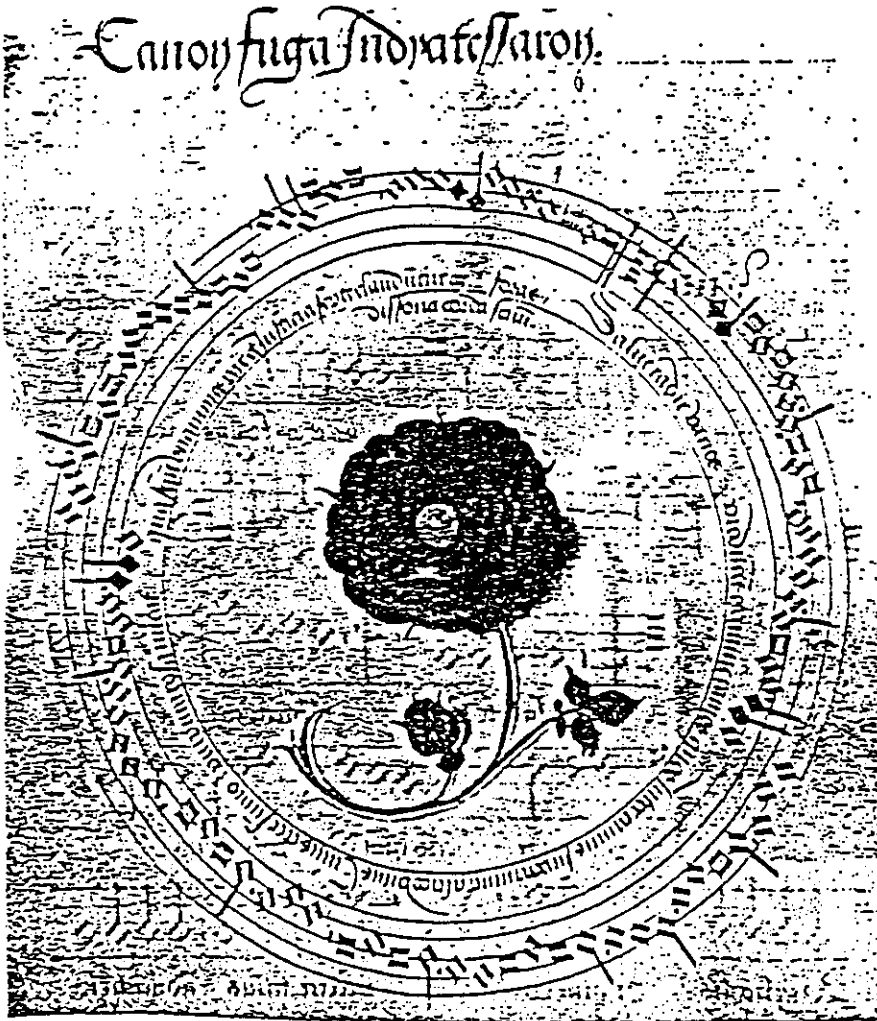
This is equivalent to forty poems as follows:

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ① | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ① |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ② | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ② |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ③ | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ③ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ④ | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ④ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑤ | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑤ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑥ | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑥ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑦ | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑦ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑧ | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑧ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑨ | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑨ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑩ | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑩ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑪ | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑪ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑫ | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑫ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑬ | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑬ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑭ | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑭ |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑮ | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑮ |   |   |   |   |   |
| ⑯ | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑯ |   |   |   |   |
| ⑰ | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑰ |   |   |   |
| ⑱ | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑱ |   |   |
| ⑲ | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑲ |   |
| ⑳ | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 荒 | 渡 | 斜 | 舟 | 繞 | 亂 | 沙 | 白 | 岸 | 晴 | 芳 | 樹 | 椰 | 幽 | 島 | 艷 | 華 | 月 | 淡 | 星 | 。 | ⑳ |



## APPENDIX II

The following Canon in the Form of a Rose is from Denis Stevens, Academia Monteverdiana, Santa Barbara, CA, taken from Yehudi Menuhin & Curtis W. Davis, *The Music of Man*, NY: Methuen, 1979, p. ii (cf. *Harvard Music Dictionary*, pp. 423, 532).



### APPENDIX III

Among those who adopted the typological approach David A. Dilworth (titled, *Philosophy in World Perspective: A Comprehensive Hermeneutic of the Major Theories*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989) has one of the most impressive – beautifully erudite, methodological, and comprehensive. It is a philosophical filing system of philosophical systems of any culture at any age; it includes slots not only for contents but for methods, and it is itself a logical architectonic. A filing system, however, remains a filing system (sophisticated or not) – with its own assumptions such as the following:

i. Essentialism: Filing is a threefold activity – analysis, abstraction, and transference. In order to file something we must first cut apart a thing to find its essence (analyze), pull it out (abstract), and put it (translate) into an appropriate slot in the file (transference) – hopefully without loss.

For this filing activity must assume that whatever is so processed remains the same (never changes) throughout, and this “whatever” that is so processed is the Platonic meaning-essence of a sentence, a theory. Only in this manner is a perfect translation feasible, although one notion expressed in one word in one system (cultural, philosophical) may require more than one word to analyze, abstract, and translate (transfer). By the same token, the filing activity has to assume that the essential core of meaning to each theory can be exhaustibly (and without distortion) translated from one mode of communication to another.

All this essentialism is the spine and the base of Dilworth’s system, *enabling* its operation. And behind this essentialism is the ideal observer and process (Dilworth) relying on the universal validity of the meaning-essence; the system is anchored in the tradition of objectivism (ideal observer, analysis-transference) and tidy logical organization – the Western tradition.

ii. Logicality: The threefold filing activity is that of *logos* in the West. The uniformity of *methods* and the unchangeability of units and elements characterize such an activity.

iii. Jargon: The labels are always specialized technical jargon, awesome,

clear, clever, eye-catching. All ambiguity is banished; discontinuity among units, styles, and labels is stressed.

Such typology is a familiar Western approach – in the name of universality it imposes itself on any and all philosophical systems. Every philosopher is neatly filed away, inter-indexed, and catalogued *according* to the specific filing standards and methods. Since Aristotle and Hegel, almost every metaphysician has tried building a definitive filing system

Dilworth's system is based on a laudable conviction that *all* philosophies are world philosophies; cultural parochialism has no place in the universal exercises of thinking qua thinking. But this conviction is cashed in too quickly. He who watches merely the stars all too quickly gets his feet caught in the gutter, the gutter of his own cultural particularity.

And so, to change the metaphor he who lives in the glass house of cultural particularity should not throw the stone of pretense to universality at his own system. Otherwise he will assail cultural chauvinism with a most blatant chauvinism of his own; he will take his own jargon, system and Western analytico-synthetic approach to be *universally valid and applicable*.

The fact that Dilworth's system is so sensitive, beautiful, comprehensive, and flexible, adds to its tragedy. It reminds one of the Hindu generosity that advertizes its vast cosmopolitan tolerance, embracing all gods and goddesses within *its* own pantheon. To embrace everything in its own pantheon means to tolerate all things in *its* own terms, to tolerate everything except intolerance, such as the Christian scandal of historical particularity – “How odd of God/To choose the Jews,” and to choose that one of them die under Pontius Pilate.

Another way of saying that one should not too quickly cash in the correct conviction of universalism is this. True universality is philosophical cosmopolitanism, which must have two aspects – (1) an interplay of (2) peculiarities. (1) Unfortunately, Dilworth's system has no interplay; his system files away systems, and those slots effectively smother interactions among the systems thus filed.

(2) Furthermore, every system in his file is different only relatively,

within *his* overarching filing principle; Dilworth's system has no inherent peculiarities of respective philosophical systems. His discernment that every philosophy "self-privileges" (so he can his) only adds to the tragedy of this brilliant chauvinism.

Individual peculiarity, incidentally, does not, cannot, and should not erase cultural peculiarity. Dilworth's system erases cultural peculiarity; his system purports to promote individual peculiarity.

Mercifully one can say that his system can be appreciated as one of the brilliant *Western* contributions to philosophy, but not as a transcultural universal arch-principle over all philosophical principles. This saves him from some awkward bind.

For otherwise Dilworth will be caught in a self-referential inconsistency. On the one hand, he claims that *his* system does not distort any system, style, tradition; on the other hand, he admits that people (he, too) grow up in a specific style, tradition, and reenact it unawares in their philosophies (as if to say that reenacting a specific tradition on a universal scale never distorts others). Similarly, on the one hand, "every system (Dilworth's, too) self-privileges"; on the other hand, "cultural chauvinism is bad" (as if to say that cultural chauvinism is other than cultural self-privileging).

Dilworth claims that the fact that disagreements exist among many philosophies within the Oriental cultural tradition – so do disagreements within the Western cultural tradition – destroys the differences *between* cultures. This claim is false, however, for the following reasons.

Chinese disagreements are content-oriented, while Western ones tend to be argumentative; intra-cultural disagreements are themselves culture-bound, that is, steeped within their respective cultural atmospheres. And the way philosophers in a particular tradition treat their "oddities" (those who depart from a particular traditional way of philosophizing), establishes the atmosphere of that cultural tradition. For instance, literature and philosophy are separated in the contemporary West; they are not in the East. Consequently, the Western philosophy goes literal; the Oriental philosophy

goes literary. And those Western philosophers who go literary tend to be looked askance at in the contemporary West; those Oriental philosophers who go literal are not, in the East – for being literal is one way of being literary, but not the other way around.

rary tend to be looked askance at in the contemporary West; those Oriental philosophers who go literal are not, in the East – for being literal is one way of being literary, but not the other way around.

Even if, per impossibile, such intra-cultural disagreements destroy inter-cultural differences, this does not automatically commit us to a particular scholar's particular classification scheme, which itself need to be independently demonstrated as culture-free, and such demonstration is impossible because demonstration itself is culture-bound. What is considered conclusive proof in a particular culture may not be so considered in another; the Chinese mind distrusts more of too perfect a *logical* argumentation than of arguing by punning, as explicated in the main text. Cf. Note 27.

## V. CHINESE UNIVERSALS

### Universals in Philosophy

"China has no philosophy," declared a famous sinologist Arthur Wright.<sup>1</sup> This pungent statement has a negative aspect and a positive one. Negatively, it is easy to retort that the statement begs the question: The technical definition of "philosophy" as explicit abstract analysis came from the West; China has no such discipline; hence, no philosophy in China. One may as well arbitrarily define "man" as "five-legged animal," then say that since there is no such animal there is no man in the world. Such a cavalier self-justification and other-exclusion only impoverishes the rich contents of philosophy, the comprehensive systematic thinking-through.

But just to retort to the statement in this manner is as fruitless as the blunt statement itself. We must go further and consider what it is which constitutes "Chinese philosophy," if it is not philosophical in a Western manner. Looked at in this light, the statement manifests a positive aspect. It warns Chinese philosophers that their philosophy is so different from the Western one that when one takes a stand in the latter, the former, if any, becomes nowhere to be found, and vice versa. Therefore it challenges Chinese philosophers to clearly characterize if not define their discipline as compared with the Western philosophy.

But philosophy is as vast and complex as life and the universe put together. Naturally there are several ways of describing philosophy. I have had my hand in trying out a comparison and characterization of Chinese

philosophy elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Here I am trying another tactic: to consider one clear-cut crucial notion, a concrete focus, in a deep and wide manner. I pick a concrete focus, “universal.” This notion is the concept of all concepts. All thinking is conducted via universals; a different sort of universals produce different sort of thinking. When universals change in character, thinking changes in its style and quality, resulting in a different philosophy. I find universals in the Western philosophy different from those in the Chinese.

The following thoughts concern how different Chinese universals are from Western ones. Generally speaking, Western universals are abstract, analytical, rule-governed, aiming at uniform applications—that is, ahistorical. Chinese universals are literary and historical. By “literary” (*wen* 文) I mean expression of actuality with responsiveness and sensitivity to what is the case (not abstract but concrete), initiating field and participatory – if not novel—thinking (not rule-centered but evocative), via universalization and application by metaphorical extension (not uniformly general but metaphorical). And all these characteristics are, I submit, those of situational thinking, which is “historical” (*shih* 史). Not surprisingly, Chinese philosophical writings typically appear in literature and historiography (*wen shih* 文史).

I shall first contrast Western universals with Chinese ones as analytical and rule-governed versus evocative and metaphorical (in Section A), and then delineate these literary categories of evocativity and metaphor as basically situational (in Section B), therefore historical (in Section C). In the final section I shall consider how evocation, metaphor, and historicity, all conspire to characterize Chinese universals as indefinable adverbiality.

### A. The Literary

Western philosophy can be characterized as an unusually persistent effort at clarifying what makes thinking possible, namely, what the nature of universals is. But in the whole course of Western history of thinking the endeavor tended toward enumerating what those universals are, and in

### B. The Situational

In order to see how relevant to the situation all this consideration about analogy and metaphor is, let us look closely at the jump; the jump here is another name for situational evocation. We are evoked by the situation to see ocean-turbulence related to man-anger. This means that analogy contains situational evocation. If analogy is synonymous with metaphor, as is so often said, then metaphor contains an element of situational evocation as its momentum, without which metaphor cannot move, as in saying, as a man is angry, so the sea is turbulent, or as humaneness is unbearableness before others's suffering, so is the sagely humane government the government of unbearable heart.

Or shall we say that we have two ways of seeing metaphor, one analogical in the sense specified here, another communicative, in this sense. It is false to say that "angry sea" is anthropomorphism or an example of affective fallacy, as if "anger" belonged exclusively to man, as if anger were *purely* a matter of high blood pressure, or purely a personal emotion, having nothing to do with the impersonal ocean. For we can see with the poet that an angry man and an "angry" ocean *share* a common situational feature of violent destructive turbulence. Hence, we see here a situational-communicative aspect of metaphor.

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The glory and strength of Western universals are both that we can clearly understand them and that they enable us to “understand” things by analysis and categorization, that is, classifying elements of things in clear-cut universals overarching them. Here to know things is to control them, their elements now being thoroughly under our purview. Thus knowledge is power. Even theoretical knowledge, or rather, especially this sort of knowledge, is power. For the more theoretical the knowledge is, the wider is its application, the farther its coverage of control.

This is why theoretical science is important, for it leads to applied science. Knowledge for its own sake is prized precisely because of its tremendous potentials for application. And the more theoretical, the more potential for application, because theory is purview, and view is effective only in noetic distance from the object. Detachment, abstraction, and analysis make for effective purview, verification, and synthesis. This facilitates application. Here “application” means an imposition of a rule (category, universal) onto the situation, in order to “manage and control” it well.

To test a hypothesis—to verify a category—means just to try what one grasped out of things back onto things, to see how far and well it can apply to them, how well we can control them. Universality and necessity are the hallmarks, both originating in abstraction and effective application. Universality, necessity, and abstraction, these three remain here, and the greatest of these is abstraction (from the situation). (For further elaboration of pros and cons of abstraction see Appendix I.)

In contrast, Chinese universals never *leave* the situation. “Universality” is a presumed completion of metaphoring, and “necessity” is open, *evocative* texturedness with the situation. That is, necessity is naturally expansive (*open*), historico-retrospective. And all this operation is firmly rooted in actuality, “textured” with the situation. One is always surprised to *find* more situational necessities as one lives on; the more acquainted one is with such inevitabilities, the wiser one becomes, “knowing the Heavenly Decree”; understanding the Decree makes one “understand things.” This

understanding is concrete and *metaphorical*, not abstract or theoretical.

Chinese universals operate on evocation (*hsing* 興) and metaphor (*pi* 比), a calling-forth and a ferrying-over. Confronted with a new situation our attention is aroused (evoked), and then situational similarity with our previous experience metaphorically expands our understanding. Thus evocation awakens felt experience into a flight of imaginative thought. Metaphor pushes the familiar toward the unexpected similar, the unfamiliar. Evocation leaps; metaphor ferries. Our thinking needs both flight and ferry, discontinuity and continuity; both are our roads to novel ideas, our way of growth in thinking.

The compelling, even constraining, exigency of the situation is the dynamo of evocation. Being unbearably distressed by the frightened outlook of an ox on its way to slaughter (*Mencius* 1A7), being alarmed by an unknowing child about to crawl into a well (*Mencius* 2A6)—they are two of many examples of our natural responses to exigent calls from common actual occasions.

*Mencius* caught these situations—a knowing ox and an unknowing child, both about to die—as sharing one exigent call, to which our spontaneous responses are discerned to be our natal unbearable feeling of “compassion.” *Mencius* discerned its whole unbearable impellingness of our responses as the concrete categorical imperative (at work), having nothing to do with other considerations—neither because of grudging the big ox, nor of desiring favor from the child’s parents or praises from neighbors. This is the structure of evocation—the situational call and our heartfelt response.

Then *Mencius* saw that this imperative constrains us to *extend* such our responses to other similars, and then the sagely rule obtains, and we become truly sagely-human(e). This “extension” is really a burning match. A lighted match invites; a sheet of paper welcomes and burns. A dying ox and dying child burn—into us and is born forth our alarmed unbearable compassion; and the burning expands into the universal natal fire of humanness throughout the under Heaven.

All this was explicated within the concrete context of Mencius's conversations with the rulers. This is metaphor expanding from some specific situations (ox, child) to many others. There is no question of abstraction from actuality; the move is always from situation (evoking) to situation (metaphored). The whole *Mencius*—and by extrapolation, the whole Chinese philosophy—can be seen to structure itself in this twofold (evocation, metaphor) situational burning. And this movement “from-to” (burning) is for ever necessary (the inevitability of humanness) and universal (its naturalness existing everywhere).

Chuang Tzu stressed this connaturality to the point of non-selfconsciousness. In an imaginary conversation while viewing a royal military parade, Chuang Tzu (or his imagined character) suddenly bursts into a poetic vision—obviously having been struck (evoked) by the contrast between the awesome military spectacle and those all too common twigs above, deer among us, and worms below:

The World of Ultimate Virtue does not honor the wise, does not employ the capable. People up there are like twigs above, people here are like wild deer. They are all decent and don't take it as right, mutually love and don't take it as goodwill, truthful and don't take it as loyalty, proper and don't take it as fidelity, wriggling like worms to mutually serve, and don't take it as giving. Because of this their acts have no trail, their events are not spread. (*Chuang Tzu* 12/80-83).

Their vital natural rhythm makes for an organic epoch of “ultimate virtue” which is so much part of us that we do not notice it. Chuang Tzu was struck by this unnoticeableness, and called it “ultimate,” and noticed that the ultimate in our nature is ‘virtue.’ Here the unobtrusiveness of the natural calls Chuang Tzu, evoking him into unobtrusive beauty of an ode to the world of ultimate virtue. These words repeatedly call (another evocation) us to return to (metaphor) naturalness that pervades nature—twigs, deer, worms.

That was about 7,300 years ago. That call was echoed later in T'ao Ch'ien's (372-427 AD) celebrated poem

My habitation thatched among men,  
I hear no noises of horses and buggies.  
Asked how I an do so, [my only reply was]  
"My heartmind being distant, my abode is itself remote."  
Plucking chrysanthemums along the east fence,  
I looked long toward the Southern Hills;  
Birds in rows flying home;  
Ah, the fine mountain air of dusk!  
*Herein* is deep meaning –  
Desiring to express it, words are already forgotten.

The situation—flowers, hills, birds, dusk, mountain air—means something (*in it*) to us, evoking something in us, definite and indefinable, making us forget words in it. Undoubtedly to *say* that it is unsayable, T'ao Ch'ien calls (evokes) our attention to such an evocation from nature, pervasive, compelling, yet ineffably unobstrusive.

Thus we are led from Mencius's government of unbearable heartmind, through Chuang Tzu's no-government, to T'ao Ch'ien's self-forgetful naturalness. We are led step by step from the human-natal categorical imperative to human naturalness to simple natural nonchalance. The signification of these facts is not over and above the facts but our route (*tao* 道) of passing from one fact to another, the trace of their meaning. Through them all run that same sensible necessity and that same understandable universality that are all to situational—the meaning which is not abstract, yet beyond words and beyond bounds. This characterizes all Chinese universals such a Tao, Li-principle, Five Elements, Heaven, Decree-Destiny, and so on.

This is perhaps what Merleau-Ponty perceived and made central in his phenomenological ontology of sensing; but sadly he left us with only programmatic remarks, imperfectly explained, such as the following:

Whether we are concerned with a thing perceived, a historical event or a doctrine, to "understand" is to take in the total intention [cf. *i* 意] . . . the unique mode of existing expressed in the properties of the pebble, the glass or the piece of wax, in all the events of a revolution, in all the thoughts of

a philosopher. It is a matter . . . of finding the Idea in the Hegelian sense . . . that formula which sums up some unique manner of behaviour toward others, towards Nature, time and death: a certain way [cf. *tao*] of patterning the world . . . the *dimensions* of history. . . .

. . . Rationality is precisely measured by the experiences in which it is disclosed. To say that there exists rationality is to say that perspectives blend [cf. *Li-principle* 理] perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges . . . The phenomenological world is . . . the sense [cf. *i-intention* 意] which is revealed where the paths [cf. *tao* 道] of my various experience intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other like gears [cf. *Li-principle* 理, *wang-net* 網]. It is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity [cf. *lun-relation* 倫] . . .<sup>3</sup>

In the final analysis, Mencius's protest against inhuman dictatorship, and Chuang Tzu's against any rulership at all, are insistent calls to heed calls from nature outside us calling on nature deep inside us. The situational call which we understand is its meaning, its rationality; its impellingness is its necessity; its pervasiveness is its universality—things are reasonable and situational, sensible and concrete, through and through.

This is what Confucius tersely expressed, saying, "Human(e)ness is, wishing oneself to establish (oneself), also (help) establish people. . . . Being able to take metaphor by the close-at-hand can indeed be called the method of human(e)ness." (the *Analects*, 6/28) "Method" (*fang* 方) here should be taken in its original sense of "*meta-hodos*," the *way between* here and there, the metaphorical way. Chinese universals are metaphorical responses to what the situation means (calls) to us and evokes in us. Western universals, in contrast, are the noetic grasp of an idea (concept) out of many confusing concrete particulars, an abstraction (out of touch) from actuality.<sup>4</sup>

Two points should be raised before going on to the historical significance of situational universals in China. They are *fang* as family resemblance, and metaphor compared with Western analogy. (This is to fuse Western thinking with Chinese, using the former to understand the latter.)

We can say that the notion of *fang*, originally meant two skiffs lashed together,<sup>5</sup> is a family of relations, metaphoric relations, consisting of

various kinds of family resemblances—Wittgenstein was well and right in talking about concept in relation to family resemblance.

In fact, adopting Wittgenstein's insight, we can say that concepts in China are nothing but clusters of family resemblances. An extreme example is the notion of "regularity"—with natural, legal, and normative connotations—presented in the *Shu Ching* 書經 (The earliest extant collection of public documents, hence, public ideals) in no less than 53 different phrases and notions. These concrete expressions are all non-comprehensive evocative ideas (not abstract concepts) for regularity; they came from many contexts, angles, to form a family cluster of expressions as complex and variegated as actual manifestations of actual regularity itself.

Regularity is synonymous with situational "necessity"; definitional necessity is its subjective side, originating in it. The fact that the Chinese mind found so many words for situational necessity shows at least three points about it: The fact shows (1) our sensitivity that judges the situation to be going in *this* way and not that, and adheres to this situational tendency; (2) our mode of attitude, our stance, our effort, to that effect, what we cannot-help-but-do-or-be (*pu te i* 不得已); and (3) the law (situational inevitability) of the nature of psyche and ecology, as when a child wants to play this game now rather than another one "cause I want to." Thus the plenitude of experience is *accurately echoed* in the Plenitude of situational meaning; in this "accurate echoing" resides the Chinese "necessity."

A concept in China can then be described as a circle whose circumference is nowhere (it can metaphorically-expand indefinitely) and whose center is everywhere (it has many evocative centers for metaphoric extension). But it is a sort of circle nonetheless, a circle of no circle.

This means that a concrete concept has neither border line cases, nor a central core case (typical representative) to which one can appeal and say this is what contains the essence of the concept. This goes against the grain of Socrates who was customarily after the essence of a concept—say, asking for what makes "justice" justice (in the *Republic*), by looking for a typical case (health) and extracting (abstracting) one overall characteristic out of it

(harmony) that covers all cases of health and justice. This is also against what Erich Kahler pressed for, who said that “Distinctions have to be made by centers, not by boundaries, because there is no real entity without fluid boundaries.”<sup>6</sup>

For if we take seriously Wittgenstein’s discovery of family resemblance, we cannot even seek the center in a concept. The most we can claim is a conceptual “kind,” which is another name for “family, kin.” Among the family members we are hard pressed to pick *one* typical physiognomy characterizing all the rest. We can parody Kahler and say that there is no real entity or notion without fluid centers, either.

But this does not mean that there are no families—kins, kinds—with some definite though indefinable features, families of concepts. One can say that each evocation comes with its own kind-and-family of metaphors. From a different angle, we can say that a concept comes with a family (specific kind) of implications and connotations. Such is the situation in China; we suspect it is more or less similar in the West also, as Wittgenstein notified us—though to a less extent apparent than in China, because the West presses for definiteness, explicitness, and clarity of definition.

Let us now go into what metaphorical relation is by considering analogy. Analogy is a jump, saying that what an entity *A* is to its characteristic, *a*, is (jump here) what another entity *B* is to *its* characteristic, *b*, that is,  $a/A$  is  $b/B$ . This relation (“is”) is a jump, an evocative jump, an “aha” experience in, say, noting that what turbulence is to the ocean *is* what anger is to a man.

Analogy is literally (what a twist of expression!) an upward movement of the very logic itself, going (jumping) from  $a/A$  (one sort of logic) to  $b/B$  (another sort of logic). It is this movement, this going and jumping upward, that is analogical. One cannot ossify the movement by fixing relation between  $a/A$  and  $b/B$ , two different kinds of logic. Once one specifies the relation with a definite formula, axiom, definition, principle, or logic, one destroys the very *characteristic* of analogy, what makes analogy analogy, namely, the jump.

### B. The Situational

In order to see how relevant to the situation all this consideration about analogy and metaphor is, let us look closely at the jump; the jump here is another name for situational evocation. We are evoked by the situation to see ocean-turbulence related to man-anger. This means that analogy contains situational evocation. If analogy is synonymous with metaphor, as is so often said, then metaphor contains an element of situational evocation as its momentum, without which metaphor cannot move, as in saying, as a man is angry, so the sea is turbulent, or as humaneness is unbearableness before others's suffering, so is the sagely humane government the government of unbearable heart.

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sharing-one-thing-in-common is called "symbol." Thus metaphor is a symbolic connection between two historical situations. Curiously, as long as "communicative" is a softened expression of "literal," the literal and the symbolic are not so far apart as they first seem to us; here they are seen to be synonymous.

Many poetic expressions are as "literal" or "symbolic" ("communicative") as "angry sea" is—"joyous flowers," "serene dusk," "tender mist." It is in this manner that through this communicative metaphor poetry expresses more poignantly, penetratingly, and accurately (and precisely, too)—that is, more "literal"—than the so-called "literal expression" of the situation.

For to say of an angry man that he has high blood pressure is inaccurate. High blood pressure is not even an expression of anger but a mere physiological concomitant of violent agitation. The agitation, pure and simple, may be *accompanied* by a psychic one, and also a physiological one—part of which is high blood pressure—but they are concomitants rather than the essence of "anger," which is agitation, violence, turbulence, of a total person or a total scene. G. E. Moore also noted in *Principia Ethica* that color-experience has nothing to do with its *physical* concomitant of certain wave-length of light. It is those who shout anthropomorphism and affective fallacy who are committing a naturalistic one.

What does analogy look like when seen in the light of metaphor? How does analogy fit in the world of metaphor? Analogy is a "simile," not "metaphor," we say, for the former (analogy and simile) use an explicit "like"-statement while the latter does not. In Chinese we say that there are two kinds of meaning transference—simile as "straight metaphor" (*chi yü* 直喻), an explicit referral, and metaphor as "hidden metaphor" (*yin yü* 隱喻), an implicit referral. The former uses explication ("strong *like* a superman") while the latter uses implication ("glaring inconsistency").

Universal in Western philosophy is basically straight metaphor smoothed out. "Chairness" is really "this chair is *like* that chair is like *that* chair is . . ." This amounts to "a chair *is* a chair is a chair." Their respective like-

nesses are reduced to one indifferent likeness; their individual likenesses are surveyed, abstracted, and summarily subsumed under “chairness.” Chairness is a weak cipher for “a likeness running through different concrete chairs”; thus this operation destroys concreteness and deadens individuality. There is no longer an exciting process of meaning transference; simile is deadened into Western universal, which is now a dead metaphor.

In contrast (paradoxically), a hidden metaphor, “This chair *is* that chair,” brings out the concrete differences of “this” from “that” in the bold identification-word “is.” Both the differences and identity are stressed, and this structural tension in the hidden metaphor constitutes the *concrete* chairness among chairs. In “straight metaphor” (simile), however, there is no such tension; it is “straight” logically, for the word “like” clarifies the relation between two terms.

Western philosophy is usually more comfortable with straight metaphor than with hidden one. Few realize that by inserting “like” between two related terms, the terms are now separated from each other. “Like”-explication gets in the way of direct seeing and feeling of the relation between two terms. The straight referral of simile is really an indirect meaning-bridging.

In contrast, hidden metaphor is direct and immediate, presenting what is seen. “My love is a red, red rose,” for instance, has no “like”-explanation; the line hits us, striking us with this enticing invitation to come up with our own understanding of it—as to how and why two obviously different things (one of the terms is not even a “thing”) are matter-of-factly identified without even a hint of explanation.

For instance, “love” in the line can be my feeling of love or my beloved other (and are they really different?); “red, red” burns us with its urgent intensity; “rose” wraps us with a multipetalled warmth, elegance, fragrance, and fragility. All these terms come upon us, gripping us with a direct compelling freshness; they enliven us feelingly. This is the difference between the “is like” of a straight metaphor and the “is” of a hidden one.

Simile (straight metaphor) is logically clean and self-explanatory. Explanation replaces the simile-part of the statement; having explanation, we can dispense with simile. Metaphor is direct, enticing, always requiring the

reader's insertion of understanding (and explanation), active engaged understanding. Such participatory metaphor cannot be replaced completely by something else; it is lively and indispensable.

Besides, if one pushes "My love is a red rose" (metaphor), one will get "My love walks as pretty as night." Metaphor is now turned into evocation. For now the sentence does not ferry us anywhere; it evokes us into thinking on our own. In general, then, we can say that the origin of metaphor is evocation, and that of notation, metaphor.

Language tends from evocation to metaphor to simile to signlike notation and formula, from life that is dark and uncontrollable to machine that is exhaustibly manipulable. At least so we want to make language to become. We are impatient with the dark beckonings from reality to think out our own explanation. The call from reality that the metaphor-sayer sees and responds to is too much for us. We want something tame for us to sit back and control. We want to be (to change metaphor) spoonfed with ready-made meaning. Convenience and immediate consumption are what we need; we call them the "progress" of civilization. For we are too busy to understand, being busy with manipulation of things for immediate satiation.

And of course clever maneuver requires clarity of conveyance of meaning and things. We aim at satiation and lose deep satisfaction at working out meanings on our own. We gain what we want, satiation, and become dissatisfied, empty inside.

Technology and modern convenience is built on the assumption of "Straight metaphor, right or wrong." This is why the product of technoculture is ennui, and the disease of modernity is what Kierkegaard calls "despair," and what the existentialists call "de trop," "futility," "nothing counts any more," "everything is dispensable," "cheap feeling." Here is no "chopping of the wood, carrying of the water," as the Zen masters required us to prepare for the coming and dawning of truths.

There is a way out; we can *use* straight metaphors as tools for more calls from reality, such as "Boys will be (like) boys," for more deeper

evocations. Children are everywhere; becoming childlike is quite extraordinary. Straight metaphors can be used as hidden ones. This sort of use ushers in “progress” in a true sense of the word, the progress into mysteries of things, into a deeper understanding of them, including our self-understanding.

This is why ancient classics such as *Shih Ching* (*The Classic of Odes* 詩經) is important. This Classic is packed with the time-tested calls, sometimes desperate, sometimes exuberant, from life as it was lived from day to day. *Shih Ching* is full of simple direct descriptions of daily life; these poetic descriptions are really similes, which are turned by ages of repeated readings into metaphors. Time (three thousand years) has worn out pretense in those ancient poems; only pure insistent calls (evocations) are left. After mastering the difficult wordings, we are face to face with the raw immediacies of ancient lives, mirroring our own, staring at us right in the face.

And then we look at today’s mundane world of technics, and we are brought back to that ancient thrills of the Wheelwright (in a story in the *Chuang Tzu*, toward the end of Chapter Thirteen [*T’ien Tao*] 天道)—only hinted at as “hand-got, heart-responded,” or the Butcher Ting’s ecstasy (in the *Chuang Tzu*, Chapter Three [*Yang Sheng Chu*] 養生主) barely noted as “sense-knowledge stops; divine desire goes.” The machine and its way of life is now a frame in which metaphoric evocation takes place.

Concrete universals reside here. “He turns red” now has something in common with “The sky is turned red,” both foreboding something arising—anger in the former, say, and fair weather for tomorrow in the latter. The Chinese has graphic expressions for both—“His face arises red” (*hung ch’i lai* 紅起來) and “The sky radiated red” (*t’ien fa hung lah* 天發紅了). Color is a situational verb here. Friedrich Weismann says that the sky radiates blueness; blue is felt as vital pulse of the sky. And we *all* understand what all this means. This is the way of concrete universals.

We saw the move of Chinese philosophy from the evoking situation to the metaphored one, *from* our responses to ox and child about to die *to* the sagely government. This move is an extension of the near to the far, the

concrete to the general; this move *is* concrete universal, as in “‘eldering’ one’s own elders extended to others’s elders.” This is to use a paradigm case, a typical example, to analogically-metaphorically apply to the future ones.

But how do we apply? Is there a principle of analogy, of metaphorical extension? There must be one because such an extension is so convincing, but the problem is that there cannot be found any precise mathematical formula to express it. The open texture of continuous number series is usually of two kinds: one as  $1/3$  where we know the pattern, 0.333 . . . , and one as in “pai” where we do not know the pattern, 3.14159 . . . . Metaphorical extension in Chinese universals has neither pattern; it is neither completely known—completely foreseeable as to what to do—nor completely unknown, such that things are entirely unexpected and impossible to respond to. Neither completely predictable nor completely arbitrary, the essence of *jen*-human(e)ness is definite and indefinable. All Chinese philosophers merely talked about typical situations and examples where *jen* appears unmistakably. This has an interesting repercussion on our thinking about justice.

“Justice is blind,” so it is said in the West—“blind” to irrelevant particulars. But what is “relevant” here? Relevant to just treatment. What is “just treatment”? Similar treatment of similar affairs. “Similar” is, however, situation-free, judged only in terms of some impersonal principle (“justice”), where every person is indifferently a person. This indifference, this blindness, is what is called “equality.” This sort of equality under the law is an abstraction from (indifference, blindness to) particulars. Similarity, blindness, abstraction, equality, and justice—they are all synonymous here.

Chinese justice do count concrete particulars. A stranger stealing a lamb differs from “my father” stealing a lamb. In a latter case, I will shoulder him away into the hide. Herein lies the “straightness” (*chih* 直) of Confucius’s justice (in the *Analects*, 13/18). In addition, such warm sentiment of “‘eldering’ one’s elders” (*Mencius* 1A7) should be extended to

others's elders. Precisely how to do so is the question. Mencius has an interesting case of the sagely ruler Shun 舜 shouldering his murderer father away to the seashore, to hide from his prosecutor's pursuit (of both his father and justice) (7A35).

Is the dodging of universal justice just? It seems so in Chinese world of thought, but not without some lingering questions in one's mind. How can Chinese concrete justice avoid slipping down to nepotism? Thus metaphoric extension, family consideration, and treatment on a case by case basis are not synonymous but complementary and tension-filled. (See Appendix II for further dilemmas of both systems of justice.)

In sum, the abstract universal of the West has its efficacy in being applicable to the variegated particulars, manifesting its schematic intelligibility in its concentration on each concrete instance. The concrete universal of China has its significance in being spread everywhere, manifesting its pervasive depths in its generalization in the public. Western universals must concretize, Chinese universals must generalize—to meet at the unification point of the concrete and the general. But neither can do so without difficulties.

The way out may be indicated by “beauty.” Beauty means coherence of an existence—coherence in this sense *is* existence—that is formed by self-recursive involvement, a selfing pattern of mutuality between difference and inter-change, contrast and complement among thing-elements, whatever they are. Thus coherence is concrescence, concretization, concretion, a coming-together of disparate elements, each feeling for and felt by the other, to borrow Whitehead.

This is the process of coming into being of any particular concrete thing. So far Whitehead is correct. Unfortunately he tried to make an explicit mathematical sense out of this, being obsessed with strict terminology and systematization, ending up with putting strictures on his original, organic, and aesthetic insights on things. For instance, Whitehead's “prehension” is too strong a term, analogous to an excessively aggressive term of “grasp” for understanding, which is more subtle and inclusive than

conceptualization (a grasping).

Shorn off Whitehead's excesses, such a concrete universal as this is an alternative to abstract universal. Here what is unique is everywhere; everything is unique, by virtue of each peculiar mode of concretion of coherence through contrast and inter-change. Beauty is at the heart of creation; God the primordial creator is indeed the Poet (Whitehead) of all poets, all poetic occasions, each an actualizing poeticity.

All this is Chinese philosophy in Western jargon. Chinese philosophy *presents* this operation of universals instead. Here concrete universals operate concretely and universally, that is, coherently, aesthetically—contrastively and complementarily in mutual agonal (*hsiang k'e* 相克) co-birthings (*hsiang sheng* 相生), in contrastive evocation (*hsing* 興) and complementary metaphor (*pi* 比).

Coherence in this wide aesthetic sense obtains among differing elements, and between the whole and its various parts. The whole governs the parts, putting its stamp of peculiarity on its parts. At the same time, the parts comprise the whole, and each part is a Leibnizian epitome and mirror of the whole; the whole is reflected, represented, and epitomized in that peculiar *manner* which is called the "part." Thus the part is both a verb (an action) and an adverb (a mode of action)—the part is an activity of reflection, re-presentation, and composition (concretization) of the whole. (Appendix III has more about the philosophical significance of beauty and aesthetics.) This is how concrete universals should operate. This is an aesthetic envisioning of the world. This is beauty as an ontology; this is Chinese philosophy.

In any case, our purpose is thus fulfilled; this examination of the strength and weakness of both kinds of universals has served to show how distinct the thinking in terms of evocative metaphorical universals is from the thinking in terms of formal abstract ones. The former has been ignored in the West but has long been a customary practice in China. It remains for us to see that evocative metaphorical universals are thoroughly situational, having their solid basis in historicity.

### C. The Historical

The sort of argumentation in terms of evocative-metaphorical universals has been instantiated above in Mencius, Chuang Tzu, and T'ao Ch'ien. However, in order to further see how such universals operate in "usual" argumentation, and how solidly situational argumentation (thinking, philosophy) in terms of such universals, is we shall see into the historical basis of evocative-metaphorical universals.

We have been asking what universals operate by. In the West, the answer was analysis, abstraction, and synthesis. In China, it was evocation, metaphor, and, we must add, historicity. As abstraction runs through analysis and synthesis among Western universals, so historicity permeates and supports evocation and metaphor. It is time to go into the historicity of Chinese universals.

Merleau-Ponty asked himself how we can experience the world as one individual if its horizons are open and no complete scientific knowledge can be had.<sup>8</sup> Open horizons would be the result if we adopt thinking according to Chinese universals operating on evocation and metaphor. A complete knowledge of a thing would be the result if we adopt thinking according to Western universals operating on abstractive analysis and synthesis. And so Merleau-Ponty's problem is relevant to us here.

His instructive answer is threefold: (1) We can recognize a stone to be stone even though we do not have a complete knowledge of a stone; (2) "all perspectives together form a single temporal wave;" (3) if I were to be freed from localization in specific time and place I will be everywhere and therefore nowhere, and every present vanishes. Time as order of co-existences and of successions is a setting to which one gains access only by occupying a situation in it, grasping its entirety through the horizons of that situation. And the world is the nucleus of time.<sup>9</sup>

Couched as he was in his own terminology, these his words are powerful statements, exploding idealistic myths on universals as timeless, obvious, ubiquitous, and recognition of a thing (whether it be stone or world) by



knowing all of it, or by knowing its adequate universals. Let us elaborate on his thinking in our manner.

Our recognition (and identification) of a thing is an open one regimented by “a single temporal wave” of our experience of that thing. “That” thing is identified by *a single* temporal wave about that thing, that is, that singleness of that temporal wave. But my experience-wave of that thing is a developing sort of knowledge, my open-textured knowledge, about that thing. This open-wave and open-texture is metaphor, replacing the traditional “universals.” There is a beginning to this wave a noticing of that thing, the evocative beginning.

Evocation-metaphor sort of operation in our identification and knowledge of things, is thus historical. Our knowledge is through and through historical. History is that-from-which, in-which, and for-which of evocation and metaphor, of Chinese universals. Words like “basis, process, ideal” could have been used here but were not, because they are nouns, themselves happening in this milieu of that-from-which, in-which, and for-which.

First, history is that-from-which evocation happens. “Facts” come to be by being noticed as facts. In the noticing the noticer and the noticed are joined; facts are not facts without the noticer, the noticer is not one without facts that he notices. This correlation is an evocative happening, taking place in history. History is that-from-which universals come about, what originates evocation and enables it to come about.

Secondly, on the heels of this evocation follows metaphoring operation as its spread, its application, from the nearby as a “similar” to the far as more surprising similars. The structure of this spread is a “from-to,” from (the originative) situation to (the similar) situation; this movement is history, never leaving the situation. Hence Chinese universals have history as that-in-which they spread. In fact, the universals *are* these historical occurrences.

Finally, we come to history as that-for-which Chinese universals are. This obtains counterfactually against historical violations of the historico-

ontological imperatives Mencius and Chuang Tzu so much stressed.

One can shylock others, and stones will fly at him and thieves will follow him. There is *something* deeply in us that tells us, in fact convinces all of us, that this is a matter of *course*. This “course” is Tao (Chuang Tzu) and Heaven (Mencius); this “Something in us” is our unbearable heart (Mencius) and nature (Chuang Tzu) shared by all of us. All of this cannot be mocked; one who shylocks perishes as surely as when one defies the course of nature.

“Nature” is ambiguous; it can be either human nature or nature everywhere. The Chinese mind says “nature” means *both*. The human factu-als are often in violation of this nature—by shylocking others one shylocks oneself. Inevitably those factu-als evoke in us counter-factu-als as what should have been and what had better be from now on. This is the Golden Age of the Never Never Land, the Organic Epoch of Ultimate Virtue, that historical myth of the Sagely Past urging us to “return” thereto. This place is as innate as it is in nature.

Thus Kant’s starry heaven above and moral law within are identified as the same by the Chinese mind. The identification also bred “superstitions” of many cosmological sympatjetic correlations, such as the Five Elements both in us and in physical nature. They are not so much incor-rect in themselves as incorrect in ignoring an open temporal process there, ignoring history. Add heat to water and it *eventually* boils, violate nature and we *invite* disasters—socio-political and ecological. They will come eventually and inevitably, but we do not see *them*, or *how* they come about, as of now; to make the correlative happening between nature-violation and natural-disaster both immediate and as expected makes for magic and superstition. The Heavenly Net is “wide and sparse-meshed” (Lao Tzu) when looked at spatially, now, but eventually “leaks nothing” in temporal dimension.

In any case, to express the identification of two sorts of nature is liter-ature’s business (*wen* 文); to depict their causal efficacy (in a wide sense) is that of historiography (*shih* 史). All this is an operation of universals—evo-

cative happenings, metaphorical spreads—covering the inner heartmind, physical nature, *and* the historical course of events, joining them in one.

This is Heavenly Decree over the rulers's heads, so smuch promoted in *Shih Ching* 詩經 and *Shu Ching* 書經. "Heavenly Decree not constant" means that goodness of the Decree cannot be constant irrespective of our behavior, but correlates with—depends on—how we behave. Our inner tunings-in (Mencius' extension of the unbearable heartmind) bring prosperous and harmonious Decree; our inner self-violations (acting against our own unbearableness) bring disastrous Decree.

Again, if the natural *course* of events follows time sequence, and if we come to act more and more in violation of our nature, it stands to reason that we tend to look back to the time *before* such violations occurred—the inner nature must be something which existed prior to violation, to be violated later. Thus the timelessness of universals—moral, logical, ontological—is naturally expressed in the ancient myths of Sagely Rulers as our counter-factual (counter-actual) ideals—to which something inside us resonates deeply, wholeheartedly. Thus heartmind, nature, and history, they come together into a whole network of universals for us to follow and for nature to manifest its order.

Here, mind you, the primordial past (before our acts of violation) and the primal that-*to*-which we strive are united in one whole myth of sagely rulers. Literature (stories, novels) is a vivid recount of the actual events to incite an envisioning of what should have been, and what should be. Novels are our halfway station on our way to utopian myths, which can also be depicted in novels.

Universals tend to be identified with nouns (nominative or adjectival). What do they look like from the historical perspective in Chinese universals? "Walk" is a style of walking, a gait, a rhythm of movement spreading itself, an orderly change-system of positions. "*Tao* (roads) are made by walking them; things are *so* by calling them," says Chuang Tzu (2/33). "Walking" is "calling"; both are the gait, texture, wave of things, and the way of the world.

The “gait” is that style that animates the color from inside, that inner rhythm of the visible holding together of itself, cohering into, say, the *rose*. Such is the active and living essence of things that we move (walk) into the weave of the visible. Noun is a presumptive completion of this evocative-metaphorical weave, the thing moving itself to us in time. Without us (evoked, metaphored) “moving” makes no sense; without the thing, there would have been no moving. Adjective is adverb to this moving synthesis presumptively completed, or description of this moving; evocation and metaphor are adjectival nouns, nouns of description.

But all this description is a disguised explication of verbs (becoming nouns) and adverbs (becoming adjectives)—“moving,” “completion,” “synthesis,” and so on. After all, facts are completed acts. The color of a thing, for instance, is the crystallized color-ing which defines that thing; a “desk” is a thing desk-ed out. A brown desk is a thing ex-isting—brown-ed, desk-ed—as “brown desk.” Nouns (color, desk) are verbs that define existence.

And verbs (describing acts) and adverbs (describing modes of acts) set forth history, in which we see, affirm, and are these activities. This is instantiated in that set of Five Elements that announce facticity, that is, inaugurate the exigency for the fact. (cf. Appendix IV on the difference between Merleau-Ponty and Chinese philosophy on this point.) To engage in adjectival activity is to engage in literature; to do adverbial one, to engage in history. Chinese universals are embedded and actuated in factual literature and historiography (*wen, shih*), not in abstraction.

### Universals as Indefinable

We have been considering what universals operate *by*, not what universals are, not even what their qualities are. For the “what” and the “qualities” are also universals, and so one cannot ask of them about universals without begging the question. We must now think of what this peculiar feature of universals means.

Take Mozart’ music. His invincible freshness, innocence, and absolute

tenderness make every note alive. But one cannot play his freshness, tenderness, and innocence, much less their invincibility and absoluteness. All one can do is to play the *notes*, as faithfully and discernfully as the score suggests. And the depths—absoluteness, invincibility—will take place, all by themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the painter and meaning are sketching themselves against the background of the world through the operation of style. Style is therefore not an object but what becomes visible *in* the work, emerging at the point of contact between the painter and the world, as an exigency at the inner hollow and echo of the painter's perception. Perception stylizes, and style gives form to the elements of the world. Style is a system of equivalences the painter builds for the world to manifest itself. Style is the painter's universal—unnoticed until the work is finished.

To be historical is like that. One can live as one wishes, and one still takes (one's) place in history. But one can only *be*, and cannot try to become, historic. All (or almost all) Chinese emperors tried—by their historians under them—to become historic; they only came in as part of history, often by becoming histrionic and unworthy of "history." History as external chronicles is one thing; history as the inner life which interests us, and animates us with historical depths, is quite another. The latter sort of "history" cannot be had; it comes like our heartbeat throbbing in us as we struggle to live our lives.

Universals are like that, too. Language does not speak of meaning (universal) but speaks meaning, or speaks according to it, or lets it speak itself among us and through us speaking. This is specially true of Chinese language. As there is no explicit formal grammar in Chinese language which is nonetheless one of the most beautiful, touching languages in the world, so Chinese thinking and its universals cannot be formalized as Chinese "philosophy," though Chinese thinking is one of the most intricate and profound thinkings that there are. The most one can *say* of it is that it is profoundly "philosophical," describing it with an adjective.

For the Chinese mind, universals are invisible, indescribable, implicit,

as Chinese grammar. All we can do about the Chinese language is to master it—appreciate its telling utterances, enter its poems and essays, and naturally we can come to write and think in Chinese *manner* and appreciate it. The persuasive beauty of a language comes while we are learning how to read and write in that language. Likewise, all we can do about Chinese philosophy is to enter its world, follow where it leads, and acquire a knack of how its thinking proceeds. Its profundity comes to us as we follow it.

Universals are like adverbs. Adverbs cannot be acted out on purpose. Being the act's mode of action, adverbs cannot be acted any more than one can act the mode of the act; one simply acts, and adverbs are there. Adjectives are ontological adverbs, modes of be-ing (as verb) as it is or as they are; an adjective is a style of being, and can only be caught and discerned when we confront a thing. Adverbs and adjectives proceed/operate by evocation and metaphor, or rather, they are part of evocation and metaphor, both of them in action.

Similarly, “Is there a universal of these two kinds—Chinese, Western—of universals?” is a tough question to answer. There ought to be a unity of them but to look for a universal of this unity is as otiose as looking for *the* history of all histories. The unity is as elusive as adverbs and adjectives. The first level universals are already adverbially difficult to discern—if any, only retrospectively and performatively. One cannot retrospect one's retrospect(s) or perform one's performance(s). It is much less feasible on the second-level universal(s). And so to this question, the answer is twofold: there is, or rather, there must be, some universal(s) of these two kinds of universals, and yet they are beyond words, analogous to the grand goal of all histories, as elusive as they are necessary and inevitable.

This is why in talking about universals we talked about evocation and metaphor, *how* they operate. This reminds us of that Wheelwright of Chuang Tzu's (13/68-74) referring to words of the Great Dead as “dregs of the men of old”—when these words were just recited or talked about; they *come* alive only as we act and live on them. When we talk, we can only talk about something, not their *modes* of be-ing, the style of their impacts on

us. This is why universals cannot be talked about like things among many things; they can be seen only *in* their manner and trails of operation—evocation and metaphor.

How about this paper? This paper through its performance claims two things; that there are two sorts of universals, Western and Chinese, and that they ought to join, and mutually support each other. This paper in its execution of argument follows Chinese philosophy, and in usage of words follows Western philosophy.

But these two sorts of universals (Chinese, Western) are quite different, one situational, the other situation-free. How can we be in (Chinese universals) and out of (Western universals) the situation at once? Well, we can because we have been doing it—in time, as we historize our present, and in space, as we drive an automobile while planning on where, and even how, to go. After all, all abstractive operations—cutting up, grasping, categorizing, organizing, controlling—are all acts, all take place in history.

Whitehead compared our thinking to an airplane flight. Concept is obtained by abstractive generalization from concrete particulars, as an airplane taking off from an actual confusing situation, noticing a characteristic, grasping it as a concept, then coming down to apply the concept to the situation.<sup>11</sup> This is a flight which takes place in history, and this descension is toward the situation; situational descending is the whole purpose of ascending in the first place.

Our thinking operates by forever shuttling between the in-pole and the out-pole of actuality. Western universals do it spatially, up and then down; Chinese do it historically, before and then afterward.

## NOTES

1. Arthur Wright's statement appears in H. G. Creel, ed., *Chinese Civilization in Liberal Education*, Chicago: The university of Chicago Press, 1959, p. 141. David S. Nivison (on p. 144) also agreed to the view. See also pp. 135, 154, 159.
2. Cf. "Comparative Philosophy, Historical Thinking, and the Chinese Mind," *Philo-*

- sophical Review*, National Taiwan University, January, 1990; "Counterfactuals, Universals, and Chinese Thinking," *Ch'ing-Hwa Journal of Chinese Studies*, December, 1989; *The Butterfly as Companion*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990.
3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith, NY: Humanities Press, 1965, pp. xviii-xx; cf. Appendix IV for further quotations.
  4. Concept is a pick-up, a grasp, of a notion *out* of many confusing actual particulars. Concept is, then, not a touching-grasping of concrete objects, but a noetic grasp of an idea, a form out of touch with concrete objects (whether the form itself is "touchable" remains to be seen). Sadly, Stanley Rosen wavers between grasping forms and grasping objects in his otherwise perceptive passage on concept in *The Limits of Analysis*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 41-44.
  5. For a convenient summary of various interrelated meanings of *fang*, see A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science*, Hong Kong and London: Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 1978, pp. 186-87.
  6. Erich Kahler, "What is Art?", in Morris Weitz, ed., *Problems in Aesthetics*, NY: Macmillan Co., 1964, p. 162.
  7. Can we say then "healthy medicine (md)" is an analogy patterned after "healthy man (mn)"? The former may be an analogy but *not* patterned after the latter, for "h/md is h/mn" does not hold. But if "health" is not derived from "man," where else can it have a notional hitch? And so I doubt if "healthful medicine" is an analogy. Is it a metaphor? If so, this *sort* of metaphor constitutes a remote case for communicative metaphor, for medicine and man share health, though in a different sense.
  8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, NY: The Humanities Press, 1962, p. 330.
  9. *Ibid.*, p. 331
  10. Maurice Merleau-Ponty said the same about painting in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, NY: The Humanities Press, 1962, pp. 197-98. There he was quoting from Cezanne's experience, how Cezanne wanted to paint Balzac's description of a tablecloth "like a covering of snow newly fallen." Cezanne said, "I wanted to paint that table-cloth like freshly fallen snow. . . I know now that one must try to paint only" the plates and napkins, and the snow "will be there."
  11. As Alfred North Whitehead begins his *Process and Reality*, NY: Free Press, 1979, p. 5.



## APPENDIX I

Abstraction implies separation from the concrete, the subject. Separation makes for impersonal sameness and uniformity which facilitates control. Management of affairs, whether natural or human, becomes mechanical and rule-oriented; rules are after all abstract and universal. Paperwork tends to be more stressed than personal consideration.

Whether a culture built on abstraction can survive depends on whether it can make room for individuals to live *as* individuals, each in his/her own way, as he/she likes, and as he/she cares one for another. Of course such room-making for individual caring can go the other way of room-making for individual atrocity, leading to totalitarian mechanization of individuality. But what is precious is that it allows us, makes rooms for us, to choose between these two basic manners of living, two ways of life.

This room-making is possible because abstraction means leaving the concrete. Leaving the concrete can lead either to leaving the concrete individuals *alone*, making room for its free development, *or* to rendering the environment *irrelevant* to the concrete, destroying the individual peculiarity of each concrete event, stifling its occurrence. Either leaving the concrete alone or leaving itself irrelevant to the concrete depends on how abstraction is interpreted—used either *for* the concrete or as using the concrete to conform *to* abstraction. “Separation” has room for this sort of decision by the human agent. The crux of the matter is how we can resist using man for the abstract law and use law to make room for human growth. It requires vigilance and tact.

Sadly, however, the way to totalitarian control by abstract universals is already intimated in the Platonic priority that insists that matter is real (concrete) only as long as matter participates (takes part) in the Forms, which are the Really Real. Aristotle hardly improved on this fatal direction when he specified the modes of participation to accommodate motion or change. Whatever cannot be thus accommodated is treated as a problem—always in the frame of reference of the priority of forms, culminating in the

Aristotelian God who (which) thinks thinking itself, the purest Form of all forms. In this important sense Whitehead's dictum holds, that all subsequent philosophical development in the West is but a series of footnotes to Plato.

## APPENDIX II

The dilemma of Western justice system obtains when applying to particulars to which it is "blind." The very purpose of justice is to effectively pply to particular cases, to which it yet is supposed to be blind, thus defeating its purpose. This does not mean that Western justice is not concerned with particulars. But insisting on the uniqueness of *every* individual paradoxically creates indifference to individuals—*everyone* is unique, so are you, hence nothing unique about you.

This then is democracy in the West. Democracy is supposed to represent rebellion against autocracy and insist on the sovereignty of the individual. Unfortunately within this democratic context an individual is curiously ineffective, buried as he is in the vast majority of people. An individual is a nonentity in the crowd.

Voting is here both important and ineffective. "One man, one vote" is an exercise in democratic futility; fulfilling every individual's wish to self-expression, individual votes are powerless in the public decision-making process—unless individuals bury their "petty" differences in a common effort. But this is to obliterate individual uniqueness. We have then a swing back to deny the individual, this time within democratic individualism. Shall we institute concrete restrictions and exceptions in the enforcement of the law? But throwing in too many situational considerations restricts the law's range of application, ending up with its being incapable of application.

The dilemma of Chinese metaphoric method (*fang*) of *jen*-benevolence lies in its difficulty of extension. Again, the whole point of extension is to apply to other cases what is appropriate in one. But too much consideration on each particular case ("on a case by case basis") renders the judgment too complex to be possible, too preferential to be extendable at all.

Politics here becomes a personality cult; nepotism abounds. Employment of the capable and the wise to the office, two moderately universal standards (“blind” to family ties), will be bypassed. The Taoist alternative of forgetting the law outright fosters brute power struggle. Taoism’s only refuge is time. That is, there is no immediate cure; either the tyrant dies a natural death or the people rise up in spontaneous revolt for another Bastille Day. Both routes take time and people suffer fatally in the meantime.

### APPENDIX III

The philosophical significance of aesthetics concerns philosophy proper. Although to praise penmanship of logical notations is not to comment on the validity of their operation, the former is not completely irrelevant to the latter. For penmanship is a way of tidying up logical notations, a delivery of (logical) thinking. As improving on the mode of transportation facilitates trailblazing, so tidying expression helps tying up logical exploration in novel directions. Logical exploration and its tying up are ways of exploring new manners of intending and mapping the world, exploring new world views. Such exploration is part and parcel both of aesthetics and of philosophy proper.

For all artistic creations carry their own principles of justification; what their principles are, and how they are carried, are the themes of philosophy proper. Thus beauty belongs to the inner core of argumentation because argumentation explores and brings out tight coherence of things, and the coherence of things is a category of beauty.

Beauty is an (1) organic coherence that (2) sparkles with inducement and inspiration, what Augustine dryly called the splendor of order. Beauty’s charm and inducement, its true charm, lies in a truthful reflection of actuality as organically coherent. The evocative charm of actuality is hidden until brought out to our attention by artistic creativity.

Beauty is organic coherence that speaks actuality. For many points in

a thing are not (just) serially, externally, uniformly, mechanically, uninterestingly, and predictably related, but related internally, three-dimensionally, stereophonically, layer after layer, the obvious hiding the surprising, the surprising the obvious—and both mutually supporting, involving—to cohere into a living whole; beauty is an organism of a thing, an ecology of a world.

This complexity—a fold-together of many layers and elements—is an entirely different order from the logical arithmetical one, though logic and arithmetic are two essential elements in the aesthetic order. Thus it is an understatement to say that beauty is logically relevant to argumentation; beauty is the very life tissue of argumentation. Without beauty argumentation turns brittle, insipid, shallow, trivial.

The *Analects* rendered into English comprises flat platitudes; their terse pregnant originals shimmer with stimulating sting, sparkle with evocative wit and depths. The pithy distinction of the Great Body versus the Small in *Mencius* 6A15 draws ages of indefinite varieties of implications; the same point was repeated clumsily and tiresomely—it may well be poor logic as well—in the Ma-Wang-Tui silk document of *On Five Elements* (*Wu Hsing P'ien* 五行篇), *Ching* No. 22.

False beauty is ornamental, vainly frilling itself away without character and substance. Its charm is sickeningly saccharine and irrelevant. True beauty is stable and always draws us further on; its world has no dull moments. This true charm of true beauty comes from the reflection of actuality itself. Actuality is full of surprising depths, layer after layer, and to reflect these depths as they are comprises beauty.

The mission of beauty is to cohere and exhibit the hidden charms—inducements and inspirations—of actuality. Beauty expresses the ineffable wholes, presents the inexpressible actuality of things. This is true not only of pictorial, sonic, dramatic, and plastic beauty; this is true of verbal beauty as well—in evocation, in metaphorr, in poems, stories, structural organization of an essay, as well as in various turns of expression, what the Japanese calls the “woven fabric of words” (*kotoba no aya* 詞の綾).

All this is not as esoteric as it sounds; all this amounts to saying that

beauty is historical. To see a pattern in a jumble of bloody incidents, and cohere them into an organic whole, calling it the drama of “French Revolution” or “Hsin Hai Revolution”—this is an act of artistic creation. In a less dramatic but no less real manner, journalists see a pattern in daily events, and cohere (express) them into a fresh reportage. Any expression in verbal medium involves as artistic a cohering act as do expressions in sonic, pictorial, plastic, and dramatic media. They all ex-press actuality, which is spatiotemporally extended, and spatiotemporal extension is history. To this extent, beauty is histoical, and history is aesthetic series of events.

This point cannot be overstressed. For the very purpose of rationality and raticination is to know actuality in its long historical extension. Beauty does it for us far more truthfully, totally, powerfully, and faster than speculative argumentation. Beauty is an infinitely truer and richer argumentation than usual logical one, richer and truer in actuality.

For “Beauty is greater than proof because it needs no explanation,” Oscar Wilde was reputed to have said. We add, this is so because beauty is something final and self-sufficient, valuable (precious) *as it is*, depending on no other than itself to justify itself. Art raises its own audience and its own criteria of judgment; it carves out its own world. Beauty creates itself; it *is* its own explanation, its own *raison d’être*. If someone quibbles that this Wilde’s statement contradicts itself because it explained, the answer would be that the statement may do but beauty does not, moreover, the contradiction, if any, is resolved by the beauty of the statement itself; the statement is now not an explanation but a presentation of this fact itself.

Because of its total, concentrated integrity (requiring no explanation or justification) beauty is stronger than destruction; beauty is harder, and requires more strength to obtain, than destruction. For beauty is concretion into wholes; the process takes time and patient creativity. Destruction merely pulverizes—and disperses—wholes into pieces. Taking apart is easier than putting together into an organic coherent whole.

“Requiring no explanation” contradicts Gödel’s claim that no system self-justifies. I have characterized life (itself a self-organizing organism) as

concretion of contrastive complementarity in this essay (in section B.), and again as an alternation between self-involved consistency and self-involved inconsistency (in *The Butterfly as Companion*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990, Chapter Two, Meditation D). But “concretion” and “alternation” describe an incoherence—perhaps an incoherence that manifests itself coherently in history. Beauty is thus alive, containing incoherence in itself, a throbbing life-movement. This is most apparent in life’s tragic dilemmas, where humanness appears in all its glory—its beauty. This theme is to be elaborated in “Tragic Dilemmas in Life.”

But an immediate problem presents itself: How do we make of the “beauty” of destruction, such as the beauty of nuclear mushroom? Such a beauty exists because anything nameable at all “exists” (concretized), and we can point at a series of events and name it “destruction”; there then exists “destruction,” as a concretion of destruction *qua* destruction. This is less of the “sickness unto death” (Kierkegaard) than the sickening death, the sickness *of* death; this is where the literature of morbidity dwells. Thus destruction thrives on existence, on concretion; evil is a parasite of the good, said Socrates. In this sense also beauty is “stronger” (more primal, comprehensive) than its negation, destruction.

Cruelty and violence are feared, despised, and yet resorted to, because they have quick results; they are *often* resorted to, because their quick results also quickly pass away. They are seldom respected; although they may be planned and executed for some time, they are often quickly used and discarded. After destruction nothing is left—no more wholes, not even a sense of accomplishment. Thus cruel and violent people are seldom happy. In contrast, gentle patience and creative persistence take time and effort to materialize. But they are constructive, often producing historic, long-lasting results (wholes); they are historical. They draw us; they *deserve* respect. They are aspects of beauty. Again, beauty is historical.

#### APPENDIX IV

Maurice Merleau-Ponty also explicated at length on the structure of

sensing activity as reciprocal, intertwined, between the sensor and the sensible; see especially the extraordinary chapter titled, "The Intertwining—the Chiasm," in *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, tr. Alphonso Lingis, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968, pp. 130-55. This "intertwining" (138) he expressed variously as "nervure" (118, 119), "texture" (115, 132, 133, 134, 146, 151, 152), "tissue" (132, 135), "woof" (132), "constellation" (132), "mesh" (135), "wave of being" (136, 140), and "fabric" (6, 11) of things (105), of Being (110), of experience (111) of our life (117), of the visible (132), and even of the flesh of the world (133). These expressions remind us of Chinese Li-principle, Tao-way, Wang 網-mesh.

Merleau-Ponty further talks about "hinge" and "pivot" among experiences (148), reminding us of Chung Tzu's *tao shu* (道樞) in his *Ch'i Wu Lun* 齊物論 Chapter; the *quale* of a thing as its "atmospheric existence" (132), reminding us of *ch'i* (氣); the "fundamental phenomenon of reversibility which sustains both the mute perception and the speech and which manifests itself by an almost carnal existence of the idea, as well as by a sublimation of the flesh" (155), reminding us of Chuang Tzu's "Ultimate" that is "neither words nor silence" that concludes his *Tse Yang* (則陽) Chapter; and the "the architectonics of the human body, its ontological framework [as to] how it sees itself and hears itself," from which "we would see that the structure of its mute world is such that all the possibilities of language are already given in it" (155), reminding us of Chuang Tzu's "*tzu wen . . . tzu chien* (自聞,自見)" (hearing itself . . . seeing itself) that concludes his *P'ien Mu* 駢拇 Chapter.

But precisely here we see a parting of the way between Chinese philosophy and Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty *explained* how all these obtain, while Chinese philosophy shows what all these are.

Merleau-Ponty explained "Element," for instance, as "the old term . . . to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being" (p. 139), as "the concrete emblem of a general manner of being"

(p. 147), and again as “not objects, but fields, subdued being, non-thetic being, being before being—and moreover involving their auto-inscription” (p. 267). In contrast, Chinese philosophy merely enumerated the *typical* Five Elements—water, fire, wood, metal, earth—and then pursued their interrelations both among themselves and with actuality. Chinese philosophy expressed experience with experience, showed one original experience with another metaphorico-evocative one.

“Don’t say it, show it!”, shouted a girl to her lover (cf. Note 11 above). Expression expresses; it does not explain. Explanation ineluctably explains things away, for explanation, however helpful, detaches us from the things explained. Unfortunately both Martin Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty explained with great skill the structure of our root-experience of things. Heidegger made much of the verb character of being, essence, and the like, in almost all of his writings. Merleau-Ponty also mentioned the “verbal *Wesen*” (ibid., p. 174), the “*Wesen*, in the verbal sense, i.e., *ester . . . west*” (p. 203). The mysterious dynamic aspect of “being” is thus emaciated verbally—explicitly, systematically.

But we need *both* exhibition and explanation. For explanation may kill the thing; with exhibition alone we may miss it. Both must be fused without defeating their common purpose of bringing the matter alive to us. Perhaps their *aesthetic* fusion is needed, at which the present essay is an attempt. Both Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger were essayists with a literary flair.



## VI. MENCIUS'S CONCRETE THINKING\*

### Introduction

Since the concrete and the theoretical seem mutually antithetical, “concrete thinking” or “concrete argument” sounds as much of an oxymoron as “concrete theory.” Looked at from the standpoint of concrete dailiness, however, nothing is more natural than to demand that thinking (argument) be concrete, that is, not only relevant to actuality but itself concrete in its premises, its steps, and its conclusion; otherwise thinking flies off into abstruse irrelevance, defeating its own purpose of elucidating actuality. It is this naturalness of concrete thinking that Mencius engaged himself in, naturally, *and* promoted as a way to the ideal of sageliness.

This essay brings out Mencius's peculiar mode of thinking and argumentation as “concrete.” Section A, “Argument by Analogy,” instantiates and elucidates Mencius's concrete thinking as primarily argument by analogy with concrete particulars and historical precedents.

Section B, “Analogy by Images,” mentions two difficulties of such a thinking—the stretch between the concrete and the conceptual, the intelligible and the unintelligible. The first difficulty is met by “images” that lie between percepts and concepts; the second is met by the stretch that goes *beyond* what we know without losing intelligibility, the mystical horizon of the Heaven and earth.

Section C, “Pervasive Images,” describes Mencius's images and his usage of them, showing how they cluster themselves organically and stretch

beyond themselves to provide the ambience of concrete thinking. The final section, "Postscript," tie all this together into a synoptic view.

### A. Argument by Analogy

The power, depths, lustre, and relevance of Mencius's thinking reside in the fact tht it is inconquerably *concrete*—always analogically demonstrating the actual with the factual. That pungent scholar, Chang Hsueh-Ch'eng (章學誠, 1738-1891), said in *Wen Shih T'ung I* 文史通義 [Principles of Literature and History] (*I Chiao*, Part I 易教上), that "The ancients never left [concrete] affairs when arguing [about] principles." This precisely describes the way Mencius thought and argued. There is nothing vacuously abstract in Mencius; he never sophistically argued for argument's sake.

1. Mencius argued sometimes from concrete particulars at hand, sometimes from historical precedents. Let us first go to the argument from concrete particulars as analogy. His favorite principle, casually tossed out during the heated demonstration of eternal truth via the concrete, "All things of the same kind are alike to one another" (*Kao Tzu*, 告子 6A7), he exploited to the full; his keen eyes spotted "same kind" and "alike" everywhere, diversely and unsuspectedly. The Classic of *Mencius* is nothing but a collection of his concrete thinking-and-arguments.

Here are two examples from *Mencius*.<sup>1</sup> The first example goes as follows:

Kao Tzu said, "Life is-called 'nature.'" Mencius asked, "Is life called nature like white is-called white?" "Yes," was-the-reply. "Is the white of a white feather like that of white snow, and the white of white snow like that of white jade?" "Yes." "If so, then is the nature of a dog like that of an ox, and the nature of an ox like that of a man?" (*Kao Tzu*, 6A3)

Here Mencius objects to Kao Tzu's blanket definition of nature with life; it is all too general, abstract, and so dangerous, tending toward the view that man is as indifferently value-neutral as any brute. Implicitly Mencius claims here the value-superiority of man—value-aware therefore more

valuable—over brutes. We notice that Mencius, by sticking to *concrete* particulars (feather, snow, dog, ox), demonstrated how ridiculous it is to argue from the abstract to the abstract: Since different lives share the same (attribute of) “life,” different lives are indifferently the same.

The second example of Mencius’s concrete argument is as follows:

Kao Tzu said, “[To enjoy] food and [delight in] colors is nature. *Jen*-benevolence 仁 is inside, not outside; *i*-righteousness 義 is outside, not inside.” Mencius asked, “With what [reason] do you call *jen* inside, *i* outside?” [He] replied, “A-man [being an] elder, I ‘elder’ him, not because [I] have elder-liness in me, [but] just as [when] he is white, I ‘white’ him, following his being-white [which is] outside me. Therefore [the *i* of eldering the elderly] is called ‘outside.’ ”

[Mencius] said, “Whiteness of a white horse is not different from the whiteness of a white man. (But) is not-knowing the elderliness of an elderly horse different from eldering someone elderly? Besides, [do you] call the elderly [being elderly] *i*, or our eldering him *i*? [He] replied, “My younger-brother I love; a Ch’in man’s younger-brother I do not. Thus I am the one who does the delighting, and so I call this [behavior] ‘inside.’ ” [Mencius] said, “Enjoying [what] Ch’in [man] roasted is no different from enjoying [what] I roasted. Even things [like these] have such [as you talked about]. If so, then, does enjoyment of roasted [things] have outside?” (*Kao Tzu*, 6A4)

More complex than the first example, this example merely shows how Mencius by using *concrete* cases demonstrated that the metaphysical question of whether moral behavior is due to outside or inside promptings cannot be ascertained by abstract argumentation, and that, in fact, the question itself is mistakenly put, since (so Mencius seems to imply here) matters of morality belong to our actual co-existence and co-experience with the Heaven and earth. Exigent matters of morality are both outside and inside.

We may note in passing that Kao Tzu also used many a concrete case case, arguing a metaphysical point with factual examples. As D. C. Lau also said, during the fourth and the third centuries before Christ, Chinese think-

ers customarily resorted to concrete argumentation by factual analogy.<sup>2</sup> This is the method widely adopted by “hundred schools” of scholars to argue against opponents and refute “heresies” in the marketplaces, so as to change the world with their respective theories. Mo Tzu said (in *Mo Tzu* 墨子, *Hsia Ts'ü* 小取 chapter) that “*P'i*-metaphor 辟 is to raise other thing(s) to clarify the-point”; this “metaphor” is argument by analogy. *Shuo Yüan* (說苑) also has a story concerning a sophist called Hui Tzu (惠子).<sup>3</sup> It goes as follows:

A guest called on the King of Liang 梁王, saying, “Hui Tzu loves to argue about matters with metaphors. Once my lord forbids him metaphors, he would be without words.” The King said, “All right.” The next day he saw Hui Tzu and said, “I wish that my dear sir state matters straightforwardly, without metaphors.”

Hui Tu said, “Suppose here is a man ignorant of what a crossbow is. He asks, ‘What does it look like? If I answer, ‘It looks like a crossbow,’ would I have explained-with-metaphor (*yü* 喻)? ‘Not yet.’ ‘Suppose I said further, ‘A crossbow is shaped like a bow, with a bamboo chord,’ would he be informed?’ ‘He would.’ Hui Tzu said, “To say something at all is to explain (*yü* 喻) what is unknown with what is known [as metaphor], so that people can be informed. Your majesty’s instruction, ‘With no metaphor,’ is an impossibility, then.” “Yes.”

This story is significant on two counts. First, the story can be said to be concerned with *yü* 喻, meaning *both* to explain and to use metaphors. As Hui Tzu said, to “explain” at all is to lead the hearer from the known to the unknown—with the known as a metaphor. To explain *is* to metaphor, to go the way of (concrete) analogy.

Secondly, the story proves a historical point, that in those early days in China people customarily used metaphors to explain and argued analogically.<sup>4</sup> The author of *Tao Te Ching*, Mo Tzu (fl. 478-438 BC), and those wandering scholars in *Chan Kuo Ch'e* 戰國策—all of them embraced Hui Tzu’s method of “with the known [as metaphor] to explain the unknown.” Having been born into this Period of Warring States, going “from

one prince to another and live upon them, followed by several tens of carriages, and attended by several hundred men" (*Mencius, T'eng Wen Kung* Chapter 滕文公, 3B4), Mencius also relied heavily on concrete argument to promote the sagely emperors's Way among his contemporary princes, and to refute Yang Tzu's 楊子 and Mo Tzu's "heresies" with his theory of Original Goodness of Human Nature.

But as the ensuing sections are going to show, while the sophists and many others arbitrarily argued from concrete anywhere to concrete anything, Mencius dug deep and wide into the ever present roots of things, the eternally (and historically) natural in us and around us. Mencius constantly argued from *there*.

More examples can be cited to this effect. Mencius's remonstrations with T'eng Wen Kung were intended as medicine which "would not heal a patient unless it disturbs him" (*T'eng Wen Kung* Chapter, 3A2); this is to quote from the *Shu Ching* 《書經》, *Shuo Ming* 《說命》. Chapter, which noted this *fact* as an eternal truth. That "carrying the gift [of introduction] to pass over beyond a state" is proper was explained with the proper practice of a farmer never parting with his plough, another *mundane* practice regarded as too proverbially proper to hardly deserve mentioning (*T'eng Wen Kung* Chapter, 3B3).

That the power of persuasion is greatest when it is that of an environment constantly attending us is argued for with the all too common example of the uselessness of learning the language of Ch'i 齊, by just being with one Ch'i man talking in Ch'i, among all the clamors of multitudes of Ch'u 楚 men talking in Ch'u (*T'eng Wen Kung*, 3B6). All this is arguing from the concrete constant and lively Root of things, just as the water constantly gushing out of the fountain, day and night (*Li Lou* 離婁, 4B18, cf. 7A24).

2. But the Root of things is couched in the analogy of flowing water, indicating the deep Chinese *historical* awareness. Confucius is also said to have stood by a river, exclaiming, "It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!" (*Tzu Han* 子罕, 9/16).

Such a deep impression with the flow of history belongs in fact to the

common and ingrained Chinese sentiment, at least since the Period of Spring and Autumn. *Shih Ching* 詩經 (in *Ta Ya, Tang* 大雅, 湯) exclaimed, “The mirror of Yin Dynasty is not far; it is in the period of Hsia Hou.” In the *Shang Shu* 尚書 (*Chao Kao* 召誥) it proclaimed, “We do well to examine ourselves in the light of Hsia 夏 Dynasty, in the light of Yin 殷 Dynasty.” It is all too natural that thinkers sought instructions, as well as the basis of their arguments, in historical precedents. This practice is expressed well by Mencius when he said.

The traces of kingly princes were smothered, the Odes perished. Then the *Ch'un Ch'iu* 春秋 was made. The *Sheng* 乘 of Tsin 晉, the *T'ao Wu* 檮杌 of Ch'u 楚, and the *Ch'un Ch'iu* of Lu 魯 – they were at one in this, that what they recorded were the affairs of Huan 桓 of Ch'i 齊 and Wen 文 of Tsin 晉, and their style was historical. Confucius said, “Their proper-meanings I venture to quote.” (*Li Lou*, 4B21)

And so naturally Mencius inherited this age-old practice of argument from historical precedents. Here are four examples from the *Mencius*:

**Example 1:** The power of vision of Li Lou 離婁, the skill of hand of Kung-shu Tzu 公輸子, without the compass and square, could not form squares and circles. The acute ear of the music-master K'uang 曠, without the pitch-tubes, could not regulate the five notes. The leadership (*tao* 道) of Yao and Shun, without a benevolent governance, could not secure peaceful government of the Under Heaven. There are now [princes] who have benevolent hearts and reputation, yet the people were not benefited by them, nor will they leave any example to future generations—all because they do not put into practice the ways of the ancient kings. (*Li Lou*, 4A1)

**Example 2:** It was by benevolence that the Three Dynasties gained the Under Heaven; it was by no-benevolence that they lost it. Likewise with the destruction and flourishing, preserving and perishing, of a state. Not being benevolent, the Son of Heaven [king] cannot preserve [all] Within the Four Seas; not being benevolent, the dukes cannot preserve their ancestral temples; not being benevolent, scholars and commoners cannot preserve their own four limbs. (*Li Lou*, 4A3)

**Example 3:** Wan Chang 萬章 asked, “I venture to ask what propriety it

is not to see the princes." Mencius said, "Those in the city are "subjects of markets and wells, and those in the country 'subjects of grass and plants.' They are all called commoners who, without presentation of introductory presents to be 'subjects,' would not presume to have audience with the princes. This is *li*-propriety 禮."

Wan Chang 萬章 said, "When called to service, commoners go to why is it that when called to audience, commoners do not go for it?" Mencius] replied, "To go to serve is proper; to go for audience is not. Besides, why does the prince desire to see [someone anyway]?" "Either for his being well-informed or for his being talented-virtuous." "If for being well-informed, then even the Son of Heaven would-not [dare] call in such a teacher, much less the prince. If for being talented-virtuous, then I have not heard of anyone desiring to call and see such a worthy.

[Let me give you some historical examples.] During the frequent interviews of the duke Mu 繆公 with Tzu Ssu 子思, [the duke] said, 'What would you think of ancient princes of a thousand chariots being on friendly terms with scholars?' Tzu Ssu was not pleased, saying, 'The ancients talked about those men being served; how could they be befriended?' When Tzu Ssu was displeased, did he not say [to himself] - 'With-regard-to position, you are sovereign, I am subject. How can I presume to be a friend with my sovereign? With-regard-to virtue, you ought to serve me. How can you be a friend with me?' [Thus] when a ruler of a thousand chariots sought to be a friend with a scholar, he could not obtain [his wish] - how much less could he call [him to his presence]!

[Another example is this.] When hunting, the duke Ching 景公 of Ch'i 齊 called a forester with a flag. [The forester] did not come, [and the duke was] about to kill him. [On this incident Confucius said,] 'The determined officer does not forget [that his end may be] in a ditch; the brave officer does not forget [that he may] lose his head.' What was it in the [forester] that Confucius [thus] approved? [He] approved his not going [to the duke] when not summoned appropriately." (*Wan Chang* 萬章, 5B7)

**Example 4:** Shun 舜 rose from channelled fields; Fu Yueh 傅說 was raised from building frames, Chiao Ke 膠鬲 from fish and salt, Kuan I-wu 管夷吾 from his jailer, Sun-shu Ao 孫叔敖 from the seashore, Pai-li Hsi 百里奚 from the market-place.

Thus when the Heaven is about to confer a great task on a particular person, it must first severely-test his will, toil his sinews, starve his body,

impoverish his self, confound his work. This is to provoke his heart-mind, grind his nature, and enhance his competence beyond the previous level.

Generally men err, then amend; they are distressed at heart-mind, perplexed in deliberation, then can be aroused; things are evidenced in their outlooks, stir up noises, then they are understood. Without family laws-to-restrain officers inside, without enemy states to trouble us outside, the state generally perish. [Only] after [going through things] such-as [these, can we] know-how-to live in sorrows and calamities, [so as] to die in ease and joy [at heart]. (*Kao Tzu* 告子, 6B15)

Now, the above are just four out of countless examples, in the *Mencius*, of arguments from historical precedents. The first example demonstrates the importance of “benevolent governance” for the peaceful government of all under Heaven—by citing “compasses, squares” and “pitch-tubes” according to which historical figures made their accomplishments. The second example has the history of Three Dynasties to support the claim that “Not being benevolent, the Son of Heaven cannot preserve all Within Four seas.”

The third example produces the historical precedent of the duke Mu’s 繆公 relation with Tzu Ssu 子思 to elucidate why it is improper sometimes to go for audience with the duke. The final example cites various precedents to demonstrate that only in living dangerously (for personal cultivation) can one afford (deserve) to die with easy conscience and hearty satisfaction. These examples show the standard ploy of those thinkers during the Warring States Period, employing historical precedents to buttress their claims.<sup>5</sup>

But these precedents are much more than dispensable persuasive frills to decorate the already complete thoughts and argument. Our historical experience has at least the following fourfold significance integral to Mencius’s concrete argumentation.

First, those historical facts are anything but arbitrary notations in abstract technical formulae; they are “signs” (Claude Levi-Strauss), that is, the images that signify, the carriers of meaning. Such image-meaning is entwined with history, part of ourselves, and so carries weight.



Secondly, the considerable weight of historical images in Mencius's argumentation includes facilitation of our own participation in the claims thus produced. The claims backed by historicity all too naturally carry enough authority (the authority of having parented us today) to claim our loyalty, our commitment.

Tirdly, keen insights into historical precedents reveal to us new principles of behavior, enabling us to gain new inspiration toward a reconstruction of our future. All the above four examples produce Mencius's new principles of government, propriety, and personal cultivation.

Finally, historical argumentation integrates our thinking into, thereby carries frward, the whole historical reality of ourselves. This generates the abiding charm of Mencius's lively argument by precedents; such an argument on history is really a historical exercise in history.

The final point bears elaboration. The Example 1 above (quotation from *Mencius, Li Lou*, 4A1) sets the radical context for such an exercise in history. It says to us that "the benevolent heart and reputation" is not enough to make a dent in the world; one must "walk in the Way of the Former Kings." Our reputation of benevolence is hollow without the Former Kings, for benevolence resides in the Way of history.

To shoulder up historical heritage is to embody in our understanding and behavior the new implications found in the precedents used to back up our argument. As long as the implications are *new* they transform history; as long as they are *implications* of history we inherit history by embodying them in our life. In the end, argument from historical precedents, with all its persuasive weight on our daily living, shoulders up and expands the Way of Former Sages. Such an argumentation inaugurates our existential participation in history, our historical participation in Life.<sup>6</sup> And, *mutatis mutandis*, argument by concrete analogy amounts to our existential exercise in actuality—a reshaping of our life in the light of new implications found in concrete particulars surrounding us.

How does Mencius's concrete thinking by images of the concrete compare with the modern Western conceptual thinking? We do nothing better

than considering Claude Levi-Strauss in this connection. He mentions “signs” that lie between concrete “images” and conceptual “ideas,” in his book with a striking title, *Savage Mind*, and in its no less strikingly tautologous title to the first chapter, “The Science of the Concrete” (what science is not of the concrete?):

Images cannot be ideas but they can play the part of signs or, to be more precise, co-exist with ideas in signs and, if ideas are not yet present, they can keep their future place open for them and make its contours apparent negatively. Images are fixed, linked in a single way to the mental act which accompanies them. Signs, and images which have acquired significance, may still lack comprehension; unlike concepts, they do not yet possess simultaneous and theoretically unlimited relations with other entities of the same kind. They are however already *permutable*, that is, capable of standing in successive relations with other entities—although with only a limited number and, as we have seen, only on the condition that they always form a system in which an alternation which affects one element automatically affects all the others. On this plane logicians’ ‘extension’ and ‘intension’ are not two distinct and complementary aspects but one and the same thing. One understands then how mythical thought can be capable of generalizing and so be scientific, even though it is still entangled in imagery.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout this description Levi-Strauss puts down “fixed” images as inferior to concepts with free “unlimited relations with other entities.” Images must grow via “permutable” signs into their “future” conceptual permutability. Levi-Strauss explains that “Signs resemble images in being concrete entities but they resemble concepts in their powers of reference. Concepts, however, have an unlimited capacity in this respect, while signs have not.”<sup>8</sup>

Clearly Levi-Strauss is still trapped in his own cultural value system, unaware of the unlimited concrete power of images that is constantly emphasized in his colleague Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception. Kant said that concept without percept is empty. Once divorced from percept (“image”), the concept’s “unlimited capacity” of reference is

an emaciated one, unable to deliver the concreteness of entities.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in analogical argumentation images serve with the same free reference (permutability) as concepts do, and that with more freshness and power.

Once his ethnocentric myopia is set aside, Levi-Strauss will see how the image-mind, such as Mencius' powerful thinking with concrete images (and signs), is less "savage" than primordial, freely and deeply thinking from the concrete to the concrete. To this point we now turn.

### B. Analogy by Images

Argument by analogy, either with concrete particulars or with historical precedents, is beset with two difficulties. The first one is mentioned by Levi-Strauss and casually tossed aside in the above. It is this. Concreteness implies specific particularity. To be used in *argument* at all these particulars must refer beyond their specificity. Yet how can concrete particulars be as "permutable" as concept, freely related to other categories and entities?

The second proverbial difficulty has haunted analogical argument to this day. Briefly put, it goes as follows. To be meaningful at all, analogical argument must introduce some literal relation among *relata* at some point in the argument (to ward off equivocation), yet once literalism (univocity) is introduced, analogy is rendered superfluous.

These are, however, not difficulties confined to analogical argument alone, but inherent in all arguments; analogical argument just brings them focused into the open. For any argumentation must stretch between concrete specificity and categorial referral beyond itself, and this stretch constitutes the first difficulty. By the same token, any argumentation must be intelligible (literal) in its task of revealing (analogical) novelty; otherwise argument defeats itself in tautology. That intelligibility must stretch toward the unintelligible constitutes the second difficulty.

This twofold "stretch"—between the specific and the related, between the intelligible and the unintelligible—is made possible by the twofold metaphysical coherence, the coherence among things and that between things and their Root. Coherence and affinity among things intelligible and

unintelligible give a bridge for the argumentative stretch. Mencius provided them in terms of the affinity of all Within the Four Seas (Under Heaven), and of the Under Heaven coming out of their Root, the Heavenly.

This is what is casually called “correlative anthropocosmology” (Schwartz). We say simply “metaphysical coherence” where the “metaphysical” for Mencius *is* the physical, in the original sense of the natural, the actual, the real that is alive. This is what makes Mencius’s arguments powerfully persuasive and relevant.

Why can specific particularity of the concrete be used as an analogical link in Mencius’s argument? Simply because a particular specificity survives, like an ever flowing stream (Confucius, Mencius), by calling for and flowing into other specificities. It is Levi-Strauss’s Western cognitive prejudice that withholds from images conceptual permutability. For every person was born into existence by the “other” called parents. Every human individual is by nature a “child” in a family; he exists *as* child to his “father.” To be an individual is to survive as a member of this family network. Existence *is* existence-with-others, a correlated, con-textured existence. It belongs to the nature of concrete individuality to refer inevitably to others, in order to exist as a specific individual.

All this describes the concentric circle schematized in the *Great Learning* and both presupposed and repeatedly explicated by Mencius from various angles—the circle that goes from the heartmind to the body, from the individual to the family, from the family to the state, from the state to all under Heaven within the Four Seas, and finally from the heart-mind to the Heaven and earth.

Interestingly, both the center of this anthropocosmic circle and this circle itself are concrete through and through, both particular and universally pervasive. There is no heart-mind-in-general; the heart-mind is always mine, yours, his, hers, each in its peculiar specificity. At the same time, heart-minds are communicative—co-influential, co-surviving; even a quarrel occurs only when two heart-minds agree on what counts as an insult.

We also see and feel the Heaven and earth surrounding us and pervading us from inside out. Our world exists as an organic complex (that is,

mani-fold) of a vast variegated plurality of concrete particulars. The center (particular individual) of this circle of vast nature is everywhere, and its circumference (the horizon of the Heaven and earth) nowhere. For individuals are everywhere, and the Heaven is far-reaching beyond all our imagination. To argue from any concrete particular to any particular situation is thus not only possible but a most natural and inevitable process of our natural reason in life. And this process is profoundly persuasive and relevant.

For if the true is the concretely real, then it follows that what really works is the true. But the equation of the true and the real is for Mencius (1) made in the Vast Beyond, the Heaven, and (2) stretched to the real in us, which is the truthful (*ch'eng* 誠), that is, the “unbearably” (*pu jen*, 不忍人) virtuous. John Dewey alleged that what works—the real—is the true, and this is what pragmatism came to mean. Mencius’s pragmatism differs from Dewey’s in that while Dewey interpreted religion and morality in the light of pragmatism, Mencius’s pragmatism is itself both mystical and moral. The Heaven (the Vast Horizon Yonder) sublimely (mysteriously) guarantees that the real is the true, which is reached by our being truthful—being moral.

In other words, Mencius’s pragmatism comes from Heaven’s moral Decree (not the other way around as in Dewey); to follow it is to prosper, to fight it is to perish. Mencius is convinced of the point of convergence among the mystical, the moral, and the pragmatic. This sublime point of identity extends and supports argument by analogy. For if the true is the real, producing the familiar real serves to make us realize—lead us to—an unsuspected (unfamiliar) reality-truth. Thus Mencius seems to be convinced of the point of Supreme Identity, where the metaphysical (the real), the mystical, the moral, and the argumentative, are all rolled into one.

Ultimately this is the reason why Mencius was so zealous and self-assured in his hortatory arguments with princes and ministers, repeatedly urging them to be truthful to their own inner connatural feelings for themselves, then expand their self-truthfulness to others and become truthfully

(“unbearably”) com-passionate. This powerful connaturality shall ultimately expand, through family, society, and state, to “within the Four Seas,” and finally “throughout the Heaven and earth.” What Benjamin I. Schwartz called “correlative” (“correlative anthropocosmology”)<sup>10</sup> is but a feeble reference to this mighty analogical expansion of the inner nature.

This is also how Mencius can be pragmatic without being “cash value”-oriented, moral without being cheaply moralistic, and “shamanistic” (Chang Kuang-chih 張光直) without being shamanic, that is, mystical without being religious, much less superstitious. For being mystical falls into superstition when lacking in moral backbone. Being pragmatic thins itself into slipshod consumerism when not backed by the sublime heights of the Heavenly. Being moral turns conventional moralism when deprived of a mystical reverence for Life.

Mencius’s “concrete” point of Identity—mystical, moral, logical, metaphysical—is literally the point of concrescence of these four aspects of the Heaven and earth. To realize this point is less primitive (savage-minded) than primal, hitting at the primordial Root of all things. This is why Mencius never ceases to attract his readers throughout history with his various profound inspirations.

Ultimately speaking, this is *the* basis on which Mencius operated his argument by concrete analogy. Analogical argument has been traditionally criticized as self-defeating. Analogy works as follows: what an attribute *a* is to a thing *A* is equal to what another attribute *b* is to another entity *B*. But this formula works only when the principle of equation is known. When the principle is known, however, literalism takes over and analogy is dispensed with. Mencius is immune from this criticism because the point of Identity on which he bases his argument by analogy belongs to the sublime heights of the Heavenly, as assured as oneself yet as mysterious as oneself, the true Socratic converging point of knowledge and ignorance.

Now, this metaphysical convergence, coherence, or correlation is of twofold character—both the convergence among things, and that between things and their root. The former coherence Mencius existentially elucidated

in the arena of ourselves—that between the body and the mind, between the individual and the society. The latter coherence is put in terms of that between the human and the natural (the Heavenly). It is important to note that the terms used in this context belongs to “images” that have the qualities of concrete percepts and those of permutable concepts, thanks to intervolved actualities as above stated; The image of *ch'i* 氣 (breath, elan, vitality), for instance, is both metaphysical and physical, concrete and universal. So are *t'ien* 天 the Heavenly and *hsin* 心 the heart-mind.

Of course the insight into concreteness as various elements having been concreated and mutually reflected is not new. Leibniz's monads, Whitehead's concrescence through prehension, the Hua Yen Buddhist's many dharma worlds of interpenetrated reflection, as well as the theoretical physicist's picture of a “table” as a whirling system of electrons (units of energy), and the like, readily come to mind.

The irony of it all, however, is that they are all blinded by their own theories to the freshness of the concrete, the very flesh and blood of common things and affairs. Claiming to treat things concrete, they turned theoretical. The Hua Yen School even prides itself of losing sight of the concrete; the whole of its theoretical exercise is to realize (discern) the vacuity of things.

In the final analysis, the appreciation of concrete matters of fact goes hand in glove with the awe of confronting the mystery of the self-transcending concrete, the mystery that contingency and surprise are at the heart of the concrete familiar. The greatness of Mencius lies here. Mencius resolutely stayed in the concrete world and marvelled at the mystical Heaven and earth that surround and the *ch'i* that penetrates common entities. He was content to draw therefrom some humanistic implications of sageliness, the cultivation of *ch'i* with rightness (*chih* 直) and righteousness (*i* 義), and submitted himself to its sublimity.

The closest resemblance that one can see in the West—keeping both speculation and concreteness as Mencius did—is with Bergson's meditations on elan vital and Merleau-Ponty's notion of the bodily. Unfortunately,

both are recent and rather “offbeat” developments in the history of Western philosophy. Heidegger’s existentials (existential a priors) such as death, despair, anxiety, and the like, cannot be taken as running through the *core* of his philosophy.

In contrast, those concrete and preeminently pervasive (universal) images in China continue to proliferate and expand—Li (principle, decorum), Tao, Jen, Ch’i, T’ai Chi 太極, Hsin (heartmind) 心, Ch’eng (sincerity 誠), and the like—as central notions throughout Chinese philosophy. Chinese ratiocination is unthinkable without them. It remains for us to go into the details of these images, as to how they cohere together and stretch forth beyond the immediately referred to the Yonder, the Heaven and earth.

### C. Pervasive Images

Images in Mencius are both concrete and co-implicative. They are incorrigibly concrete, living as they are in our daily common ongoings. Yet they can freely imply further meanings unsuspected by unthinking commoners, through analogical implication. Such free analogical extensions are tacitly systematic, naturally correlated and regulated by our common-sense usage of the images. They are as spontaneous, wide-ranging, unpredictable, and at the same time inevitable, as the swimming of the fish in water.

We now concentrate our attention on Mencius’s cluster of powerful images and how they cohere to form a tacit system.<sup>11</sup> Being as free and elusive as our concrete daily life, these images cannot be exhaustibly tabulated and classified, and any reasonable description of them is as plausible as any other. But we can notice a more natural description from a less natural one.

A three-tiered correlation is tentatively adopted here: (1) body versus *hsin* (heart-mind), (2) self versus society, and (3) human self versus nature, “the Heaven and earth.” The development from the first correlation to the third is effected through the second.<sup>12</sup> In the end, all this can be seen in the context of the cosmic co-implication of *ch’i*-breath 氣 and *ch’eng*-sincerity 誠.



Mencius breathtakingly exhibited the grand unity of the first and the third correlations in one single Chapter of *Kung Sun Ch'ou* 公孫丑., 2A2. The central image running through them both is that of *ch'i*. And indeed what in Mencius captures our eyes as nothing else does is the image of *ch'i*, a breathing atmospheric elan that pervades and pushes our life activities, making them as alive as the spontaneous-inevitable breath and wind. *Ch'i* cannot be translated into a single Western category, not (only) because it is mysterious but because it, being incorrigibly concrete, penetrates throughout various realms and categories of the universe and, in the end, the "life" (vitality) of the Heaven and earth.

*Ch'i* is one of the central and pervasive images in the thinking of ancient China. Ancient Chinese medicine, philosophy, military tactics, ethics, and aesthetics are imbued with this image. Huang Chun-chieh's 黃俊傑 research revealed four different attitudes toward *ch'i* among the *I Chuan* 易傳, incantatory mediums, the Taoistic divines, and military strategists.<sup>13</sup> Endowed with nimistic vitality as *ch'i* does, these four perspectives share a view of *ch'i* as a value-neutral natural phenomenon.

Mencius's image of "vast, flood-like *ch'i*" (*hau jan chih ch'i* 浩然之氣) represents an important advancement on the view of *ch'i* in the Chinese history of ideas. This is the primal vitality of the universe rendered rational, in a natural primordial sense of the word "rational." This vital elan is at work in man's basic physiological dimension, and at the same time receives leadership from the rational-will (*chih* 志; in China will and reason are inseparable)—"*Chih* 志 is the leader of *ch'i*," said Mencius (2A2). This humanized *ch'i* then circulates the entire body—"Ch'i fills up the body," said Mencius (2A2). Being distinct from rational will (*chih*, *hsin* 志, 心), *ch'i* yet penetrates both and gives them vitality.

In short, not only does *ch'i* fill our entire bodily life with vital energy, it finally expands and becomes the Vast, Flood-like *Ch'i* throughout the Heaven and earth—"It is most great and vigorous; sustaining itself straightly and no injury, it suffuses all amidst the Heaven and earth," said Mencius (2A2).

To invite this Vast Cosmic *Ch'i* into human life amounts to initiating a creative revolution of basic ethical and ontological sort; our invitation is by cultivating its provocative vigor with *i*-righteousness 義 and *tao*-the proper way 道. Incessant “accumulation of *i*-righteousness 集義” is then an important task in “cultivating the Vast, Flood-like *Ch'i*.” In the end, *ch'i* enables the Sage to “tread-forth the schema of his bodily-organization 踐形” which is “Heaven-conferred nature” (*Chin Hsin* 盡心, 7A38; Legge’s translation modified). And this is how the body (*shen* 身) and the heart-mind (*hsin* 心) are inter-penetrated and integrated into a unified organic complex.

This complex *expands* from individual integrity, concentrically, through family, society, to the state, and then onto all Under Heaven. At the same time, we note that all dimensions are patterned after the way individuals are integrated. “People has this common saying: ‘The Under Heaven, the state, the family.’ The root of the Under Heaven is in the state; the root of the state is in the family; the root of the family is in the person himself (*shen* 身),” said Mencius (*Li Lou* 離婁, 4A5); as trees grow from their roots, so humanity grows from its center, the integrity of oneself.

Here organic “expansion” is crucial. At the center of all is that *pu jen jen chih hsin* 不忍人之心, the heart-mind unbearable to see someone suffering. There in the heart-mind are the Four Buddings—the heart-mind of compassionate alarm, of decency-and-shame, of yielding-to-others, of discrimination. Mencius’s ringing words recur: “Whoever is convinced of these four heart-buddings in himself, once develops them and suffuses himself with them, will find them as tinder just kindled, as a wellspring just venting forth. Spread them to the full, and they suffice to preserve [all within] the Four Seas. If not, they are insufficient even to serve the parents” (*Kung Sun Ch'ou* 公孫丑, 2A6). This is the extent and importance of the expansion, of the stretching forth of our compassionate integrity at the heart-mind.

Thus development and full-filling are the stretching forth considered just a while back, and can be seen in many phases. First, the expansion goes throughout the Heaven-Man relation, as Mencius said, “One who exerted one’s heart-mind to the fullest knows one’s nature (knows himself).

Knowing one's own nature, one knows Heaven" (*Chin Hsin* 盡心, 7A1).

Then, as far as the relation of man's spirit and his body goes, Mencius claims that man's inner cultivation can expand and develop itself, even to the point of transforming the entire bodily-organic outlook. "Only the person turned Sage can tread-forth [fulfill] his bodily-constitution," claimed Mencius (*Chin Hsin*, 7A38).

Finally, in regard to the relation between individual and society, Mencius clearly pointed out that "Spread them to the full, and they suffice to preserve [all within] the Four Seas. If not, they are insufficient event to serve parents" (*Kung Sun Ch'ou*, 2A6).<sup>14</sup> Expansion of one's *ch'i* and connatural heart-mind preserves all of us.

This dynamic expansion of what is natural and connatural has a dynamic structure that goes both ways. On the one hand, the initiative, leadership, and priority lies with one definite pole in the three polar relations in our human complex—"man" in the man-Heaven relation, "heart-mind" in the mind-body relation, "self" in the individual-society relation. This priority keeps the organic complex rational and autonomous against the vicissitudes of external circumstances. The anthropocosmic circle, or these concentric circles, always expand from their centers outward.

On the other hand, one must note that this unilateral expansion depends for its dynamism and justification on the correlative poles. The human rational subjecthood takes initiative toward expanding heavenward, body-ward, and in social direction because the self discerns, embodies, and implements what vigorous (*ch'i* 氣) principles (*i* 義) there are that pervade the Heaven and earth. Man promotes the Heaven by following it.

Thus human existence inherently tends (grows) from the known and the self to the unknown and the other, until the entire existence is pervaded by the whole cosmic mystical Yonder, suffused with the natural-connatural As-is of the Heaven and earth, submerged (breathing) in the Vast Flood-like *Ch'i*. Or rather this active tending is this passive suffusion; to include is to be submerged.

This dynamic interrelation is most apparent in man's historicity. For

what is said above about reciprocity in spatio-cosmological realms holds true of mutuality in seasonal-historical dimension. On the one hand, the present is as it is, having been molded as it is now by the deposits of the various pasts. To see the present is to see all the pasts that have gone in to comprise it; the present is the pasts alive now. On the other hand, the present has brought the pasts back alive only to transform them and create *out* of them the what-is-to-come, the new future. The present is shaped by the past in order to shape it into the future.

The mutuality of shaping, in a mutually opposite direction, thus crisscross at the intersection called the present which manifests the past and molds the future, in the style of the present. Without the present as it is, there would be neither the past as it was nor the future as it will be. The present is that unifying shuttle that weaves back and forth between the past and the future, and accumulates the future into the past of itself. This may well be what Mencius enigmatically called “*chi i* 集義,” accumulation of righteousness; “righteousness” here carries moral-cosmic-mystical significance.

Both cosmically and historically this complex sympathetic reciprocity concretizes itself, through human agency and his rational initiative. “Exhaustive fulfillment of heart-mind brings self-comprehension of nature. Comprehension of nature brings comprehension of Heaven” (*Chin Hsin*, 7A1). What the Heaven-earth originally *is* (Mencius’s “Way of Heaven”) is embodied and consummated by human rationality into what the human *ought* to be (Mencius’s “Way of Man”), as the cosmic *ch’i* spreads fully throughout the human to expand to the Great Body (*ta t’i* 大體).

The dynamism that effects such a transcendental unity of the ways of heaven and man, sagelihood, is called *ch’eng*-sincerity 誠. Mencius describes the *ch’eng*-situation 誠 this way: “Being sincere is the way of heaven; to think of [becoming] sincere is the way of man. Never has there been one completely sincere who did not move [others]; never has there been one not sincere who could move [others]” (*Li Lou* 離婁, 4A12). It is thus that “Whatever the superior man passes through is transformed; whatever he lets be is spiritualized. And so the above and the below, with the Heaven and

earth, flow together” (*Chin Hsin*, 7A13). Here humanism is mystical, mystical cosmology is humanistic, and *ch'i* and *ch'eng* describe this vibrant anthropocosmic co-resonance and inter-pervasion.

### Postscript

Now let us tie together this vast complex of the concrete and the factual, this time from the standpoint of thinking. What does the above mystical historico-cosmological coherence have to do with Mencius's concrete thinking? In the final analysis, historical argument is as analogical as the usual analogical argument from concrete particulars. Both share this in common, that both lead us from the familiar (the known, the past) to the unfamiliar (the unknown, the novel present and future). This is to go beyond the familiar status quo, to transcend ourselves into cosmic novelty, the wider, higher, deeper Yonder.

This explains how concrete argumentation, whether analogical or historical, inevitably leads to the mystical All in all, the Heaven and earth. This elan of inevitable self-transcendence describes the *ch'i* that invigorates ourselves from inside out and vibrantly fills up All that is. Concrete argument is one manner (our rational movement) in which *ch'i* through *ch'eng*-sincerity impels everything, including our bodily nature and our connatural rationality, toward the concrete mysteries of the Heaven and earth.

All the above schematic depiction of the intervolvement among things in the Heaven and earth, as well as that of the present in the past toward the future, is only meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive or definitive. The description serves to show that such an *interweaving*, on individual, societal, historical, and cosmic scales, is both the content (conclusion) and the presupposition (justification) of Mencius's concrete argument by analogy.

Seen from an opposite perspective, all the above amounts to this. Concreteness bespeaks correlativity. In order to clarify this complex reciprocity, rational explanation must take the form of argument by analogy both from concrete particulars and from historical precedents. In short,

the actual, the historical, the mystical—these three come together to make up Mencius's concrete analogical thinking.

## NOTES

- \* This chapter was co-authored with Professor Chun-chieh Huang, who was gracious enough to allow it to appear here. Having contributed much to the materials herein, he is innocent of its philosophical imperfections.
1. For more examples, see D. C. Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Arguments," in D. C. Lau, tr., *Mencius*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979, 1984, Vol. II, pp. 334-56.
  2. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 355.
  3. *Shuo Yüan* 說苑, in the *Ssu-pu Ts'ung-k'an, Ch'u-p'ien*, (*Suo-pen*), 四部叢刊初編·縮本 Vol. 11, p. 51.
  4. Cf. Lau, *op. cit.*, p. 355, n. 23.
  5. E. C. Pulleyblank first pointed this out. See W. G. Beasley & E. G. Pulleyblank, eds., *Historians of China and Japan*, London School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London Press, 1961, pp. 2-3.
  6. For more on the intervolving of history and thinking, see Part One.
  7. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, The University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 20.
  8. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
  9. Since "signs" can easily be confused with vacuous notations in technical formulae, and since "images" are even for Levi-Strauss fraught with fresh perceptual connotations, I shall from now on use "images" to mean what Levi-Strauss means by "signs" (as here).
  10. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 350.
  11. The structure, as it were, of this free systematicity of concrete image-thinking is being explored by Kuang-ming Wu, in his "evocative metaphors" at work in Chinese literature and historiography. Cf. the previous Chapter, "Chinese Universals," in Part Two.
  12. For detailed demonstrations of this point see Huang Chun-chieh, "Mencius and the Elan of Life," *Ch'ing Hua Hsüeh-pao* 清華學報, New Vol. 19, No. 1, (June, 1989), pp. 1-37, and "Men-tzu Ssu-hsiang Chung teh 'Ko-jen yü 'She-hui',"

(“Individual” and “Society” in Mencius’s Thought 孟子思想中的個人與社會), *K’ehsüeh Fa-chan* 科學發展, January, 1990, forthcoming.

13. For *Ch’i* in the history of ideas in ancient China see Huang Chun-chieh, “Mencius and the Elan of Life,” *Ch’ing Hua Hsüeh-pao* 清華學報, New Vol. 19, No. 1, (June, 1989), 1-37, and see Note 5 there (on p. 3-4) for bibliography on the topic. Two more recent publications can be noted: Hayashi Kinafu 林己奈夫, “*Chūgoku Kodai no Ibutsu ni arawasareta ‘Khi’ no Zuzō teki Hyōgen*,” (Schematic representations of ‘*ch’i*’ on relics of ancient China n. 中國古代の遺物に表はされた「氣」の圖像的表現), *Tohō Gakuhō* 東方學報, No. 61, March, 1989, pp. 1-93, and Sakadashi Shōsin 坂出祥伸, “*Chūgoku Kodai no ‘Khi’ Matawa ‘Unkhi’ ni your Uranai—Kandai igo ni okeru Bōkhijuchu no Hattatsu*” (Divination according to *ch’i* or *Yun-ch’i* in ancient China—development of ‘*Wang Ch’i* Techniques’ since Han dynasty 中國古代の氣または雲氣による占い—漢代以後における望氣術の發達), *Kansai Daigaku Chūgoku Bungakukai Kiyō* 關西大學中國文學會紀要, No. 10, March 1989, pp. 1-24.
14. See Note 12 above.

## VII. TRAGIC DILEMMAS IN LIFE\*

Life is full of sufferings. Many *human* sufferings come in the form of dilemmas, conflicts of obligations. When dilemmas cost our lives they are tragic dilemmas. We will trace tragic dilemmas and their dissolution (often in death) in ancient China, and think about what all this means to us today.

We begin with defining and describing with historical examples what dilemmas—specifically tragic dilemmas—are (Section A). Then we explain how dilemmas originate in the conflict between position ethics and desert ethics. This conflict breeds urgency and martyrdom (Section B). The typical Chinese preference of position over desert constitutes a justification for the life and death of a person (Section C). Then their utterly sincere reactions to dilemmas—their solutions and dissolutions—are considered (Section D). We conclude by calling attention to those tragic heroes' authentic *decisions* that arouse us into authentic yet ambiguous living (Section E).

A. What is a “tragic dilemma” in life? A *dilemma* is a conflict between two exigent obligations, ethical or otherwise, that are mutually incompatible; Mencius counsels us that sometimes we must choose between two desirables, either fish or bear paws (6A10). When incompatible demands are turned into inescapable necessities and become contraries within oneself, the *tragic* dilemma appears; when two incompatible desirables are turned inward, Mencius warns us, “life” becomes contrary to “rightness”



and we must choose between them (6A10).

But we must be careful. Incompatibles turn tragic only when they become *inescapable*. Mencius said that when the sagely ruler Shun finds his father to be a murderer, Shun 舜 should relegate the legal task of prosecuting his father to the prosecutor under his jurisdiction, while he himself should shoulder his father and hide in a remote seashore (7A35).

Thus Shun can choose the bear paw of his father over the fish of rulership without endangering his integrity or his life—the choice is not *inescapable*. This is presumably because filiality is the root of loyalty, family obligations found duties to the state—and so only the filial son deserves to rule people. Here the situation is indeed serious—matters of the state colliding with matters of the family. But Shun can justifiably unload one horn of this dilemma to someone *else* and go hide with his father. To this extent the dilemma is serious, but not (yet) tragic.<sup>1</sup>

The *tragic* appears when someone (such as Shih Sheh 石奢) is the prosecutor himself and his father is a murderer he unwittingly caught.<sup>2</sup> By capturing his father, Shih Sheh is caught between two “fateful obligations”—as Chuang Tzu said in 4/39-44—filiality and loyalty, neither of which can be fulfilled without violating the other, yet neither of which can be avoided without violating one’s integrity. Shih Sheh released his father, went to the ruler to report the incident, and, despite the ruler’s forgiveness, voluntarily accepted the death penalty.<sup>3</sup>

Shih Sheh’s incident is a rare clear-cut case. The duke of Cheng’s 鄭伯 story, a strikingly complex case, justifiably begins the entire *Spring and Autumn*; the story is an offshoot from filiality versus loyalty, and is very ambiguous. The story goes as follows.

Having crushed his brother’s insurrection which was instigated by his mother, the duke of Cheng swore an oath, saying, “Unless reached the yellow spring [underground, i.e., till death], no mutual seeing [with you, mother] will happen.” Afterward, he repented. On hearing this, a border warden offered something to the duke, who gave him some foods in return. The warden put meat aside; asked why, he replied, “My mother always shared food with

me, but she has not had such a meat you gave me. I request permission to leave it for her." The duke said, "You have mother; I alone do not." Having heard the story, the warden said, "Why be distressed? Just dig down till yellow springs, make a passageway to each other, and no one can say your oath is not fulfilled." The duke complied and rejoined his mother in joy.<sup>4</sup>

This happy ending conceals a puzzle. We do not know what sort of loyalty is involved here which conflicts with filiality. Is it loyalty to the state's integrity, or to that of a royal decree, or to something sacred?

Sometimes the filiality-loyalty conflict turns tragic. Shen Sheng's 申生 sad story is another offshoot of dilemmas involving filiality, and is a nasty case. The story goes like this.

Shen Sheng 申生 was the heir to Duke Hsien of Tsin 晉獻公, whose second wife Li Chi 驪姬 was jealous of Shen Sheng. She urged Shen Sheng to make a sacrifice to his deceased mother. Having kept some meat and spirits for the Duke, put poison in both, she then proved to the Duke that the meat and spirits were both poisoned. Shen Sheng fled. Someone urged him to explain the matter to the Duke; he refused, saying, "Without her ladyship my father would be miserable." "Would you go away, then?" "No," he replied. "With the name of such a crime I go away, then who will receive me?" He finally hanged himself.<sup>5</sup>

This time an innocent life is sacrificed in the collisions among many exigencies. Shen Sheng's integrity collided with various obligations—those to his stupid father-duke, to his vicious jealous stepmother, to his state racked by such royal character flaws, and so on. Here the dilemmas are many-sided, the sorrow is abysmal, and the death, tragic.

Besides tensions between filiality and loyalty, life has other sorts of tragic dilemmas. Here are some of them. First, fidelity can collide with loyalty.

Lawless duke Ling of Tsin 晉靈公 got so sick of Hsüan Tzu's 宣子 frequent remonstrations that he dispatched Ts'u Nei 鉏麇 to kill Hsüan Tzu. Very early in the morning Nei went and found Hsüan Tzu's bed-chamber open,

and Hsüan Tzu dressed in all his robes, ready to go to court. Mei went home and sighed, saying, "So reverent to his Duke, Hsüan Tzu is indeed the people's lord. Murdering the people's lord is disloyalty; not to follow the Duke's order is infidelity. I had better die." He dashed against a cassia tree, and died.<sup>6</sup>

Then, integrity can be in tension with being disliked, which leads to the instability of the state.

Liang Ying-fu 梁嬰父 hated Tung An-yü 董安子 who directed the affairs of the Chao 趙 family, and schemed in such a way as to require the Chao family to kill An-yü [otherwise the Chao family would be invaded]. Knowing about this, An-yü said, "If my death gives the state tranquillity, why should I live? What man must not die?" He then strangled himself. Peace was restored.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, loyalty to the ruler can collide with respect for the ruler (No. 10).

Yü Ch'üan 鬻拳 vehemently remonstrated with the viscount of Ch'u 楚子. As the viscount would not listen, Yü threatened the viscount with a weapon. The viscount adopted his advice out of fear. He then said, "I have frightened my ruler with a weapon; no crime is greater," and cut off his own feet. He was appointed to be warden of the city gate, which he refused to open for the viscount on his return from the defeat. The viscount turned and fought a victorious campaign with another state. One the way back home the viscount fell ill and died. Yü buried him, then committed suicide.<sup>8</sup>

It is time to take stock before going further. All these stories show that to have a dilemma means having a problem beyond reasonable resolution; having a tragic dilemma means that the problem is overwhelmingly exigent, that it bites into the very marrow of my being, that it is impossible—often even undesirable—to cleverly manipulate situational factors to engineer my life out of trouble. I am confronted with a dead end (or a fork) on life's way, and the fork and the dead end are inescapably within me, stinging me numb. *I*—not my hands, not my brain, but no less than the totality of my life—have to grapple with the situation.<sup>9</sup>

B. One can surmise that the dilemmas, tragic or not, arise out of the conflict between what we would call “desert ethics” and “position ethics.” Desert ethics concerns imperatives originated in the merit of the act itself; position ethics concerns imperatives arisen out of the agent’s position in the ambience of human intercourse. Thus position ethics stipulates that one ought to respect a person as one’s teacher or father, irrespective of whether or not the teacher or father has anything deserving of respect; desert ethics says one ought to respect or despise another person only in the light of what the person deserves, irrespective of what social position the person occupies. (Cf. Appendix 1)

We tend to dissolve the clash by integrating position into desert—what one is being valuable for something else, for good of the society, for instance. But often the clash continues to infest the present moment, and then we have a dilemma. We can run away from it, of course, as Shun 舜 did, as Shen Sheng’s brothers did, as Jesus’s disciples did, as both Shen Sheng 申生 and Socrates were counselled to do; and then we sweep the dilemma under the rug of ordinary life. But if we do not run away, then the dilemma can be intensified into a tragic one—as Socrates and Shen Sheng refused to run away, and one drank hemlock, the other hanged himself. This is the clash turned fatal crash—between the deontological-position ethics and the desert-utilitarian ethics, between “my” principle or “my” position as heir apparent, on the one hand, and public nuisance or future royal scheme, on the other.

Desert ethics in ancient China is typically couched in political reciprocity. The *Shu Ching* 書經, the oldest extant collection of public documents, thus exhibits the ideals officially and publicly endorsed. It repeated twice the touching royal phrase of cherishing people “as if [they were royal] disease” (*jo yu chi* 若有疾; in “Ta Kao 大誥” and “K’ang Kao 康誥” Chapters). Mencius also said that King Wen “looked on the people as [he would on a man who was] wounded” (視民如傷 4B20), and to extend the unbearable heart to (see) others (suffer) to the government of the unbearing (heartmind), typically by “elderly-ing” one’s elderly and extending the relation to others’ elderly (1A7, 2A6, 4A1). The regal ideal

is both to bend over in parental solicitude toward his people and for them to reciprocate in filial loyalty.

All this shows both that desert ethics derives its sense and sensibility from parent-child relation (the primal paradigm of position ethics), and that these two ethics differ. Desert reciprocity can be resolved by a lack of sincerity on one side; “When the prince regards his subjects as his hands and feet, his subjects regard their prince as their bosom and heart; when he regards them as his dogs and horses, they regard him as any other man; when he regards them as dirt or grass, they regard him as a robber and an enemy.” (4B3) But position ethics is natal, ingrained, hence our filial obligation is unilaterally binding on us, no matter what else changes. This is what distinguishes man as man from beasts, as expressed movingly and variously by Mencius in 4A3, 5, 19, 27, and 4B12, 19.

The clashes between these two ethics are all too vividly rampant today. The quality-of-life attitude pitted against self-ishness or “just to exist is holy” attitude, is a modern example of the conflict between desert ethics and position ethics. Self-ishness is in the realm of position ethics; desert ethicists would say that it is irrational for every good to be channelled into *myself* irrespective of others, or irrespective of whether or not I deserve it. Similarly, quality-of-life-ers says that it is irrational for one terminal patient to exhaust the society’s limited medical resources which can be distributed among many other (younger? non-terminal?) patients. We can understand how euthanasia becomes a battleground between desert ethics (life is lived because of its quality; the quality of life is nonexistent in a terminal patient) and position ethics (just to exist is holy, what profits a man who loses his life for the entire world?).

Position ethics is instantiated in what is *urgent*—to me personally, whether or not the matter is worth the demand of urgency, or whether or not I myself am up to (worthy of) an urgent action. I may or may not have much money, but I should spend a thousand dollars either on my son’s tuition or on saving African children from starvation. I choose to pay for my child’s tuition, which puts an urgent demand on me, because to pay for

it is my responsibility, now; for my son is *mine*. Whether or not my child deserves (my) help, or whether or not I am capable of answering his need, or how many other children's *lives* will be saved with that amount of money, as compared with the same money defraying only a portion of a semester's expenses, is irrelevant here. My child's need (hence my responsibility to him) is more "urgent" (to me) than African children's who are distant (to me in kinship and in space) and can be saved by other people.

In the final analysis, urgency is synonymous with "myself": anything that touches me and concerns my life (and death) is by definition urgent (and inescapable). This is the other side of the argument for "selfishness." To think of it, though seemingly opposite to each other, the justification for selfishness is the same as that for martyrdom—in both the matter concerns me personally. "Myself" is the paradigm for urgency and, by extrapolation, the tragic.

Martyrdom is where the tragic appears—where the dilemma is urgent (inescapable) and can only be confronted head on with my whole life (and death). The tragic almost always costs my life; most of the tragic heroes in ancient China committed suicide.

Martyrdom obtains when the conflict between position ethics and desert ethics happens, say, in the political sphere. Democracy opts for a position ethics, insisting as it does on every person's inalienable rights and dignity *qua* human person, irrespective of personal qualifications, while aristocracy—at least in the original sense of the "rule of the best"—opts for a desert ethics where some are fit to rule, some others fit to be ruled (Aristotle). Thus in the "incompetent ruler" the issue is joined. How can an "incompetent" person be fit to rule? Yet why should not the "ruler," *qua* ruler, be obeyed? Quite often martyrdom happened in ancient China under the circumstances of such ethico-political dilemmas.

C. The sentiment in ancient China, both moral and conventional, is that desert ethics makes sense within the context of position ethics, the consideration of which overrides that of desert ethics. Position ethics takes precedence over desert ethics because the former is the latter's origin and

meaning context.

An ethical claim of a person over someone else comes from that person's social *position* in relation to that "someone," and this is the whole basis of the Five Relations—ruler-subject, father-son, brother (or sister)-brother, husband-wife, and friend-friend—in whose context each person has his/her prescribed duties and privileges, which make a person person. This is the Woof and Warp of all ethics in ancient China. To be a person *is* to be a father to someone, for instance, with all the fatherly joys and responsibilities accrued thereto. And so desert ethics makes sense only with in position ethics—a "good man" (desert) is a "good father," "good son," and so on (position). There is no "good man in general" any more than there is man-in-general.

But life is complex; conflict often happens between two positions (good sonhood against good subjecthood) and/or between two sorts of ethics (loyalty to a ruler who does not deserve it). The sentiment in ancient China seems, again, to prefer position to desert in both sorts of conflicts.

As for positional conflicts, irrespective of who merits one's loyalty or filiality, filiality tends to come before loyalty. For one must prove oneself worthy of being the ruler; the *Book of History* and the *Mencius* are full of such injunctions and warnings to the rulers to behave *like* one. In contrast, fatherhood is a primary, ingrained, and natural position in life, in fact, *the* position after which all other positions are patterned. The heaven is the father; the ruler, the teacher, the elder brother, and the husband, all occupy a father-like position. Once a father, always a father. But "once a ruler, always a ruler" does not hold. (See Appendix 2) One is a legitimate ruler as long as one behaves in a fatherly manner, and only he who deserves rulership should, and is entitled to, become one. This explains how, when filiality conflicts with loyalty to the ruler, filiality often has the final word. (See Appendix 3)

Nobody is indispensable in the world of competition—in, for instance, business and politics. This is desert ethics. He who maneuvers best (most appropriately, most effectively) wins; then he will be taken over by some-

one else more shrewd and efficient, that is, more deserving.

In contrast, the parents (at least until recent times when even this area is influenced by desert ethics) treasure their children simply for being their children, no matter what; in fact, the less worthy and capable the children are, the more the children are loved. That this is an epitome of position ethics is shown by the traditional Chinese classics habitually linking parental love to the fostering care of the “Heaven and earth,” synonymous with What Is. It is all too natural that the *Classic of Filiality*, after briefly mentioning the basis of good politics to be virtue, instructs that the root of virtue is filiality, and the beginning of filiality, “not to destroy [or even] injure” one’s “body, hair, skin [the entire existence of oneself] received from [one’s] father-and-mother,” who are ultimately identified with the Heaven and earth, What Is.

Whatever exists is thus precious simply because it *is*, being cared for as such by the parental What Is and As Is. Furthermore, consideration on who deserves what is impossible without the *existence* of that “who,” begotten by the parents. No wonder our gratitude and obligations to the parents are natural and deeply rooted in our very existence. Therefore, filiality (a typification of position ethics) takes precedence over loyalty (an instantiation of desert ethics), and if sometimes loyalty takes over, it is for reason of filiality, as was the case with a loyal subject of Pai Kung 白公 of Ch’u 楚 (mentioned in Note 3). (See Appendix 4).

All this further explains Shun’s strange (to our modern eyes) behavior (*Mencius* 7A35, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter). As long as filiality is the precondition for rulership, and prosecuting the father is the height of unfiliality, prosecuting the father renders one unfit to prosecute at all. But not prosecuting the criminal also renders one unfit to be the ruler (and prosecutor). Thus, on the one hand, Shun is eternally his father’s son; it is the son’s duty to protect his father, and to put his father to death (even justly, by state law) is eternally unfilial. On the other hand, protecting the criminal (even he is one’s father) from prosecution violates the law; Shun thereby disqualifies himself from rulership. So Shun had to flee with his father. The only choice left for Shun is to shoulder his father, flee, and



hide in the seashore.

Shun's behavior in the face of his murderous father—deserting rulership, hiding the father—seems strange (if not wrong) in our modern eyes because we tend to stress the reverse—desert over position. But we know at heart that this modern preference of desert often renders life forlorn and wrong. To turn in one's father for prosecution (as in *Euthyphro*, Iran, and the Communist China) somehow rubs us in the wrong way, if not angers our hearts. Notice also how the modern son's defiant "Prove to me that you deserve being my Dad" destroys many a home—where one does not need to prove oneself worthy, but can just be oneself as father or as son and be treasured as such. Home being the basic unit of the society, desert ethics crumbles the society into lonely individuals—atomic, reactive, irrational, in the pulverized universe of dark defiant individualism.

Shun in the above case dodged responsibilities to the state and happily (though seriously) dislodged his dilemma. But often holding on to one horn of a dilemma costs one's life. To *see* clearly which horn of the dilemma one should choose and act on, constitutes the tragic here. How could one choose one horn over another without being stung to death by that "another" horn? To *see* clearly that both horns of the dilemma should be embraced and act on them both, also constitutes the tragic hero. How could one fulfill various conflicting obligations at once without being torn asunder? Trying to respond to these rhetorical questions confronts us again with the conflicts between two sorts of ethics. And here the same Chinese preference also shows through — position over desert.

Four examples can be cited. Take a sad story previously cited (see Note 2), about Shih Sheh 石奢 the prosecutor who, having released his murderous father, voluntarily submitted himself to the death penalty. Clearly Shih Shen saw that his duty to the father overrides his duty to the state, which he had to fulfill also. He chose the filial horn of the dilemma, and was stung to death by the other horn of loyalty to his prosecutorship. His death enabled him to fulfill both obligations.

Another story, also previously cited (see Note 4) concerns the Duke of

Cheng 鄭伯 whose mother tried sedition against him and failed. Having pledged not to see her until under the Yellow Spring (i.e., after death), he later repented and dug a tunnel underground and saw her. Her behavior was wrong, deserving of eternal separation from her son, yet she *as mother* was eternally and invitingly lovely; the latter sentiment prevailed. Again, to break his own royal decree is wrong, yet the wrong was overridden (justified?) by the more urgent sentiment of filiality.

Our third story is about a subject who kept his position and went to undertake a dangerous task (fully knowing its futility) which ended his life.

Being notified of the commotion and revolution in the living quarters of his lord K'ung K'ui 孔懼, Chi Tzu 季子 rushed to the city gate. "The gate is shut," he was told. "Besides, the incident has nothing to do with you and you need not share in your lord's misfortune." He replied, "I have eaten his pay, and will not try to escape from his difficulties. . . . You seek what gain you can get, and shrink from meeting the State's difficulties. I am not such a one. Having got the benefit of the State's pay, I will try to save it in its difficulties." Having managed to get into the city and the place, he was struck down, and his cap's strings were also cut. "The superior man," said he, "does not let his cap drop to the ground when he dies." He tied the strings and died.<sup>10</sup>

Here his act was useless and worthless, his act *as the subject's* is commendable, and as such the story was handed down to us.

Our final story was also previously cited (see Note 8). There was a subject, Yü Ch'üan 闞拳, who remonstrated with his lord with the threat of a sword, succeeded in converting his lord to the good, then with the sword cut off his own foot. The act of effective remonstrance deserves praise, yet the same act *as the subject's* is highly insubordinate, deserving of punishment. The latter consideration prevailed— in amputation.

D. How did people in ancient China react to life's tragic dilemmas? The above varieties are what the Chinese historians (and later generations) took to be worthy of writing down, where we see the reactions—solutions or resolutions—worthy of high regard:

The happiest resolution is simply to *retire* (when possible) from what

they take to be secondary duties and choose to fulfill only the primary duties. The “secondary duties” could be those to the state (as both Confucius [13/18] and Mencius [7A35] proposed); the “primary duties” could be those to the family (Confucius [13/18], Mencius [7A35]) or even to humanity as a whole, as the following story shows:

King Chuang 莊 of Ch'u 楚 besieged the State of Sung 宋 until his troop had only seven days' food left. So he sent Ssu-ma Tzu-fan 司馬子反 to go up to a hill to spy on Sung. Ssu-ma went, and was told by Hua Yüan 華元 from Sung, who came also to spy on Ch'u, that the entire state was starving to the point of “exchanging children to eat, crushing human skeletons to cook.” Deeply moved with compassion, Ssu-ma came back to report the situation. Duke Chuang was overjoyed to begin his assault when Ssu-ma said that *he* had already told Hua Yüan that *his* troop was not too far from starvation, either. When accused of negligence to his duty, he replied “So small a state as Sung has a subject who does not cheat; why cannot *we* have one, too?!” Duke Chuang still wanted to go ahead and take Sung; Ssu-ma told him that Ssu-ma will go home. Duke Chuang had to return home with him also. Sung was saved.<sup>11</sup>

This is a rare height of humaneness beyond local allegiance to the state. Unfortunately the ideal is as rare as it is high. In this height, we are so dizzy that we do not know what conflicts with what amountes to what that has been transcended—small nationalistic claim against big humanistic one, to be sure, but what belongs to desert, and what to position, shift according to how we look at the situation.

In any case, the above are varieties of orthodox or rather conventional view on which sort of alternatives count as primary. When one takes the duties to be primary which differ from those taken by the conventional line, one is branded either a recluse<sup>12</sup> or simply wrong.<sup>14</sup>

Then, when retiring from secondary duties is impossible, the resolution of dilemmas obtains by fulfilling the primary obligations and resorting to *expediency* to dissolve what one takes to be the lesser obligations, as in the story of Duke of Cheng who dug a tunnel underground to see his mother after his vow never to see her (see Note 4).

But often death results from the clash of obligations. Often we are at a loss as to what interpretation we should assign to which case of death. We can only roughly characterize them. Those deaths can be regarded in three ways: the tragic person was torn to death in the conflict of obligations, or he overcame the conflict in death, or he went *beyond* the conflict—in death.

First, those deaths can be seen as lives *torn* in the violent clashes of various obligations, cut to pieces by the sharp edges of many demands of rightness. The famous Ts'ü Yüan 屈原 and Chieh Chih-t'ui 介之推 who committed despondent suicides at being forgotten by (or out of favor with) their beloved rulers, and the tragic heroes listed in the Chapter on "Secessions of the Throne" (*Jang Wang P'ien* 讓王篇) in the *Chuang Tzu*, can be classified under this heading.

But then, we can regard them (and some others) as *courageous martyrs*, fully looking into the faces of those dilemmas, shouldering the full weights of all duties, fulfilling them all at once. Their deaths seem to do justice to all of the moral demands. Many dilemmas were produced by the bad behavior of persons at the top of the relational ladder—the father, the ruler; those "martyrs" courageously, selflessly (without any Freudian inner conflicts), shouldered their elders' "mess," taking it into their lives, allowing it to crush them—thereby either putting a stop to the mess, or fulfilling the relational obligations with the sacrifice of their lives (to the mess), or choosing one horn of the dilemma and breaking the other one—in their deaths.

Lastly, their deaths can be seen as a serene *transcendence* beyond the conflicts, shown in the dedication of their lives to the exigencies of the situation, "regarding death as going-home." Lang Shih 狼蹕 the courageous soldier did so (see Note 14); Yü Ch'üan 鬻拳 who with sword remonstrated with his lord did so (see Note 8).

The story of a subject under Duke Pai 白 of Ch'u 楚 is appropriate here (see Note 3) also, especially when, reaching the court, he stumbled three times in fear of death. Upon being asked why he would not go back home,

he said that fear of death belongs to his private life, while dying for his ruler belongs to his public duty, and he would not allow private fear to interfere with the execution of public duty.

But of course transcendence does not need to end in death. As the moving story of Ssu-ma Tzu-fan's 司馬子反 compassion toward the enemy State Sung 宋 shows (see Note 11), people *can* go beyond narrow national loyalties towards the cause of universal humanness. Chuang Tzu has hinted at this transcendence over localized loyalty when he talked about "forgetting the parents" as high filiality (14/5-11), in a similar spirit as Mencius's who advocated "'eldering' one's elderly to extend to others's elderly" (1A7).

All in all, some people in ancient China did not so much solve their dilemmas as (a) saw them clearly and (b) faced up to them—quietly, victoriously, or transcendently—often accepting death, or (c) bypassed them by retiring from them, by resolving them in expediency, or by sacrificing secondary obligations for primary ones.

E. We are now in a position to ponder on what all this means to us today. It is important to note that there are many dilemmas in life. As business ethics, medical ethics, and politics show, various moral obligations do clash (loyalty to the public against particular duties to friends and to parents), producing various disappointments and misfortunes that entangle worthy projects. Unfortunate dilemmas are so unavoidable that we can almost say that they *constitute* human living. To live as a person is to be involved in those dilemmas.

Now some of them can be solved, many can be dissolved. But many others are not meant to be solved or resolved, but to be lived through. It is in such a living-through that our humanness is manifested; it is the mode, the style, and the process of how we live through the tragic dilemmas in life that judges what sort of human being we are, and tells us what it means to be truly human.

Living through dilemmas often results in death, at least in ancient China. How one dies in what dilemma speaks loudly about what person one is/was. Camus's vision of Sisyphus is one of simple defiance against all

odds; the defiance gives Sisyphus Sisyphus.<sup>15</sup> The lives and deaths of those tragic heroes in ancient China tell us that there are many ways of defiance, resulting in more than defiance. Here are some examples.

Defying all odds to save his ruler, Chi Tzu 季子 died uselessly and gloriously (see Note 10). Lang Shin's 狼瞞 death defies the shame of demotion and fulfilled himself without disloyalty to the ruler (see Note 14). Yü Ch'üan's 鬻拳 sword both brought his lord to his senses and cut off his insubordination by maiming himself; his sword executed respect and remonstrance (see Note 8). In contrast, being disliked without reason by a strong enemy clanstate, An-Yü 安于 quietly died to save his state (see Note 7). And Shih T'a's 石他 death nullified his pledge of allegiance to the ruling enemy state *and* saved his parents from execution (see Note 2).

Problems are literally thrown at me—thrown-before me—for no reason, then disappear, sometimes, for no reason. Life is measured not by how many solutions I produced, but by *how* I sustained myself in the teeth of those problems and dilemmas. The sustenance of life comes from self-sustaining struggle in the face of dilemmas. And how I sustain myself has a lot to do with how I complete my life, sometimes by ending it. How I die testifies to how I have lived. The rest is of secondary importance.

To sustain myself in the midst of dilemmas and conflicts between two (or more) irreconcilable ideals, obligations, and situational demands, *means* to put up my own self, my life, as something that holds those irreconcilables together, keeping them, softening (if not solving) their clashes. This was what Jesus did—standing between God's love, justice, and holiness, on the one hand, and human sin, on the other. This was also what Socrates did—standing between ignorance and its knowledge. To *stand* there courageously at the point of clash, of collapse, of conflict—just to stand there—often leads to death. Both Jesus and Socrates had to die. At the same time to stand there unflinchingly is to sustain myself amidst the life-threatening problems of life. Such a stand brings life through death, as both Jesus and Socrates did. Shih Sheh 石奢 who executed not his father the murderer but himself the prosecutor (Note 2) reminds us of Socrates's

dealing with his “father,” the Athenian society; both left their misbehaved fathers alone and took upon themselves the penalty their father deserved. Shen Sheng 申生 who died to cover the guilt of his royal parents (Note 5) was a Chinese Jesus; both quietly died to let the offending parties live. All of them showed us, that life can be made deep and worth living.

To stand amidst the conflicting demands of rightness is to accept dilemmas into oneself—and let them become his. The tragic hero has contraries—his contraries—within himself. He has the difference and the split in him between what he understands and aspires to be/do and what he chooses/acts. When he acts, he has the Utopia of reconciliation—of irreconcilable ideals—at a distance. For he has the Utopia—that is why he chooses and acts; yet he does not have it—that is why he always has an afterthought that he could have done otherwise, and yet things would still have come out the same—split, caught, dissatisfied, unfulfilled.

And, in the final analysis, every man, like the tragic hero, is divided this way. The common man merely muddles along where the tragic hero sees clearly the inner contraries, and acts decisively to manifest them.

If to obey with eyes closed starts panic, then to choose in the full light of one’s understanding sows the seed to tragedy. But those who are simply people are silent in/to all this; they are far from classifying others into the good and the evil—or, perhaps being precisely so, they are all too facile in classifying people. Their classification speaks loudly about their silence over the ambiguity, the painful irony, of life. Then comes the tragic hero who brings their silence into the open, manifesting the irony with his life—tragically—for all to see and come to self-understanding, and breed a hindsighted virtue.

Then irony in life becomes a task, the execution of which changes the very meaning of life. And we become wiser, that is, more cautious and perceptive about what it means to really live *in a situation*. We learn how to prefer one facile rival dogmatism to another. We now refuse to judge and vindicate—we smile at those posthumous judgments (of historians, of later generation) on those tragic heroes. By remaining resolutely there, in

silence, we do not transcend errors and dogmatisms but leave all dilemmas and judgments at grips with one another.

One day there may be the Utopia where all morals are seen less than absolute and valid—as Chuang Tzu clearly saw; and hence all dilemmas serve to challenge us not so much to (re)solve them as to enlighten all, opening us to true freedom, of which we are now ignorant. In that Utopia

People are like wild deer, being proper without knowing what is right, loving one another without knowing benevolence, being faithful without knowing loyalty, . . . wriggling like worms to mutually serve without knowing bestowal. Thus their deeds leave no trace, their events produce no tradition. Filial sons flatter no parents, loyal subjects fawn on no ruler.<sup>16</sup>

In the meantime we of this present world listen intently to the tragic hero as he acts on his life, which speaks loudly: “The ‘absolute’ truth here and now is evanescent, never elsewhere; it must be defended at each event, for it belongs to a situation, to an instant, where ideals vie with one another amidst incompatibles, and no matter how one decides, one must sacrifice oneself on the spot where things collide.” One cannot act on principles (as a moralist does) nor can one live and act without thinking them (as a roue lives). What one finds here is neither the depth of oneself nor absolute knowledge, but a renewed sense (and understanding) of the world and of oneself placed in it *among* others and among many incompatible situational obligations.

In short, the dialectic, or rather ambiguity, of the tragic hero is only a way of expressing what every man knows well—the value of those moments of truth when one’s life renews itself by going beyond itself (in death), as one gets hold of oneself in those moments of decision. These are the moments when one’s private world becomes the deep common world.

What does the tragic hero say of death, except the following: that death seals the meaning of life as it decides on itself, that death puts to test all our analyses and knowledge of the relations between the self and the world, that death frees us from dispersion, concentrating our personality in



integrity, of which life is a mere preparation, that death is life's sense that does not wear out, that death is the open truth that clinches nothing but keeps questions open—as in an adage already quoted (in Note 3), “Things appropriate to the ruler but not to the father, the filial son would not do; reversed, the superior man would not do. And neither the ruler nor the father should be disregarded.”—and that death is this place and this fact that brings peasants, tragic heroes and whole people together.

The tragic hero is the man who wakes us up and speaks to us through his life and his death. And we all contain silently within ourselves this paradox of tragic dilemmas in life, for this containing of contraries in oneself, and waking up to this paradox, is to be completely a human person.

So far the positive side of tragic dilemmas has been considered—that the tragic is sublime because it is the open window into what we are. But the tragic is sublime because it is tragic; what we see through this open window of tragic death is sheer openness. The sublimity of the tragic lies not in offering us any solution but precisely in offering us no solution, in its sheer offering of this open sore, where *any honest* “solution” is a sorrow-filled deadend. The tragic is sublimely tragic because of this “honest” facing up to its open sore, in full awareness of its consequences, in its untimely closure of death.

But the tragic can turn sad because of this openness in a different sense, that here *any* interpretation—of ours or of those involved therein—is possible and sorrow-filled. Shen Sheng or Hamlet can be taken as silently resolute, or silently at a loss, not even capable of running away, or even silently rash, not having thought through the situation or thought it rightly—as insurmountable odds. Death here was not chosen but simply resulted from either rashness or cowardliness, and then one's death is not tragic but sad.<sup>17</sup>

Precisely in their not running away, their lives collided headon with the situational and valuational dilemma, revealing that openness of the situation, that ambiguity that can be taken either way, and that either way is a deadlock knotted with colliding obligations; the situation was a tragic

one, not our hero.

Finally, tragic dilemma is *open* even in this sense, that one can always run away from it all, and fail to acknowledge the dilemma *in* one's life; all Shen Sheng's brothers ran away. Then tragedy ceases, and life muddles along—although the dilemma remains, and remains hid away, swept under the rug of humdrum dailiness.

This is why it has been repeatedly said that the tragic happens when the calsh is taken *into* oneself—and lets the dilemma explode there inside, and explode one's life. To the extent that one's life is not exploded—to the extent that Sisyphus can defy the Fate and did as he did against the divine order, to the extent that Sisyphus can roll the boulder (any boulder) up the hill, and defy the punishment and claim himself unexploded—to that extent there is no conflict and no tragedy.

Thus the openness of the tragic means: The situation is an open sore, and so any interpretation of such a death is possible, and one can run away. The tragic is an open crack, that unsightly window, into the openness of life. This is what makes tragedy tragic, and what renders the heroic resoluteness herein tragically sublime. To know oneself—claimed by Socrates as our supreme aim of life—is to feel such a sublime tragedy right within us. We owe this felt and lived knowledge to our heroes, who defied nothing and resolutely stood in the thicket of tragic dilemmas.

## NOTES

- \* This chapter was co-authored with Professor Chun-chieh Huang, whose scholarship and permission of it to appear here are much appreciated, though he is innocent of its philosophical ineptitude. Professor Seymour Sargent's meticulous criticisms saved this essay from many a logical blunder. Various scrutinies by graduate students at History Department, National Taiwan University, brought more historical accuracy to the essay. The essay owes much to them, though my obtuseness prevented us from adopting all of their valuable suggestions.
- 1. If someone says that Shun 舜 also is responsible for this prosecutor, therefore there is nowhere for Shun to flee and hide, it must be stated that there then

would be no difference between Shun and the prosecutor, and the latter is rendered nugatory. To the extent that there *is* the prosecutor who differs from the ruler, to *that* extent Shun has the leeway to flee.

Similar serious but not tragic dilemmas abound in ancient China, as anywhere else in the human world. The quiet story of Tzu Tsang 子臧 is one of them. He was son to a prince murdered by another, called Fu Tsou 負芻, who ruled over his territory. He was going to leave, and all the people followed him. Fu Tsou got scared, admitted his wrongdoing, and begged Tzu Tsang to remain. Tzu Tsang returned and surrendered his city to Fu Tsou. (*Annals of Spring and Autumn*, Duke Ch'eng, Thirteenth Year, [Legge, pp. 381, 383])

Confucius gave us two examples of serious yet non-tragic dilemma. The first is in 17/1, where Confucius refused to see a minister Yang Huo 陽貨 (improperly scheming to take over Lu 魯), but accidentally met him anyway. Yang Huo persuaded Confucius to serve him on two grounds: one should not keep one's jewel and leave the country in confusion, and one should not waste time waiting when an opportunity turns up. Confucius complied.

The second is in 17/7, where Pi Hsi 佛髀, another evil man, invited Confucius to serve him. Tzu Lu 子路 objected, on the ground that a superior man does not mix with evil doer such as Pi Hsi. Confucius said that things really hard and white cannot be ground down or steeped black. Besides, Confucius is no bitter gourd—only to be hung without being eaten. Confucius was consistent in wanting to serve the state whenever an opportunity turns up. (cf. 17/5).

2. This incident was recorded in *Han Shih Wai Chuan* 韓詩外傳, Vol. 2. A similar story is told of Shih T'a 石他 under the new regime which had overthrown the one to which he had been loyal. He was ordered to pledge allegiance to the new regime on pain of deaths to his whole family. He was caught between incurring deaths to the parents with his loyalty to the old regime, on the one hand, and saving his parents by being disloyal to his former ruler, on the other. He went ahead and pledged allegiance, then committed suicide for his former ruler. (*Han Shih Wai Chuan* 韓詩外傳, Vol. 6)
3. Cf. the principle enunciated in *Han Shih Wai Chuan*, Vol. 8, saying that "Things appropriate to the ruler but inappropriate to the father, the filial son would not do; reversed, the superior man would not do. And neither the ruler nor the father should be disregarded. As the *Book of Odes* said, 'How great is the superior man who follows what everything requires.'"

This principle is easier said than practiced, however, and the difficulty of

practicing it is all too well known. Duke Huan 桓公 sighed, saying, "Being a loyal subject prevents me from being a filial son; what should I do?!" (*Shih Shuo Hsin Yü* 世說新語, Yen Yü No. 2 言語第二) Chou Ch'u 周處 also said, "The way of loyalty and the way of filiality—how could both be obtained!?" (*Tsin Shu* 晉書, Lieh Chuan 列傳, No. 28).

Thus filiality colliding loyalty is a salient example of the tragic. It has many variations—Fu Tsou's 負芻 story in Note 1 is one of them; the story of Shih T'a 石他 in Note 2 is another. Yet another story is about a loyal subject who went to his mother to bid goodbye, for he was going to die for his superior, Duke Pai 白 of Ch'u 楚. His mother asked if it was all right to neglect mother and die for the ruler. He said that his emolument was what enabled him to support his mother. (*Han Shih Wai Chuan* 韓詩外傳, Vol. 1)

4. The story begins the entire *Annals of Spring and Autumn* and recorded as Duke Yin 隱公, First Year, Legge, pp. 1, 5.
5. *Annals of Spring and Autumn*, Duke Hsi 僖公, Fourth Year, Legge pp. 139, 141. *The Book of Rites* 禮記, T'an Kung, shang 檀弓上.
6. *Annals*, Duke Hsüan 宣公, Second Year, Legge, pp. 288, 290.
7. *Ibid.*, Duke Ting 定公, Fourteenth Year, Legge, pp. 786, 787.
8. *Ibid.*, Duke Chuang 莊公, Nineteenth Year, Legge, pp. 98-99.
9. There are many many more cases of tragic deaths caused by stringent dilemmas, especially during the violent transitional Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods. Many cases are collected by Ogata Nobuo 緒形暢夫, "Various Forms of 'Violent Deaths' (kyōshi) During the Spring and Autumn Period, 春秋時代における「強化」の諸相" in *Nihon Chūgoku Gaku Kaihō* 日本中國學會報, No. 15, October, 1963, pp. 25-37; Suzuki Kiichi 鈴木喜一, "The Ruler-Ruled Ethics During the Spring and Autumn Period, 春秋時代の君臣倫理" *ibid.*, October, 1982, pp. 1-16; same author, "The Ruler-Ruled Ethics During the Warring States Period, 戰國時代の君臣倫理" *ibid.*, October, 1983, pp. 84-98. Some puzzling cases of deaths due to father-son and ruler-ruled relations are listed in Hihara Toshikuni 日原利國, *A Study of the Ch'un-ch'iu Kung-yang-chuan* 春秋公羊傳の研究. Tokyo: Sōbunsha 創文社, 1976, pp. 160-96. They are many variations (some very complex) on the themes produced in this essay. We are here not to exhaust those examples—a well-nigh impossible task in any case—but to look at their overall structure and assess their tragic significance for life.
10. *Ibid.*, Duke Ai 哀公, Fifteenth Year, Legge, pp. 841-42, 843. A similar story was told in *Ibid.*, Duke Hsi 僖公, Ninth Year, Legge, pp. 152, 154, about Hsün Hsi

- 荀息 who was entrusted by the dying Duke Hsien 獻公 to look after his heirs. Hsün Hsi pledged with life to do as told. The heirs were, however, all killed later; Hsün Hsi committed suicide.
11. *Kung Yang Chuan* 公羊傳, Duke Hsüan 宣公, Fifteenth Year, Summer, Fifteenth Month.
  12. Cf. the many stories of "recluses" in *Analects*, 18/2, 5-9.
  13. Confucius branded Tsai Wo, 宰我 "not human(e) (jen)" because he differed from the official view on three years of filial mourning, although Tsai Wo offered many reasons for his view (see *Analects*, 17/19).
  14. See also the story of Lang Shin 狼曠 (*Annals of Spring and Autumn*, Duke Wen 文公, Second Year, Legge, pp. 231, 233) who wanted to die, to redress the injustice of being demoted for no reason, but waited until the *right occasion* of a battle where his death won a great victory. Cf. also Mencius 2B3, 5, 9; 4A18; 7A26.
  15. Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Gallimard, Paris, 1942. It began by claiming that the most important issue (in life and) in philosophy is suicide, revolt at the limits of life. It ended by claiming that even in the underworld after death, where one is condemned like Sisyphus to an eternally futile labor of pushing a boulder to the top of a hill only to see it roll down, even there, the very labor of pushing proves, no, manifests, that one *exists as a Sisyphus*. Defiance gives existence. This is a profound philosophy of existential revolt.
  16. *Chuang Tzu*, 12/81-83; our translation.
  17. Shen Sheng 申生 or Hamlet's death can be taken as a courageous facing-up to, and taking-into-oneself of, the exigent dilemma of the situation, or else a cowardly capitulation before (what was taken to be) the insurmountable odds. Hamlet was in fact sometimes interpreted so. Shen Sheng was not (though he could have), because of his reasoning against his adviser's counsel either to run or to tell the ruler, and because the historians chose to praise his death as heroic.

## APPENDIX 1

We can compare these two ethics the position ethics versus the desert, instructively with our traditional deontological versus utilitarian ethics. Deontological ethics is in the end tautological. The categorical imperative is a tautology; it is its own justification. Utilitarianism is in contrast

consequential; teleological reasoning is its justification.

For the deontologist, something is good, an act is right, by the nature of the case, and no further reasons can be had. “Nature” is a *past* participle—*natura*, *natured*, having been born *that* way there, and that is the deontological position—*having-been-put*, another past participle—of that thing, that act. Thus deontological ethics can be said to share with position ethics some retrospective reasoning.

In contrast, for the utilitarian, something is good, an act is right, by reason of its value, its usefulness for a future aim; its justification is prospective—something or some act counts as (deserves) “good” or “right” because it is good-right for a future desirable state of affairs. Even revenge and retribution aim at the *future* just balance of the evildoer’s negative deserts. One avenges oneself *to* heal one’s damaged conscience. Retribution satisfies one’s hunger *for* justice. Desert ethics then can be said to share with utilitarianism some prospective reasoning.

The clash between the two amounts to the clash between the past and the future, between deontological imperative and utilitarian value, between *what-one-is* and *what-one-is-for*, between the *is* and the *for*. And the present is the locus of the historical clash.

All in all, the above is one possible interpretation of how position-versus-desert ethics is related to deontologist-versus-utilitarian ethics. It may be fair to say that both position ethics and deontology share something absolutistic, while both desert ethics and utilitarianism are contextual in character.

## APPENDIX 2

Suzuki 鈴木 says that “Once a ruler, always a ruler” does not hold, presumably because there exists irreplaceability between father and son, but no such exists between ruler and ruled. See his “Spring and Autumn,” *op. cit.*, p. 13.

He also states that the ruler-ruled relation is similar to friendship that

is reciprocal fidelity toward their respective responsibilities (in “Warring Period,” op. cit., pp. 93, 98). “Friends that benefit” or “friends that hurt” (*i yu, sun yu* 益友, 損友) we hear; these notions are mutual—he as well as you can be either beneficial or evil friend. But we do not hear beneficial father or damaging father, though we hear filial and unfilial sons. The father-son relation is one-sided; the position of the father cannot be replaced with that of the son—once the father, always the father; once the son, always the son.

Father-son relation is at the top of the Five Relations; friendship is at the bottom. And the ruler-ruled relation was placed (at least functionally) on a par with friendship yet gradually edged up to the top later, modelling itself on the father-son relation (see Suzuki, “Spring and Autumn,” op. cit., p. 13). Actually, in Spring and Autumn Period, the ruler-ruled relation had two radically different varieties, according to Suzuki. The first is absolute, reminiscent of father-son relation; this is the relation of the ruler to his family subjects (*chia ch'en* 家臣). The second is reciprocal, reminiscent of friendship; this is the relation of the ruler to his nobles and high ministers (*ch'ing tai-fu* 卿大夫) see Suzuki, “Spring and Autumn,” op. cit., pp. 5-9).

But the whole purpose of bringing up this topic is not to treat it for its own sake but to illustrate the situation of clashing obligations, through which to underline the poignancy of tragic dilemmas in ancient China. Our simpler diagram of ruler-ruled reciprocity versus father-son absolutism is meant not so much to reflect the actual complex situation of the times as to serve as a paradigm case for more complex application of intricate conflicts among obligations.

For very few pages were devoted to even merely touching on the topic of dilemmas of such a serious dimension; none mentioned the distinction between “tragic” and “serious” dilemmas. All of them dealt merely with who said and did what under what circumstances, under what contractual or ethical principles, and left out of account the pathos, the significance, of their behaviors. But of course the pathos and the significance are those of the what, when, and how. One must know the latter to consider the former. Those articles are worth reading from this perspective.

### APPENDIX 3

How seriously the father-son relation is taken (by the ancient Chinese) can be evinced in the absolute horror and unqualified condemnation expressed by the historians on three parricides in the *Ch'un-ch'iu Kung-yang-choan* 春秋公羊傳 and others. See Hihara Toshikuni 日原利國, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-65.

The reverse does not hold, however. One cannot insist on "Once a son, always a son," simply because sonhood is derived from parenthood which is the root of the whole matter here. This raises a whole host of problems concerning filiality on various sorts of parenthood—obligations to the adoptive parent versus those to the biological one, obligations of an abandoned child to his parent, obligations to one's unrecognized parent, and so on. All these are beyond this essay's concern, which is simply to state the principle of Chinese positional ethics which is at least partially responsible for the Chinese tragic dilemmas.

### APPENDIX 4

Thus state loyalty takes over family filiality via the absolutism of filiality. This is indeed what happened later, as Hihara 日原 (*op. cit.*, p. 149) alleged, when ruler-ruled reciprocity turned more and more to be identified with father-son absolutism. This trend understandably intensified the tragic character of the dilemma when the two obligations collide.

The love of position ethics seems to persist in humankind. The notion of "aristocracy" turned from the rule of the best into the rule of privileged rank. "Democracy" turned from Plato's 'worst' rule of the plebeian crowd into the "best" rule of individual persons *as* persons, each endowed with inalienable rights and inviolable dignity—an extension of "aristocracy" from the favored few to humanity as a whole. This is why ancient Greek democracy did not, while modern democracy did, abolish slavery where some persons are mere chattels. "Animal rights" advocates fight for an animal aristocracy, for the animal's right to be treated *as* animal, not purely as means for human utility.



## CONCLUSION

Everywhere to be is to do the becoming, exhibiting its becoming-pattern of becoming. What is is in the pattern of becoming what there is; the self is in the pattern of becoming what the self is. Universals manifest themselves as functions of becoming what is, and also the self's peculiar pattern of assimilating what is there, so much so that what is exhibits to us in the form of universals. Human self is nothing (in itself) but a becoming-itself, a pattern of assimilating what is, in response to the pattern of calls from what is that is not the self.

In this sense universals are as much the pattern of what is the self (as a self-ing pattern) as the pattern of what is (not the self), the pattern of an insistent calling, an ontological evocation that is a self-ing vocation. Metaphor is the process of the self going-growing from what is here, the familiar, part of the self, to what is (there), the unfamiliar not-self, to make for a fuller truer self. The self is this growing process of metaphorical assimilation; this it is which defines the self's peculiar cohering composition. The self also comprises with other selves (alter egos) a world, what is (out there).

What is (out there) as an unfamiliar (unknown) is no simple inert Thing-in-itself; it is actively calling forth, evoking the self to *make* some sense out of it, some consistent constitution called the world. This situational evocation is directed toward our metaphoric growth into ourselves-together and the world. The evocation comes as an imperative—to cognitive understanding, to ethical undertaking, to ontological undergoing—in a word, to growing. It is the call to coherence and consistency together, to the world. On this call everything (including the self) depends for its existence.

Universals are growing patterns of calls and exhibitions of such a self-world undertaking. To undertake is to undergo and understand so as to become as it is and as we are; to undergo is to be con-scious and to constitute a coherent world. Since this undertaking is a becoming of the self

and the world as the self responds to the consistent persistent calls of the world, as the self assimilates them and understands oneself and the world, universals here amount to a living growing pattern of the self-world, universals in the making, in the becoming. These living concrete universals we call history.

These historical universals are as hazardous as they are alive. For, sadly, the things themselves often call forth in cacophonous contradictions. Two colliding situational exigencies call forth at once—the father as a murderer, the sovereign as a tyrant. My obligations to them clash, crushing me, when I do not evade them as the truly human does not. In fact, it is precisely the facing up to my obligations—even when they collide—that defines the truly human. If evocative metaphors defines a person as a human universal, then when that metaphoric universal makes no sense, when the metaphor taken in is a mess, then I become truly a “person” precisely when I am destroyed in the tragic mess as I courageously stand—understandingly—there.

This undergoing *is* history. I become human by thus steeping myself in the flow of “history” of this undertaking—understanding, undergoing—existential “thinking”. For I am thoughtfully human as I act out, responding to exigent imperatives of the situation, living myself out, come what may. Thoughtfully thus to live through is the process of history. This co-steeping of thinking and history works in evocative metaphors of human universals—constituting the world—expressed in literature, in historiography. This is concrete thinking, at work even when, and precisely when, life is in tragic dilemmas.

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