

Confucian Encounter with the Enlightenment Mentality of the Modern West¹

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1 How to Understand Confucianism

Confucianism is one branch in the development of human spiritual civilization, possesses multiple layers of meanings and plentiful connotations. In order to summarize its distinct features one can say that Confucianism transcends time as well as culture, it is multidisciplinary yet divided into several strains of thought and it possesses no dogma whatsoever.

1.1 Confucianism Transcends Time

During the long process of history, the development of Confucianism was always confronted with and was forced to respond to the specific circumstances of historic reality and needed to spread under particular historical situations. This historicity and time-dependence goes without saying. The Confucian thought of Song and Ming and the development of the “Third Period”-Confucianism both responded to reality. However, in the course of history it might also happen that the development of a thought has its inner alternatives and can develop into a train of thought that transcends the particular situation and surpasses history. To speak in an analogy one can say that if we understand the dynamics of the development of the mind as a topographic map made up of high mountains and low valleys, we can from a contemporaneous angle see the relationship between the mountain top and the bed of the valley and the relationship between the highest realizations of the *zeitgeist* and its lowest foundations. They both belong to one period of time and in many aspects they use the same language and constitute the basis of a thought. For instance, one could assess the burgeoning, development and evolvment of one particular strain of thought from its economic conditions, its social relations, environmental concerns and so forth. This is one area in which Western researchers in social sciences and intellectual history excel. But in the development of Confucian thought there exists more dialogue between the mountain tops, dialogue that transcends time. Take for example the “Du Mengzi er zide zhi” of Lu Xiangshan.² The minds of Lu

1 Translated from Chinese by Jonathan Vogelsang (Hamburg).

2 *Lu Jiyuan ji* 35: 讀孟子而自得之。

Xiangshan and Mengzi have a secret agreement; Lu manages in the analysis of the passage “Exhausting one’s mental constitution, knowing one’s nature, knowing the Heavens” to completely enter the realm of Mengzi’s thought.³ This kind of dialogue from one peak of history to another frequently brought about path-breaking developments that left the constraints of time and history behind.

1.2 Confucianism Transcends Culture

In order to understand how Confucianism transcends culture, the observer needs to have an open mind and not limit himself to a certain viewpoint or fall back into a certain kind of sub-conscious regionalism. Seen from a historical perspective, Confucianism is not just the regional culture of Qufu, not just the civilization of the central plains of China, indeed it is part of the whole Sino-graph cultural sphere and part of the East Asian civilization. In Japan, Korea and Vietnam Confucianism has had profound impact, furthermore in all these places it has its own distinct qualities and developments. Japanese Confucianism has a long history and played an important role in the process of Japan’s recent modernization. Shibusawa Eiichi, who has been called the “father of Japanese capitalism”, has written the famous book *The Lunny and the Abacus* and applied the knowledge of Confucian thought to the realm of economics. Korean society also carries the characteristic of religious tolerance, unquestionably and strongly influenced by Confucianism. According to a survey, the number of Confucianists in Korea may be small but in every religion in Korea Confucian elements are strong and it has also had an impact on Korean family ethics and sense of community.⁴

Starting in the 1980s, Singapore established the East Asian Institute. The government of Singapore actively promoted the links between Confucian ethics and modern society and has produced very good results as well as many interesting discussions.⁵ In Vietnam large quantities of Confucian writings have been copied by hand and thus conserved over time. Called the “Han-Nôm documents,” they are

3 *Mengzi* 7A1: 孟子曰：“盡其心者，知其性也。知其性，則知天矣。存其心，養其性，所以事天也。殀壽不貳，修身以俟之，所以立命也。”*Lu Jiu yuan ji* 12 [陸象山解釋說]: 今學者能盡心知性，則是知天，存心養性，則是事天。人乃天之所生，性乃天之所命。*Lu Jiu yuan ji* 18: 《孟子》之盡心，盡此心也，故能知性知天。*Lu Jiu yuan ji* 35: 伯敏云：“如何是盡心？性、才、心、情如何分別？”先生云：“如吾友此言又是枝葉。雖然，此非吾友之過，蓋舉世之弊。今之學者讀書，只是解字，更不求血脈。且如情、性、心、才，都只是一般物事，言偶不同耳。”伯敏云：“莫是同出而異名否？”先生曰：“不須說得，說著便不是，將來只是騰口說，為人而不為己。若理會得自家實處，他日自明。若必欲說時，則在天者為性，在人者為心，此蓋隨吾友而言，其實不須如此。只是要盡去為心之累，如吾友得意時，即今便是。”

4 See also Tu 1996.

5 Cf. Tu 1991.

the precious resources of Vietnamese Confucianism.⁶ In Indonesia for political reasons more than one million ethnic Chinese have been deprived of their civil rights for retaining their faith in Confucian values. After a 30 year long hard struggle, Confucianism finally was granted religious rights under a changed constitution. Confucianism has displayed a prominent religious aspect in the development of the Indonesian society. Seen from the perspective of developmental tendencies, in English or any other language Confucianism can easily be understood and accepted. In America, Canada and some other English-speaking countries Confucianism has been studied and propagated. “Boston Confucianism” is just one example of this.⁷

1.3 Confucianism is Multidisciplinary

Confucianism is multidisciplinary; from the understanding of different areas of research it has various aspects. The perspective of philosophy scholars on Confucianism is very different from that of historians. For instance, the understanding of the philosopher Cheng Zhongying is very different from that of the historian Yu Yingshi. They look at Confucianism’s various phenomena from different angles. The comprehension of political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists are all very different.⁸ Professor Godwin C. Chu, a researcher at the East-West Center and author of the book *The Great Wall in Ruins*, has investigated the impact of Confucianism on modern society on various sociological levels, including family relations, work ethics, social morals, organizational relations and cultural values.⁹ I have once organized a workshop at the Academy of Arts and Sciences regarding “Confucian Humanism”. Japanese, Korean and American scholars from various fields of research such as psychology, anthropology, history, philosophy, sociology and political sciences held discussions. Among the topics of discussion were cultural identification and societal connotations, gender and family, community and education, political culture and business ethics and a lot of other topics.¹⁰ The Mainland Chinese academic world has only just come up with an agenda for the comprehensive multi-disciplinary study of Confucianism. This question indeed deserves our attention.

1.4 Confucianism Consists of Several Tiers

There is elite Confucian thought, there is popular Confucianism, there is Confucianism in between popular and elite. For example the very well-known novels *Water Margin* and *The Scholars* were propagated and spread by intelligent people

6 Cf. Trinh and Phan 2006.

7 Neville 2000.

8 Cf. Tu, Hejtmanek and Wachman 1992.

9 Chu and Ju 1993.

10 Cf. Tu, Hejtmanek and Wachman 1992.

through the means of literature and popular style. On the popular level moral instruction books (*shanshu*) were a very important method of propagation. Of course most moral instruction books are Buddhist or Daoist tools, but in them the basic Confucian values found their expressions. The *Taishang ganying pian* is certainly one of the most influential moral instruction books in Chinese history.¹¹ According to research carried out by the Japanese sinologist Sakai Tadao, Western missionaries in the eighteenth century had found that every Chinese village had a large batch of *Taishang ganying pian*. If one was to calculate the number of volumes circulating in China, it might be said that there were many times more of the *Taishang ganying pian* in China than there were bibles circulating in Europe.¹² Furthermore there was the *Caigen tan* and many other similar works.¹³ Gilbert Rozman, professor of sociology at Princeton University, has divided Confucianism according to different social strata. For example imperial Confucianism, reform Confucianism, intellectual Confucianism, merchant-house Confucianism, and mass Confucianism that were comprehensible for various different tiers.¹⁴ This is why Confucianism not only transcends time and culture and is multidisciplinary but also consists of several different tiers.

1.5 Confucianism Has No Dogmas

In the tradition of Confucianism there is on the whole no dogma that may not be questioned. Neither the “Three Bonds and Five Constant Virtues” nor any other concept is exempt from doubt. In other words, all things are open to discussion. Many people believe that “benevolence” is the highest Confucian value, but many others think “ritual” is more important than “benevolence”. Another point also deserves attention, everyone knows that very well but we rarely spell it out clearly, namely the fact that Confucius is not the founder of Confucianism. Before him, Confucianism has already had a very long development, such as the civilization of the Zhou dynasty for which the Duke of Zhou is representative. Therefore, Confucius is not in a strict sense the founder of Confucianism. This point is similar to the relation between Moses and Judaism but also very different, because the development of Judaism before Moses is relatively unclear while the development of Confucianism before Confucius is widely known. Furthermore, Confucius is also not the highest embodiment of the ideal Confucian character. In the Christian belief

11 The *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 is a traditional book on moral behaviour, it is abbreviated to *Ganying pian*, the author is unknown.

12 Sakai Tadao 1980 and 1960.

13 The *Caigentan* 菜根譚, also called *Chushi Xiuyang pian* 處世修養篇, was written by Hong Yingming 洪應明 during Ming Dynasty, Jiajing period.

14 Rozman 1991.

and in Buddhism, Jesus and Shakyamuni are themselves the religious founder and simultaneously the embodiment of the ideal character. It is unimaginable which Christian could ever be able to exceed Jesus in terms of being a good Christian. It is equally unimaginable which Buddhist could ever exceed Shakyamuni. Confucius was the “timely saint;”¹⁵ seen from the perspective of the situation during the “Spring and Autumn”-period, the character Confucius represented was of course the highest; there was no way to be better than him. But the highest ideal in Confucianism is the “Inner sage and the outer king”.¹⁶ The “sage sovereign” represented by (the emperors) Yao, Shun, Yu, Shang, Wen and Wu is characterized by this ideal moral quality. And Confucius is of course not such a sage sovereign. In the times of Wang Yangming one student raised the question of which sage is the highest one and Wang Yangming answered: Suppose Yao and Shun are equal to ten thousand “Yi” of gold, Shang and Wu are seven and eight thousand “Yi,” Confucius is nine thousand “Yi,” although the division of the gold is not equal, but the quality and pureness can all be called refined gold. With people, they all have different talents but the important thing is if they make an effort to be pure.¹⁷

Among the spiritual civilizations other than Confucianism, the spiritual sphere and the worldly sphere are often sharply divided. In Buddhism there is a distinction between the world of mortals and the Pure Land, in Christianity there is the division between paradise and the ordinary world. “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.”¹⁸ In Confucianism there are no such sharply divided two worlds. In the present, all great spiritual civilizations are facing a very important change. The respect and concern for the world we are living in is becoming a commonly accepted consensus among all the spiritual civilizations. One cannot neglect the interest in and efforts towards our world because of a certain religion. In the future, every spiritual civilization will have to develop two worlds of meaning, you can also call it two kinds of languages, one is a special language derived from a particular civilization's religious traditions, and the other is a common language derived from the need of addressing the many contesting and problematic developments that exist today. Yet Confucianism has always had just one language. Confucius said: “It is impossible to associate with birds and beasts, as if they were the same with us. If I associate not with these peo-

15 *Mengzi* 5B1: 孔子，聖之時者也。

16 First mentioned in *Zhuangzi*, “Tianxia pian”.

17 Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu* 1: 先生曰：“聖人之所以為聖，只是其心純乎天理，而無人欲之雜；猶精金之所以為精，但以其成色足而無銅鉛之雜也。人到純乎天理方是聖，金到足色方是精。然聖人之才力，亦有大小不同，猶金之分兩有輕重。堯、舜猶萬鎰，文王、孔子猶九千鎰，禹、湯、武王猶七、八千鎰，伯夷、伊尹猶四、五千鎰。才力不同，而純乎天理則同，皆可謂之聖人；猶分兩雖不同，而足色則同，皆可謂之精金。”

18 *New Testament*, Matthew, 22:21; Mark, 12:17, Luke, 20:25.

ple, – with mankind, – with whom shall I associate?”¹⁹ Confucianism is inner-worldly, and being inner-worldly it has no special language. It is unthinkable that Confucianism has a dogma, concept or person that cannot be called into question. Confucianism has no unquestionable dogma.

Because Confucianism does not have any beliefs that transcend external phenomena, Confucian scholars have to find expression in actions. Lu Xiangshan said: “Even if someone does not even know a single character, he still has to be treated with respect.”²⁰ In the *Lunyu* there is the sentence: “If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere: although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has.”²¹ If someone is able to uphold the harmony in family relations, neighborly relations and in the relations between the upper and the lower ranks, if he can conform with the standards of benevolence, justice, ritual, wisdom and trust, then we can call him a Confucian. There is no doubt that even though this person may never have learned about the traditions of Confucianism, we can still call him a Confucian. However, the other sort of character might be skillfully describing Confucianism without actually embodying or experiencing it, then this is merely an expert on Confucianism that likes to sing his own praise and yet does not have the basic qualifications of a Confucian. Therefore we normally do not call ourselves Confucians but researchers on Confucian thought or persons that hope to learn from the sources of Confucianism the principles of being human.

I have written a book called *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*.²² Way, learning, and politics embody three aspects of Confucianism. The first aspect is the Way, it is a core value and most basic concept, one can compare it to Heidegger’s most basic philosophy or to Fundamental Theology. It is the aspect that is of the most interest to philosophers. The second aspect is a very systematic development of learning, among which the most culturally distinguished are classical studies. The tradition of classical studies calls for meticulously and systematically studying the process of the historical development of Confucianism. The Academia Sinica on Taiwan has established the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy. I took part in the preparation work. Rao Zongyi, Lao Siguang, Liu Shuxian, Yu Yingshi, Wang Shumin and others were in the advisory committee. They all stressed that in an Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, philoso-

19 *Lunyu* 18: 鳥獸不可與同群，吾非斯人之徒與而誰與？

20 *Liu Jiyuan ji* 35: 若某則不識一個字，亦須還我堂堂地做個人。

21 *Lunyu* 1: 賢賢易色，事父母能竭其力，事君能致其身，與朋友交言而有信。雖曰未學，吾必謂之學也。

22 Tu 1993.

phy is one part and includes Western philosophy, ancient philosophy and modern philosophy; literature is one part and includes ancient literature and modern literature however it must also establish classical studies because that is a unique tradition of Confucianism. The third aspect is politics. To put it simply, politics means governing and benefiting the people. Nowadays people normally call it political Confucianism. There are a few controversies which I think are unnecessary. For example in the research of political Confucianism, the design of the research system is in every aspect discriminating towards “mind and nature” Confucianism, asserting that “mind and nature” Confucianism involves purely theoretical understandings and philosophical understandings. Some researchers of “mind and nature” Confucianism have expressed that practical statecraft and even the solid text-critical work of the Qianlong and Jiaqing schools do not belong to Confucianism and do not represent the genuine spirit of Confucianism. I think this is very one-sided. These three aspects all have a very close relationship to Confucianism. Representing its fundamental philosophical concepts, its systematic learning tradition and its practical statecraft, they are inseparable. Furthermore, from the point of view of practical statecraft, Confucianism is relatively broad, it does not prescribe that one has to become an official, engage in politics and take concrete action. Sometimes seminars like the one we are currently taking part in do not purely convey knowledge but are themselves a form of action.

It is a misunderstanding to believe that “mind and nature” Confucianism and political Confucianism can be separated. But the representatives of contemporary Confucianism Zhang Junmai, Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan are not like that. If the concept of politics, as in governing for the benefit for the people, and the Way, as in pacifying oneself and establishing one’s fate, do not link up, then this is not fully comprehensive. Mengzi said benevolent government demands for morals, ideals and politics to operate in an interactive relationship. Today there is criticism saying that Confucianism has not thoroughly understood modern politics and that it is superficial to develop the notion of nation and world from the idea of family. From a Machiavellian point of view, politics is an independent sphere with its mode of operation and no necessary connection to moral. Liberalism holds the view that orderly politics is established after morals are eliminated. Politics belongs to the public realm, while religion belongs to the spiritual realm and has no connection to politics. My response is this: In today’s 21st century, if one is not sensitive towards religious or moral questions, does not handle these questions well or does not even put them on the agenda, then this is also one-sided politics. We are facing a new world today; moral questions, no matter in which country they arise, cannot be separated from politics. Politics without moral discussion will lead nowhere.

In order to evaluate if a society is capable of reflecting the basic values of Confucianism and display the Confucian system of rites and music, one has to see if the

society can agree with the Confucian values and treat them as their own inherent values. A society might have been influenced by the teachings of rites and music, but not at all agree with the values that come with them, then the evaluation will start from a contrary and distorted value system and this cannot be called a civilized society in the Confucian sense. There is a sentence in the *Lunyu* that says: “The rude tribes of the east and north have their princes and are not like the states of our great land which are without them.”²³ One possible interpretation of this sentence is that even if the barbarians have a person of noble character they will still be less civilized than the Chinese kingdoms, even if these do not have people of noble character. Another interpretation that I endorse more is that in uncivilized places like the barbarian lands the notion of ruler and subject, father and son still persists while it is already lost in the Chinese kingdoms. When the rituals are lost they have to be searched for in the wilds.²⁴ “The wilds” are on the contrary turned into a place of genuine reflection of the teachings of rites and music. Therefore Confucius had the idea of “getting upon a raft and floating about on the sea”.²⁵ With regard to Confucianism, civilization and savageness are not unalterable. If it does not treasure Confucian values and holds an arrogant and dismissive attitude towards Confucianism, then a place that was once fostering Confucianism can turn into a force that impedes the development of Confucianism and the realization of its values.

There is another misconception in the belief that Confucianism overstates the romantic notion of family, that the family is always cozy, the father loving and the son filial. I believe that in the Confucian understanding of family the family is treated as a complex system. Take for example a family of five individuals; there are differences in gender, age, position and power. The problems and relations one has to deal with here are particularly complex, especially the questions involving emotions. Family relations are closely interlinked with every family member and are the central environment for the maturing of the individuals that must not have shortcomings. Why do we call Shun “greatly filial”? Shun accomplished to govern his family even though his family was very complicated, and he was capable of finding a place for his family in the most perilous environment, turned a messy family into a harmonious family. This is not something that everyone can achieve.²⁶ Where lies the importance of the idea of “rectification of names”?²⁷ “Let the prince

23 *Lunyu* 3: 夷狄之有君，不如諸夏之無也。

24 *Hanshu* 30, “Yiwen zhi”: 仲尼有言，“禮失而求諸野”，方今去聖久遠，道術缺廢，無所更索，彼九家者，不猶愈于野乎！

25 *Lunyu* 5: 乘桴浮于海。

26 Cf. *Mengzi* 4A28: 舜盡事親之道而瞽瞍底豫，瞽瞍底豫而天下化，瞽瞍底豫而天下之為父子者定，此之謂大孝。

27 Cf. *Lunyu* 13: 子路曰：“衛君待子而為政，子將奚先？”子曰：“必也正名乎！”子路曰：“有是哉，子之迂也！奚其正？”子曰：“野哉由也！君子于其所不知，蓋闕如也。名不正，則

be prince, and the minister be minister; let the father be father, and the son be son.”²⁸ The former is the role in reality, the latter is the ideal role. A father is supposed to resemble a genuine father, a son is supposed to resemble a genuine son. The “*Baihu Tong*” expounds that the relations between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife are basically a question of how the latter remonstrates with the former and helps the former to improve.²⁹ For instance the task of a son is to gently and effectively help the father to become more of a father. Of course the real father has shortcomings, but helping the real father to change for the better, that is true filial piety. When in the past a dutiful son completely and without complaints accepted his father’s harsh punishment, then Confucius believed that this father was trapped in injustice and it would be better if filial piety was realized through the method of “evading the punishment if it is big, accepting it if it is small”.³⁰ If, in discussing “uprightness”, methods like “if their fathers have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact” were generalized, using legal sanctions to handle every kind of relation, this would be a severely oversimplified and limited solution. The moral flexibility represented in “the father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father” is a more creative solution.³¹

2 Modern Predicament and Self-transformation of Confucianism

The normal belief is that the modern predicament of Confucianism started with the anti-traditional “May Fourth Movement”. But, if put in a broader perspective, starting with the Opium War in 1840, the assault of Western military, economy and culture constitute the wider background of Confucianism’s modern predicaments. It was 110 years from the first Opium War to the founding of the People’s Republic of China and every ten years saw dramatic changes. These changes have been devastating to the inherited cultural resources. This was the unprecedented crisis that Confucianism was confronted with.

Talking about the challenges and crises Confucianism encountered in modern times, we can divide them roughly into three stages, and the problems in every stage were somewhat different. The first stage lasted from the first Opium War until the May Fourth Movement. Domestically Confucianism was controlled and

言不順；言不順，則事不成；事不成，則禮樂不興；禮樂不興，則刑罰不中；刑罰不中，則民無所措手足。故君子名之必可言也，言之必可行也。君子于其言，無所苟而已矣。”

28 *Lunyu* 12: 君君、臣臣、父父、子子。

29 *Baihu Tong*, “Sangang liuji”.

30 *Kongzi Jiayu*, “Liu ben”: 大杖則走，小杖則受。

31 *Lunyu* 13: 葉公語孔子曰：“吾党有直躬者，其父攘羊，而子證之。”孔子曰：“吾党之直者异于是。父為子隱，子為父隱，直在其中矣。”

utilized by the Qing Imperial Court, and the spirit of Confucianism was laid in chains. From the outside Confucianism was attacked by Western culture. It can be said that Confucianism was beset with difficulties at home and abroad. The second stage lasted from the May Fourth movement until the founding of the People's Republic. The anti-traditional trend step by step eroded the inherited spiritual resources. The links of ethnic and cultural identification that Confucianism was providing were step by step dismantled. The third stage began after the founding of the PRC. Undergoing a profound inner rethinking and a difficult self-transformation, the wisdom of Confucianism was preserved and developed abroad and the preconditions for the next step were prepared: "growing back out of the spiritual roots."³²

In this period Confucianism fell into hitherto unknown predicaments. There was criticism from every side, yet there also emerged a large number of intelligent and assuming cultural scholars that made untiring efforts for Confucianism to return to its roots and grow anew. In a certain sense without true rejuvenation Confucianism would constantly be in a difficult position. The development of Confucianism during the third stage remains a question. But in another aspect, the profound rethinking Confucianism has undergone during these three stages laid the foundation from which we are today able to more clearly survey the developments of Confucianism in the third stage during the 21st century, and make great efforts to turn Confucianism's great questions and transformations into a progressive force.

2.1 The Stage of Inner and Outer Challenges: The Decline of the Late Qing Dynasty Regime and the Assault of the West

In its first stage – from the Opium War until the May Fourth Movement – as seen from an outside perspective, the major problem that "modern" Confucianism was faced with was the assault of Western culture. This sort of cultural crisis developed against the background of profound political, economic and military factors. The introduction of Western culture followed the expansion of Western economy, military aggression and political dominance. Compared to the introduction of Buddhism, its degree was much greater. In a few decades every Chinese social stratum, especially the intellectual circles, had no time to absorb the new knowledge and rethink the traditional culture but rather passively responded to Western culture. In the sweep of the epochal trends they created various forms and schools.

Seen from the fundamentals of Confucianism, looking at the whole Qing dynasty one finds that, beginning with Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong, the Qing Imperial Court used Confucianism as a tool to control politics and thus caused the politicization and instrumentalisation of Confucianism. Because of the severe inquisition of books and control of thoughts, the intellectuals of the Qing era in the end

32 See Tang 1975.

had almost no particular protesting spirit. The Qianlong and Jiaqing school of “pure studies” came about under such circumstances. This was a reverse of the inherited academic orientations and also it was restricting for the inner values of Confucianism. From the 19th century on the Manchu regime started to gradually fall apart. The Confucianism of that time had already become an “empty shell”. Because Confucianism was already inextricably connected with the regime, the decline of the regime also caused great disturbances for Confucianism.

After the Opium War, with the collapse of the military the Qing Court had already lost the ability to control Chinese society and had no means to preserve national culture. The political and cultural powers of that time had as a matter of fact been diverted to the regions. The political Westernization and Self-strengthening movement as well as the spontaneous popular uprisings of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Boxer Rebellion were reactions of different strata of society to the challenges and crises. It is noteworthy that Zeng Guofeng in this situation put forward questions of how to protect the nation, the people, the race and the teachings and that he tried hard to safeguard Confucian traditions in times of crisis. He found acceptance with the reform movement of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong and others. After the revolution of 1911, Kang Youwei advocated to make Confucianism the state religion. From a modern viewpoint this counts as a stubborn restorationist activity, but at that time it was an effort to save the nation from extinction. Of the many movements of the time, some of them being very conservative, others being very progressive, all deserve further research. Set against the larger background of a cultural crisis, the self-continuations and the difficult struggle for changes should be treated with sympathetic understanding.

2.2 The Fruits of Confucianism Start to Fade and Fall: The Disintegration of Cultural Identification and the Distortion of the Nation’s Soul

The second stage of what I have called the “modern predicament” of Confucianism covers the first half of the 20th century, beginning with the May fourth Movement and ending with the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Regarding the intellectual circles of the early 20th century, I have my own point of view, namely that under intense anti-traditional and strong patriotic conditions an extraordinarily distorted mentality seems to have come about. On one side, we had to negate all the resources for cultural identification that have molded us, that have made the Chinese we are today. On the other side, we had to confidently confront imperialism and colonialism in order to conquer it, overthrow the great powers and rise up in the future. On the one hand we had to conduct a revolution based on our own cultural resources and thoroughly eradicate the influence of tradition, while maintaining strong patriotism in the face of the outside world. From the ideas of “Enlightenment” we had to learn the wholly new way of Western spirit and value orientation, from

science and technology to system and institutions, from language to customs, yet at the same time we had to completely oppose the West in order to save the nation. This was too severe a test. Li Dazhao began to introduce Marxism from the Soviet Union because the thought of Marx and Lenin represented the most advanced Western ideas yet at the same time it was an ideology that strongly opposed imperialism and colonialism. It satisfied the two apparently contradictory orientations of complete Westernization and patriotism and thus drew a strong sympathetic response from the intellectuals.

In an article I once evaluated the May Fourth Movement.³³ Of course I identify with the movement, yet I think that “freedom,” “conservative” and “radical” are merely political labels. I approve of Guo Qiyong’s point of view, to transcend the antagonism of “conservative” and “progressive” and to reflect anew on the role of “cultural preservatism” in the process of modernization.³⁴ Guo Qiyong’s colleague, Professor Hu Zhihong of Wuhan University, is currently undertaking a research project in which he researches a trend among modern Chinese intellectuals that existed from the first Opium War on, namely to offer criticism and rethinking of Western civilization in the light of Chinese criticism of Western Enlightenment. Zhang Taiyan, for example, criticized Western civilization, while Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were partly approving and partly criticizing. Gu Hongming and Liang Shuming analyzed the differences in Western and Chinese culture on a more sophisticated level.

Joseph R. Levenson has written a book called *Liang Qichao and the Mind of Modern China*,³⁵ in which he takes Liang Qichao as an example to analyze the thought of modern China. This book distinguishes between two concepts. One concept is called emotional attachment, the other intellectual commitment. The modern intellectuals represented by Liang Qichao were influenced by traditional culture and the Western assault. They were still emotionally involved with traditional culture, yet this involvement had no reasonable foundation because on the whole they denied this culture. But regarding Western culture they had an intellectual commitment and rationally approved Western culture and wanted to learn from the West. But as regards traditional China they had not undertaken a rigorous intellectual analysis and towards the West they were neither emotionally devoted nor did they have a strong feeling of identification. Intellectual analysis and emotional identification were both divided, that is why they both failed.

In analyzing the criticism and rethinking Confucianism has received in modern times one can identify two main categories. One is criticism from the outside, sim-

33 Tu 1989a.

34 Guo, *Wusi ling yige bei ren bulüe de chuantong*.

35 Levenson 1959.

ply speaking it was counter to tradition, and the other kind was rethinking from within by scholars who identified themselves with Confucianism. The former was a characteristic of the May Fourth Movement; Confucianism was criticized in all of its aspects. Represented by Hu Shi, it advocated the use of Western modern science to research and rearrange Chinese culture and learning. As a matter of fact it treated Confucianism as an outdated legacy that was to be disposed of. In the study of history, under such influences, Fu Sinian said: "Those people that mix up traditional or self-created "four cardinal virtues" and other concepts with the study of history and language are absolutely not our comrades!"³⁶ Thus he essentially nullified the cultural vigor of Confucianism. In literature Lu Xun in his works "Kong Yiji" and „The true story of Ah Q" vividly depicted the traditional image of Confucianism, its man-eating ethical code. His Ah Q-ism was widely accepted among the intellectuals. Chinese Marxists also believed that China was formerly a feudal and autocratic society and that the authority of religion, monarchy, clan and patriarchs had to be broken. Confucianism was equal to the feudalistic age. The liberalist side thought that Confucianism was servicing autocracy; they considered the politicization of Confucianism to be its true spirit and vigorously criticized it. Scientists criticized that Confucianism could not solve real problems and essentially considered it as useless prattle and metaphysics. In 1923 Zhang Junmai and Ding Wenjiang held a very important debate that was a dispute between scientific knowledge and the view of life, also called the science and metaphysics debate. The science doctrine introduced by Ding Wenjiang, Wu Zhihui and Hu Shi stood as the winner. The overall tendency of these criticisms was to treat the dregs of the traditional culture as well as outmoded and undesirable customs such as smoking opium, foot-binding and so on as the distinct features of traditional culture. They took these dregs and compared them to pinnacles of Western culture, this is why in comparison to other cultures Chinese culture seemed to be "not human in a hundred aspects" and only the way of complete Westernization seemed worthy to be pursued. The train of thought in these criticisms represented a psychology of self-weakening, a layer of sediment in the structure of the national mentality. Even today it remains a burden to the revitalization of our cultural mentality.

In the inner rethinking of Confucianism, starting with Joseph R. Levenson's *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, there is Yu Yingshi's representative word of the Confucian "wandering souls".³⁷ Yu Yingshi believes that the social structure based on Confucianism is subject to great changes in modern times. Confucianism in the modern age has become a rootless "wandering soul". This judgment touches upon deeper questions and has had great influence. A possible response is, as Con-

36 Fu Sinian 1928.

37 Yu 2005.

fucianism and the original social structure separated from each other, this caused Confucianism to lose important support. But on that basis, Confucianism also gained the open space to develop a step further. And there is also Mr. Jin Yaoji, who from a sociologist's point of view stated that the biggest challenges to Confucianism are neither its theoretical struggles, nor its political restrictions but whether or not it is connected to China's modernization.³⁸ In other words, the biggest crisis for Confucianism lies in whether it provides actual spiritual resources in the process of the construction of China's new civilization and in the design of social ethics. This is a point of criticism but also offers a chance.

In a strict sense and from the perspective of Chinese culture, the active and conscious response to the challenge of Western civilization started with the May Fourth Movement. Zhang Junmai, He Lin, Feng Youlan, Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili and Ma Yifu represented the first generation of the third stage in the development of Confucianism. Zhang Junmai and his teacher Liang Qichao both took part in the Paris peace conference, and when they learned that the Shandong peninsula was to be taken from Germany and given to Japan they were very angry and persuaded the Chinese delegation not to sign the treaty. Afterwards they brought the news back to Beijing University where it drew a sharp response and subsequently caused the eruption of the May Fourth Movement. Later Zhang Junmai gave lectures in Singapore and created the conditions for the spread of Confucianism in Singapore during the 1980s. If it was not for the efforts of these few generations of intellectuals, Singapore would not yet know what Confucianism is.

This period of absorbing new knowledge and transforming classical learning had two methodological resources. One came from Buddhism, especially the Yogacara School. The other one was derived from Western culture. After the Yogacara School had gradually disappeared from China after Xuan Zang, Yang Renshan (Yang Wenhui) brought the Japanese Yogacara School to China and to the China Buddhism School established by Ouyang Jingwu. If it was not for this development in Buddhism, Xiong Shili would not have studied at Ouyang Jingwu's China Buddhist School, he could not have created the *A New Treatise on Yogacara*.³⁹ To give another example: Ouyang Jingwu very much wanted to accept Tang Junyi as a pupil and even treated him as if they were of the same generation. Tang Junyi had other plans and did not become a Buddhist disciple. Buddhism had not only a great influence on Xiong Shili. Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi and Xu Fuguan were also influenced by Buddhism. Xu Fuguan's original name was Xu Foguan and only after

38 Jin 1966.

39 Xiong Shili in "Xinweishilun Xuyan" clearly mentions that "This book is about Buddhism," and he followed the pattern of the theories of Boddhisatva and signed his writings with "Huanggang Xiong Shili zao". Cf. Xiong 1932.

Xiong Shili advised him to study Confucianism – an extreme begets its opposite – he changed his name to Xu Fuguan. He attached the utmost importance to Buddhism. The most important and most fascinating is of course Liang Shuming. He is one of the brightest persons in contemporary Confucianism, but deep inside he considered himself a Buddhist. He ate vegetarian, calling himself a Confucianist in spite of the fact that he himself, until late in his life, said very clearly that he was a Buddhist. He called India, China and the West the three great civilizations. His fundamental belief was that at present the Western civilization ruled under Heaven and if China did not study the West it would perish, but that in the future the Indian civilization would have a huge influence on humanity or else problems of live and death for humanity would arise.

2.3 The Period of Renewed Growth of Confucian Virtues: Inner Rethinking and Self-transformation

The third stage of “modern” Confucianism began after 1949 and continues to this day. If in a narrow sense the representatives of the first generation of rejuvenated Confucianism from the May Fourth Movement until the founding of the Republic were represented by Zhang Junmai, He Lin, Feng Youlan, Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili and Ma Yifu then the second generation were almost exclusively overseas. They were concentrated at Hong Kong’s New Asia College and Tunghai University on Taiwan. These people are all rather well-known, they include Qian Mu, Xu Fuguan, Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan, Fang Dongmei and others. Because of the effort of this group of people, Confucianism had the opportunity to make another step forward. Tang Junyi had the idea that at that time the fruits of Confucianism were already falling but the moral trunk could newly grow. This sort of essential cultural psyche can be used to summarize the feelings of the whole second generation of Confucianists.

In the early days of the assault of Western culture, Confucianism had been deconstructed. Confucian tradition had been marginalized in the scientific mainstream. It had not only received a pounding, but the basic scholarly orientation had changed. As a matter of fact the main stream of contemporary scholarship in China is a combination of Western Sinology and the study of textual research of the Qianlong and Jiaqing school. The first and second generation of modern Confucian scholars chose an approach towards classical books and studies different from that mainstream. None of them turned to the schools of Qing China or to Western sinology. Confucianism was in their understanding the study of life. They strongly felt that in the Confucian scientific tradition, the Qianlong and Jiaqing school had not touched upon the learning of body, mind, nature and life, or call it the study of ethical metaphysics. These are merely tools and not an end in itself. If such studies were the purpose, then the fundamental questions of body, mind, nature and life would not be discussed and the wisdom of Confucianism would essentially be abandoned.

The publication of the “Manifesto to inform the people of the world about Chinese culture” of 1958, represents the consensus among the second generation of Confucian scholars.⁴⁰ The declaration was proposed by Zhang Junmei and written by Tang Junyi while he was giving lectures in America. Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan revised and polished it. The four men jointly signed and published it. This manifesto was on the one hand a sharp response to the assault of Western culture, an attempt to clarify misunderstandings about Chinese culture and science and truly put forward vital questions of Chinese culture and world civilization. On the other hand it was a new definition of the direction of Confucian studies; it touched anew upon the main aspects of the Way, learning and politics. The manifesto particularly projected the Confucian study of mind and nature in the Song and Ming Dynasty and the study for oneself; it also paid close attention to the institutional design.

The individuals of the first and second generation of the third period of Confucianism were all to a different extent influenced by Western culture. He Lin drew some lessons from German Idealism, Zhang Junmei was deeply influenced by German law, and Mou Zongsan devoted himself to translating and transforming the works of Kant. What deserves attention is the phenomenon that the relation between those scholars that were studying in America and their Western professors was a relationship of teacher and pupil. For example Feng Youlan and equally Hu Shi were both students of John Dewey and were influenced by the American New Realism. They pursued almost no equal dialogue with Western culture. The people of the second generation started a dialogue with the West. The problems they responded to were also transformed from ones narrowly concerning the West to more general questions of modernization. Fang Dongmei was studying Greek philosophy, but after he was at Michigan University he was shocked and amazed how Chinese culture could have been misunderstood by the West to such an extent and he was determined to prove its worth. Thereupon he gave up studying Greek philosophy and taught Confucian philosophy at Furen University.

3 The Third Period of Confucianism and Confucianism of the 21st Century

3.1 What is meant by the third period of Confucianism?

The question of the development of Confucianism in the third period is long standing. The word of the development of Confucianism in the third period began with the logician Shen Youding. In January 1937 at the annual meeting the Chinese Phi-

40 The “Manifesto” was first published in the first month of 1958 in the magazines *Minzhu Pinglun* and *Zaisheng*. Afterwards it was included in Tang 1974.

losophical Society in Nanjing, Shen Youding presented a paper titled “The future development of Chinese philosophy”. He put forward that after China underwent the two glorious periods of pre-Qin and the imperial age, it should enter the “third culture”. Moreover he clearly pointed out that the third culture should make the consciousness of Confucian philosophy its motive.⁴¹ Commonly it is believed that Mou Zongsan was the first to raise this question and conduct a system theoretical discussion of it.⁴² Furthermore all of the Confucian scholars of that generation, including Tang Junyi and Xu Fuguan, shared this common idea of wanting to unfold this third period of Confucian development. In 1985 in Lushan, a symposium was held about Feng Qi’s work *The development of logic in ancient Chinese philosophy*.⁴³ During this symposium I made my first reflections on the problems of the third period of Confucianism and raised first questions on the development of Confucianism in the third period.⁴⁴ From today’s perspective, one has to carry out deeper discussions of this question.

Why is it necessary to speak of the third period of Confucianism? If perceived from a regional point of view, the first period was marked by the development of Confucianism from the regional culture of Qufu to the civilization of the central plains during the few hundred years from pre-Qin times until the Han dynasty where it acquired an extremely important role in the civilization of the central plains. The so-called “first period” is significant as a regional beginning. Confucianism began as local knowledge of Qufu but gradually transcended regional confines and developed into “local knowledge with global significance”. If during the first period, Confucianism developed from local knowledge of Qufu into the civilization of the central plains, in the second period it developed from Chinese culture into the civilization of East Asia. This is the development of the Song and Ming Dynasties. The teachings of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming influenced the whole of East Asia. Beginning in the 11th century with Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai and the Cheng brothers, a rejuvenated Confucianism was brought from the culture of the central plains to Korea and from Korea to Japan, while Vietnamese Confucianism had started to develop since the Han Dynasty. In other words, during the 1000 years since the 11th century Confucianism developed from the culture of the central plains into East Asian civilization. The Japanese scholar Shimada Kenji believed that Zhu Xi’s teachings are not exclusively the intellectual tradition of China but also a reflection of East Asian civilization.⁴⁵ Because during the second period Confucianism had already become the embodiment of East Asian civilization, Confucian tra-

41 Shi 1994, 145.

42 Cf. Mou 1959.

43 Cf. Feng 1983.

44 Tu 1989b.

45 Shimada 1967.

dition is not only Chinese but also Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese. Furthermore East Asian social groups can be found in every corner of the globe, so it is fair to say that the development of the third period of Confucianism is directed towards the whole world.

It should be noted that the development of Confucianism in the third period may be closely connected to how we assess and understand the development of Confucianism during the second period. Robert Bellah is a religious sociologist rich in original ideas. He holds the view of “religious evolution”. Under the influence of Karl Jasper’s theory of “axial civilizations” he split the world’s religions into several phases. The first phase is primitive religion, the religion of the Neolithic Age. The second stage is archaic religion in the main equivalent to the religion of China’s Xia, Shang and Western Zhou Dynasties. After that comes historic religion, corresponding to Chinese Confucianism, Daoism and the Indian Hinduism, followed by early modern religion and finally modern religion.⁴⁶ Such a historical concept of religious evolution is entirely perceived from a perspective of monotheism (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and is very prejudiced towards Confucianism and other civilizations. Bellah believes that early modern Christianity only after the revolution of Martin Luther completely entered modernity and in the next step developed the spirit of Capitalism. In his view the Confucianism of Song and Ming made essentially no important leaps forward and only developed in pre-Qin times. This is of course a prejudice. I believe that precisely because of the developments of Confucianism during Song and Ming times it turned from the culture of the central plains in the first period into the civilization of East Asia in the second period. Its transformation was even greater than that of Christianity through Luther. Today Bellah also accepts this point of view. If the transformation is that great, we cannot only include the Chinese phenomena in the discussion of the development in the third period. This would be unilateral because it has already become the embodiment of the civilization of East Asia.

Dwight Perkins is professor of economics at Harvard University. In the 1980s he raised a controversial idea, namely if China could become an economic giant.⁴⁷ Seen from the perspective of that time this was merely an assumption of wishful thinking. After he had put forward that question the test of time proved his farsightedness. When we today raise the question of the perspective of the development of Confucianism in the third period, on the basis of the history of the former two periods we have to raise the question: Is there actually a development of Confucianism in the third period? This is not at all a description of a historical phenomenon but rather a look into the future, a vista into what is laying ahead. Li Ze-

46 Bellah 1964.

47 Perkins 1986.

hou believes one should not speak of the third period of Confucianism but rather classifies the two Han dynasties as an independent period and thus speaks of the fourth period of Confucianism.⁴⁸ This is a more fine-grained division of the development of Confucianism that does not influence the main thrust of the question we raised. Li Zehou believes that contemporary Confucianism has actually no genuine ground-breaking development but is rather a “contemporary Song and Ming Confucianism”.⁴⁹ I cannot accept that point of view. Seen from the broad perspective, Confucianism went through the assault of Buddhism during the second period and only after completely absorbing a different culture it resurged with the features of Song and Ming Confucianism. So with regard to the second period, the key to the possibility of a development of a third generation of Confucianism should be its response to the whole Western civilization, especially to Enlightenment and the mentality of Enlightenment. In 1988 the East Asian Institute in Singapore convened a symposium on the “Problems and perspectives of the development of Confucianism”. The discussions of the symposium were afterwards published as a volume by the Taipei Zhengzhong Publishing Company.⁵⁰ This symposium may well be called an unprecedented occasion, many famous scholars from Mainland China, Hong Kong, North America and Singapore participated. For example on the part of Mainland China there were Xiao Shafu, Pang Pu, Tang Yijie, Fang Keli, Yu Dunkang, Zhu Weizheng, Dong Lai, Jin Guantao, Gan Yang and others. From Hong Kong there were Lao Siguang, Liu Shuxian, Cai Renhou, Wei Zhengtong, Fu Peirong and others, from America De Bary, Chen Rongjie, Yu Yingshi, Zhang Hao, Lin Yusheng and others. At that time it was still questionable if there was a development of the third period after all. From today’s perspective we should be one step further with our response.

3.2 The Transfer to Confucianism of the 21st Century

What was discussed above was the development of Confucianism during the third period and whether or not Confucianism has a third period. As matter of fact one has to see into the future whether or not there is a revival and maturing of Confucianism and can or cannot offer something of value to humanity. Therefore after looking back into the developments of the third period of Confucianism, we now have to enter into the prospects of Confucianism in the 21st century. Today we are still in the early stages of the 21st century; the so-called Confucianism of the 21st century therefore is inevitably an assumption through foresight. Faced with the 21st century Confucianism should be able to offer spiritual resources to today’s human-

48 Li 1999.

49 Ibid.

50 Tu 1997.

ity and its philosophers. In the next step one has to ask whether or not it has an original idea in response to the assault of Western culture. However, if it only has an original response but in its inner workings no development or transformation, then the strength is still not enough. On the basis of these three demands, there are a number of questions that require examination. On October 19, 2009 I was invited to a small academic conference chaired by the German President Köhler, the topic was “Forms of Modernity: Views of Modernity”. The questions discussed were, firstly, “Why are we here? – The search for meaning”, secondly, “What connects us around the world? – Views on culture and communication”, and thirdly, “How do we want to live in the future?”. Furthermore we explored “The future of Modernity”. Even though in the end I was not able to participate in the conference, the questions that were raised there responded to the Confucianism that I had studied and reflected all along. These fundamental questions are precisely the questions Confucianism should answer in the 21st century.

The first question is: what are humans? We are now touching upon the question of human survival: Is humankind a surviving species, is there a possibility of humankind to live in a group along with questions of the perspective of prospering? There are many different responses. Biologists speak of natural selection and that the extinction of the human species is unavoidable, human’s ability to live cannot compare to bacteria or cockroaches. After birth a human cannot survive on its own for three years while zebras can seemingly live on their own after ten seconds. Today humankind itself does evil that directly disturbs evolution in a negative way. It’s in plain sight for everyone; there is a survey on dreams that found that many middle and elementary school pupils have dreams in which humankind becomes extinct. This sort of dream is becoming more common.

The second question is: why are we here? That is the question about the meaning of human life. The question of what is human inevitably invokes the question of the significance of humankind. This question cannot be discussed from an anthropocentric point of view. If man has this ability can it step out of anthropocentrism? Some people even believe we can essentially not step out of subjectivism, but this is strong skepticism. I believe we have the possibility to surpass and break through anthropocentrism. But what needs illustration is that while I am discussing that there are still many presuppositions that can be challenged and discussed.

Following these two fundamental questions, in the next step I want to discuss three more theoretical questions. One is “how can we know,” namely the question of epistemology. What methods are we relying on to gain knowledge about this world? Another is “how to act,” namely the question of ethics. What should we do? And the last question is what people hope for, this a question of theology.

As everyone knows, Kant raised three questions: “What can I know?”, “How should I act?”, and “What can I hope for?”, and afterwards Heidegger said that there

is another more fundamental question that is the question what is human and the question for the meaning of life. Confucianism is the study of life and should act in response to these questions. Western philosophy also has many reflections on this. For example the famous French philosopher Pierre Hadot has written the book *“Philosophy as a way of life”* subtitled *“spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault”*.⁵¹ This book had a great influence in departments of philosophy, including many analytical philosophers who also accepted it and created new conditions in the exploration of human significance.

4 Five Questions of 21st Century Confucianism

4.1 What is Human? Man from the View of Confucianism

First of all we are looking at the Confucian way of thinking, which is very different from the Western. Western philosophy takes the path of “reductionism;” the essential distinguishing features are what defines something. Only in this way can one be promoted to the highest degrees of philosophy. A simple description of phenomenology, the everyday experiences of someone’s life are all not philosophy but rather saying that man is a rational animal, a political animal, later Marx said that man is a tool using animal. Today more importance is attached to man as using script and symbols, or his ability to use language. But Confucianism is not like that, it is not of the definitional type. Given the present opposition to essentialism, speaking of essentialism is equal to questioning the concept’s basic methods, but I still advocate reflecting the essence of a problem. The essence of the problem is “what is human?”. Not to go the way of “reductionism” but rather to comprehensively understand every different aspect, are preconditions for man to become human. This is not the definitional type but may be compared to an archer aiming to directly hit the mark. The normal impression is that Chinese thinking has comprehensiveness and ambiguity, working like a “black box”. You do not know what it is doing. This amounts to saying that the mainstream of Chinese philosophy is not going the way of reductionism, but I believe that this is a conscious choice.

4.1.1 What Kind of Existence is Human?

Man is a perceptive animal, he exists in society, he is a political animal, he exists in history, and in addition man seeks the existence of eternal values and meaning. I

51 Hadot 1995. Hilary Putnam explained this book of Pierre Hadot to me. He said this book had greatly enlightened him on his ten-year long effort of researching the meaning of philosophy.

once used the *Five Canonical Books* to summarize the diversity of man, which is not accurate but only an *upāya*, a convenient method. The *Book of Songs* reflects that man is a perceptive animal; the *Book of Documents* reflects that man is a political animal; the *Book of Rites* reflects that man is a social animal; the *Spring and Autumn Annals* reflect that man is a historical animal and the *Book of Changes* reflects that man is an animal seeking meaning. This is a method of exemplifying and because they are examples they are necessarily exaggerated. For example, there are also the *Classic of Music*, the *Classic of Filial Piety* and so forth. Simply speaking this view regards man as a comprehensive being. This can be valid since every man living in this moment has characteristics that can be treated as a starting point for working out a philosophical concept. This method is taboo in Western philosophy, especially in Kant's philosophy. It all has to be eradicated, and the questions of man cannot be confined to people that are actually alive.

In addition, taking this thought one step further, what are the original connections among humans? Ethnic group, age, gender, birthplace, language, social context, fundamental beliefs: these are all indispensable factors molding living people. Precisely because of these factors, every individual is different. However, there can be a problem here. It seems as if this could bring about discussions that have not been analyzed in philosophy and that can contain virtually every point of view. But this by no means shows that in this world there are as many philosophies as there are people. That would be subjectivism. We have to break through this sort of subjectivism engendered by practice and experience. Subjectivism is one shortcoming of epistemology. To overcome such a shortcoming, one could say that people have experiences and have intrinsic values. This entails problems of presupposed subjectivity, but what I call subjectivity is not subjectivism.

4.1.2 The origin of man

Early Chinese thought did not pay much attention to the question of where man comes from, it lacked creation myths and that sort of questions; it was closer to the concept of evolution theory. There are many examples for this. Man has only become human through changing from an inanimate object to a plant to an animal. In pre-Qin times, this concept was mainly reflected in *Xunzi*. All things have *Qi*, but *Qi* should not be regarded as being material. Temperament, divinity, vitality and spirituality, these all are *Qi*. So if things lack consciousness, then this cannot be considered as *Qi*. In modern language, *Qi* is a sort of energy, including the energy of life. This implies one presupposition: If something has *Qi*, then in the final analysis it is a dynamic process and cannot be viewed in a static way but has to be seen as a process. Finally, there is "life". For example, only after the emergence of plants and animals wisdom could emerge. Wisdom is consciousness, animals have perception and some of them far exceed humans; take for example a dog's sense of hearing and

smelling. In this aspect Xunzi's thought and Mengzi's thought did not differ: only man has righteousness. Speaking with ethical rationality "righteousness" is somewhat narrow and needs further discussion. From *Qi* to life, to wisdom and righteousness: this is the human evolutionary process.⁵² It should be noted that what is said to "emerge" comes from a certain place, but cannot return to that place. This has to be made clear. The emergence of life cannot be reduced to ordinary *Qi*, but rather to a particular *Qi*. If one reduces it to ordinary *Qi* one could not comprehend what life is. In other words, although the origin is there it cannot be reduced to the original circumstances. To give an example, man has a material, physiological and psychological existence. Seen from a genealogical angle, through an autopsy it is possible to clearly differentiate the material conditions of man, but living people cannot be understood through dissection. So where is the difference? It is that corpses are dead and do not have living *Qi*. If one says that the energy circulation system is the embodiment of life, but in a dissection the material base of this system cannot be found then this is not authentic, but vague and not of scientific nature. This way of looking at things is not comprehensive. We believe, if the energy circulation system embodies life, life cannot be reduced to *Qi*; therefore humans without life (like corpses) simply do not have any energy circulation system we can talk about. In this analogy "wisdom" cannot restore life, from plant to animal there is a quantum leap, and is the same with righteousness. Xunzi and Mengzi differ in many aspects but in this one they agree. However, Mengzi's point of view concerning human life is more pronounced and more comprehensive.

Concerning Xunzi's interpretation, some people might raise doubts, saying: The first span is relatively easy to understand, but the span between wisdom and righteousness is a little too big. For this I have an easy response: Just look at the instincts of humans and birds and beast, there is no difference. Given that "desire for food and sex is part of human nature,"⁵³ man has the quality of animals. But to see humans as a sort of animal is not comprehensive enough because the emergence of a new phenomenon cannot be reduced to its former origin. The lower is the foundation for the upper, the upper is the superstructure of the lower. Superstructure and foundation are related, but from the foundation the superstructure is not understandable. Mengzi said: "That whereby man differs from the lower animals is but small. The mass of people cast it away, while superior men preserve it."⁵⁴ However, the very scarce constitutes the "main principle," whereas the very plentiful consti-

52 Cf. *Xunzi* 9: 水火有气而無生，草木有生而無知，禽獸有知而無義，人有气、有生、有知，亦且有義，故最為天下貴也。

53 *Mengzi* 6A: 告子曰：“食色，性也。仁，內也，非外也；義，外也，非內也。”

54 *Mengzi*, 4A: 人之異于禽獸者几希，庶民去之，君子存之。

tutes “small principles”.⁵⁵ The plentiful makes up for 99,9 percent of man as a living being, but what is fascinating is that the 0,1 percent fully reflect the elements of human values. It has a connection to the 99,9 percent, one could even go a step further and say that it is capable of transforming the 99,9 percent. After man got a mind and a character he could not be reduced back to an animal. Yet man’s most rich substance is just that very fragile power. This seems to be a case of “an extreme begetting its opposite”. The power is very fragile, but is nevertheless every person’s indispensable foundation, otherwise one would just be not human. “Not human” is of course a value-driven judgment, but has a profound reason. In it one can see the minimum requirements as well as the highest embodiments. The minimum requirement is that every human possesses it. The highest embodiment means that no person can ever be fully perfect, even a sage has regrets. Mengzi said “Every man can become like Yao and Shun,”⁵⁶ but really even Yao and Shun can never be genuinely perfect men.

The relation between the minimum and the maximum can be understood in concert, but I made a differentiation: One is ontology, the resolution of ontology, one is the restriction of ontology, one is the breakthrough of process, and one is the restriction of structure. Mou Zongsan had the idea of “Multiple level restrictions, multiple level breakthrough restrictions”.⁵⁷ This process is a very complicated one. As a matter of fact Xunzi’s theory that men are born evil and Mengzi’s theory that men are born good is a discussion on different levels but they can be completely matched. However, Mengzi could analyze Xunzi’s questions, but Xunzi on the other hand could not analyze Mengzi’s questions. Mengzi touched upon more profound questions on the distinct quality of human essence. Simply speaking, the four sprouts being “subtle“, in causing men to become human, they rely on his active and aware self-development. If that development is not promoted, the sprouts will wither.⁵⁸ If people have no sensitivity towards the outside world, then “there is no greater sorrow than a dead heart” and they become apathetic. Some people called Mengzi’s a recovery model, saying it is about how to newly discover the intrinsic four sprouts, but I think this is one-sided. Mengzi’s is also a forward-looking, open and creative way of thinking.

55 *Mengzi*, 6A: 公都子問曰：“鈞是人也，或為大人，或為小人，何也？”孟子曰：“從其大體為大人，從其小體為小人。”曰：“鈞是人也，或從其大體，或從其小體，何也？”曰：“耳目之官不思，而蔽于物。物交物，則引之而已矣。心之官則思，思則得之，不思則不得也。此天之所與我者。先立乎其大者，則其小者不能奪也。此為大人而已矣。”

56 *Mengzi* 6B: 人皆可以為堯舜。”

57 For different discussions of this idea, cf. Mou Zongsan’s *Xinti yu xingti* 心體與性體, and *Yuan Shan Lun* 原善論.

58 *Mengzi* 4B: 人之所以異於禽於獸者幾希，庶民去之，君子存之。

4.1.3 Human Enlargement

In Mengzi's view men should gradually enlarge the "subtle," or else it would wither. That is why he said, "the great end of learning is nothing else but to seek for the lost mind."⁵⁹ To seek peace of mind can cause your essential qualities to define the things that are most at the core. This principle of abiding by the essential qualities is not a principle of accepting, and also not of newly discovering things that were originally there. Some people ask, since it is originally there, what should one "develop"? The *Great Learning* states that one should "make bright the bright virtue," but since it already is the "bright virtue" why is there a need to "make it bright"? This is precisely the minimum requirement and the highest embodiment. Confucius made a choice; he created the fundamental principle of ethical relations for humankind. He could not and was not willing to leave this world where inanimate objects, plants and animals existed together. He did not transcend the outside world. That is why I call it the continuity of existence.⁶⁰ Normally religious experience is considered a break with existence. Only if there is that break, there is the emergence of an idea of a transcendental God, Allah, King of Heaven and so forth. Some people say the particular development of the transcendental breakthrough of Confucianism is not clear, this is also true from my perspective. The unclearness of that breakthrough is exactly the continuity of existence. The existing world is the world of humans and it is not possible to leave the world of humans. Making concrete living humans the starting point of rethinking is Confucianism's most fundamental belief.

One can say that the biggest test is through concrete common questions. Heidegger also said that, but his methods are completely different. We can discover that the people in everyday life are inseparable from the myriad of things. The highest significance of human life is reflected precisely in everyday life. The ultimate concern and meaning of Confucianism is on the one hand a possibility that may be reflected in everyday life, on the other hand a necessity that has to be reflected in everyday life. Leaving everyday life can by no means be the highest value.

4.1.4 Man in the 21st Century

To ponder the question of what is human in the 21st century is something former philosophers could not have imagined. But the full approval of the living world that is an essential element of Confucianism has even more profound implications. To give an example, only in today's world is man for the first time able to see the whole picture of the globe with his own eyes. Animals, plants, minerals, water re-

59 *Mengzi* 6A: 孟子曰：“仁，人心也；義，人路也。舍其路而弗由，放其心而不知求，哀哉！人有雞犬放，則知求之；有放心，而不知求。學問之道無他，求其放心而已矣。”

60 Tu 1989c.

sources and even soil and air are all in our field of vision. This is what the astronauts of 1968 saw with their own eyes. Because of this, it is the responsibility of each one of us to become a global thinker. This is something that could not be understood in Heidegger's times even though his philosophy was a global one. Wittgenstein said: "Death is not an event in life: We do not live to experience death. Death is not a thing of living; man has not been through death."⁶¹ Equally, if one has not left this world, it is not possible to understand its significance. This is what philosophy was unable to understand before the 1960s but we have to ponder that question today.

Therefore all religions that have developed from the axial civilizations, religions that have their final concern in transcending the external world, have to undergo a profound transformation and comprehend life on earth anew. Christianity says that earth is worldly. "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."⁶² It does not pay much attention to worldly matters. But now a large number of Christians is talking about ecological conservation, and Buddhists do the same. The Buddhism presently widely adopted in Cultural China is "Buddhism among humans". In China, Taixu has received Christian influence; he himself taught a Buddhism of human life; but Buddhism has profound truths to offer concerning the question of death. Taixu's disciple Yinshun taught popular Buddhism. Later, Master Zhengyan founded the Buddhist Compassion Relief Association, the Foguang shan school of Master Xingyun and the Fagu shan school of Master Shengyan all thought popular Buddhism, they all sought a paradise among the people. This is a big transition. It is clear that their mentality and Confucianism are identical. This should become the fundamental presupposition of philosophy in the 21st century.

4.2 The Meaning of Life: Transcendental Heaven and Man

The second question is "why are we here?", the question about the meaning of life. Man must have a transcendental dimension, only then can one ask the question of the meaning of life. We can reject the notion of "it is impossible to understand life without dying". But if we do not transcend the self, the group and the world of being, then we cannot adequately comprehend the meaning of life. Of course this is a presupposition that is open to debate. Therefore, we have to introduce another question, the question about Confucian "Heaven," or else we could hardly explore the question about the meaning of life. Seen from the perspective of theology, Confucian Heaven is not quite the same as the Christian God. God is omniscient, ubiquitous and omnipotent. Omniscience and ubiquitousness are understandable but omnipotence raises big questions. If God is omnipotent, then why are there so

61 Wittgenstein, *Logic and Philosophy*, 6.4311.

62 *New Testament*, Matthew, 22:21; Mark, 12:17, Luke, 20:25.

many brutal phenomena among men? Does God not love the world of man? This question is hard to solve. The Confucian Heaven is omniscient and ubiquitous but not omnipotent, that is an important difference.

4.2.1 Heaven and Human Creativity

As the saying goes “Heaven and earth both know, you and I both know”. Heaven is transcendental, earth is the globe. This relation between Heaven, Earth and Man deserves attention. Heaven is not omnipotent. At the core the reason for this is the emergence of humans. Xunzi said “Heaven created the earth, man accomplished it”.⁶³ The notion of accomplishing also implies a developmental process and not a static structure. The idea of creation means producing, Heaven is creativity itself. Of course Heaven can also destroy. Everyone understands that the essence of Heaven or “the great virtue of Heaven and earth is creation,”⁶⁴ it is the most primal ability, and it is the original source of all things. Heavens most prominent feature is the “great transformation and diffusion”. It can be said that Heaven is a God, an ancestor, that he gives a mandate and even that he has willpower. Tang Junyi had offered many interpretations of Heaven.⁶⁵ Confucianism is not anthropocentric, but is also not purely naturalistic. Heaven is regarded as creativity itself, its distinguishing feature is creativity. This has implications for man: in the first place man is an observer, this is stated very clearly in the *Book of Changes*. The trigram of “View” is a case in point. In addition man is also an admirer. To express it by analogy with the Christian “Genesis”: After God created all living creatures; he still felt lonely and thereupon created man to appreciate his creation. But this is not a mainstream in Christian theology because God and human existence are separated. Man can never know what God wants to do. To be an admirer does not mean regarding Heaven as an object to study and analyze, but to newly unfold him before one’s eyes from an artistic point of view. This is a dialogic relationship, implying neither instrumentality nor reasoning. Without benefit or practical function, one merely regards him as one’s own companion. This is also Martin Buber’s concern in his work *I and Thou*.⁶⁶ He is indispensable in my life. This presupposition of appreciation makes man a participant in the “great transformation and diffusion”.

This is a notion that is very hard to accept for Christianity since it says that man is a co-creator of the universe. If man has this characteristic, then Heaven and man complement each other. The theory that Heaven and man are one is not easy to understand: there is the interpretation of Heaven and man conquering each other

63 Xunzi 10: 故曰：“天地生之，聖人成之。”

64 Cf. Zhou Yi, “Xici zhuan”: 天地之大德曰生，聖人之大寶曰位。

65 Tang 1977 (*Shengming cunzai yu jingshen jingjie*).

66 Buber 1958.

and the interpretation of Heaven and man responding to each other. From the notions of the observer, the admirer and the creator developed from the theory that “Heaven creates, man accomplishes,” each have their distinctive constrains. The value of the “humanistic world” created by man lies not just in society and politics, but it is a higher value in a complementary relation to the infinite power of creation possessed by Heaven.

Furthermore, Heaven is creativity itself, but man also has creativity. Man is the co-creator of Heaven, they are mutual creators. Yet man itself is born from Heaven, therefore this mutual creation needs to be correctly understood. My point of view on this is that the “great transformation and diffusion” is not entirely a natural phenomenon. In the description of Confucianism it also has the meaning of the transformation of human affairs. “Sincerity” is also a creation. In the *Doctrine of Mean* it says: “Sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of man.”⁶⁷ The way of man not only creates the self, it also creates culture, and this is what is meant by the transformation of human affairs.⁶⁸ But the power of Heaven to nurture life does not imply that Heaven created culture for man. Daoism wants to be non-active, but Confucianism wants to be active, it wants a creation of a social nature. But compared to the creativity of Heaven, the creativity of man is not worth mentioning. This is why Confucianism demands to respect Heaven, fear Heaven and serve Heaven. From a human point of view, “man can enlarge the Way; the Way does not enlarge man.”⁶⁹ If it is misunderstood, for example using Christian vocabulary, man can honor God, but God cannot honor man. But Confucius is projecting this sentence to human responsibility. Because Heaven is natural it inadvertently transforms.

There are many leaps here. Man’s ultimate creation is the self. Man’s creation and the “subtle” linked together create the full embodiment of the character of the self and not just a value of social politics nor an anthropological value. Seen from a philosophical perspective, man created the self and developed the self. It is a non-transformable sort of self: what you want to do and what you are doing are inseparable. For example if you want to become a doctor you have to meet the restrictions of a lot of conditions, the wish itself by no means can achieve the goal. Only in religious and moral categories there is the possibility that what you want may be achieved instantly. “I want to be a Christian”: it only takes a real desire and the desire itself turns you into a Christian. Søren Kierkegaard said he is not a Christian

67 *Zhongyong* 20: 誠者，天之道也；誠之者，人之道也。誠者不勉而中，不思而得，從容中道，聖人也。誠之者，擇善而固執之者也。

68 *Zhouyi*, “Tuanzhuàn”: 賁亨，柔來而文剛，故亨。分剛上而文柔，故小利有攸往。剛柔交錯，天文也。文明以止，人文也。觀乎天文，以察時變；觀乎人文，以化成天下。

69 *Lunyu* 15: 子曰：“人能弘道，非道弘人。”

but trying hard in the process of becoming a Christian.⁷⁰ This self-assessment is the reflection of the Christian spirit to eternally try to become a Christian; it is a very modest remark. Equally, if someone says he wants to become a “Confucian,” this decision is action *per se*. In the *Lunyu*, it says, “I wish to be benevolent, and lo! Benevolence is at hand.”⁷¹ If you decide it, you have already achieved it. So the self is a participant, creator, observer, admirer. The creation of the self is absolute. “The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him.”⁷² Everyone has this ability; it is not an elitist interpretation. The Confucian philosophy of cultivating the own moral character means that “from the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything.”⁷³ All people have to cultivate the own moral character, not one person can escape from cultivating the own moral character. The meaning of this cultivation is not that after one is warmly dressed and well fed, practices *qigong* or yoga. The practice of this cultivation is absolutely necessary for all men at all times. Even the most cruel person like the father of Shun could afterwards tolerate Shun. If he had not consciously cultivated his own moral character, that would not have been possible.

4.2.2 The Family and Social Attributes of Man

In Confucianism man’s sociality is an indispensable element in the transformation of human affairs, especially the family at the very beginning. In thinking about the family, Confucianism is not going the way of reductionism but is rather looking at the family as a complex system. In a family there are differences in age, gender, position and so forth, it is a complicated integration. The relations within a family are very complex and if one follows this line of thinking, expanding it to the nation and the world, these too are even more complicated. The eight clauses of “Investigation of things, completion of knowledge, sincerity of thoughts, rectification of minds, cultivation of persons, regulation of families, governing of the state, tranquility of kingdom”⁷⁴ in the *Great Learning* are not a linear equation. In the stage of regulating the family, the challenges of cultivating one’s moral character are magnified, in the stage of governing the state the challenges of cultivating one’s moral character and regulating the family again redouble, at the level of pacifying the world it has

70 Kierkegaard 1941.

71 *Lunyu* 7: 子曰：“仁遠乎哉？我欲仁，斯仁至矣。”

72 *Lunyu* 9: 子曰：“三軍可奪帥也，匹夫不可奪志也。”

73 *Daxue*: 自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本。

74 *Daxue*: 古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先修其身；欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；欲誠其意者，先致其知；致知在格物。物格而后知至，知至而后意誠，意誠而后心正，心正而后身修，身修而后家齊，家齊而后國治，國治而后天下平。

become extremely complicated. Proceeding from A to B, B contains A, proceeding from B to C, C contains A and B, but compared to A and B, there is a qualitative change. Confucianism also has “leaps,” one’s own leaps are a method. Therefore if the family relations have been handled well, then they are the origin and base for handling every kind of relation. In the times of emperor Xuanzong of the Tang, there was a clan with nine generations living under one roof. The head of the clan, Zhang Gongyi, replied to Tang Xuanzong’s inquiry that his handling of the family relations relied solely on “endurance”. This is why in old times people often said “a hundred endurances regulate the family”.⁷⁵ In this aspect man conforms with nature and is also creative.

To give an example: In the development of every world civilization there were floods. Noah’s Ark is famous, and on the Chinese side there is the legend of Emperor Yu taming the floods. What does Yu’s taming of the floods reflect? Gun, the father of Yu was killed because he did not understand the characteristics of a body of water. For Yu the first thing was observation, through observation he understood what kind of irrigation system he had to use to control the floods. This is accumulated scientific knowledge. What other qualities did he have to put into practice this scientific rationale? He could order several hundred thousand people to tame the floods, not by relying on armed forces but by relying on the influence of virtue to set the great masses in motion. For example by “passing three doors without entering,”⁷⁶ he basically abandoned the warmth of the family: this is a reflection of the spirit of self-sacrifice. He was also courageous and unselfish, rationally investigating, researching, and let the masses actively participate. This illustrates how people can transform natural disasters through their own initiative. Hurricanes, flooding, rain and earthquakes are abnormalities of Heaven’s power of nurturing life.

By the way, Dong Zhongshu did not create theological legitimacy for the Han dynasty; he had a strong spirit of criticism. Unlike Gong Sunhong and Shu Suntong he instilled a feeling of reverence in the leaders of the common world. This has to do with the notion that “the mandate of Heaven is not constant”.⁷⁷ Heaven creates, man accomplishes. The opposite of accomplishment is non-accomplishment, even destruction. The men of old said: “If Heaven commits evil, it may be avoided, but if

75 Cf. *Jiu Tang shu* 138.

76 *Mengzi*, 3A: 當堯之時，天下猶未平，洪水橫流，泛濫於天下。草木暢茂，禽獸繁殖，五谷不登，禽獸逼人。獸蹄鳥跡之道，交於中國。堯獨憂之，舉舜而敷治焉。舜使益掌火，益烈山澤而焚之，禽獸逃匿。禹疏九河，濬濟漯而注諸海，決汝漢，排淮泗而注之江，然後中國可得而食也。當是時也，禹八年於外，三過其門而不入，雖欲耕，得乎？

77 This concept is repeatedly mentioned in the *Shijing* and *Shangshu*.

one does evil oneself, one cannot live.”⁷⁸ The “one” in this sentence can also be replaced by “man”. Heaven’s evil are natural disasters, but man can escape the destructive power of Heaven. Yet since man is not the product of evolution but a force in the evolutionary process, while Heaven creates and man accomplishes, Heaven’s creation has no negative meaning, but man’s accomplishment can have a negative meaning. In a broader sense, seen from pure scientific rationality, it appears doubtful if it is possible for man to live on. Many scholars believe that the possibilities for man to become extinct are quite big. But with the wisdom we acquired through analysis and understanding, it becomes more and more clear what we should do, but it also becomes harder and harder to do what we should. Why is that so? Because of the inertia of the system accumulated over years. There is also a sort of scientific belief that can be regarded as an ideology. It supposes that problems can be solved through scientific rationality. For example, Tokyo was once very polluted, but the situation has been improved a lot through the application of science. Certainly the belief has spread that scientific rationality is to be applied in the face of natural transformation, but this could become arrogant and muddled. Since the reform and opening policy, the development of China has been very good. Previously, Beijing was a capital of bicycles, now it is one of cars. That is superficially very advanced but it might also be a road of no return.

4.2.3 Breaking Through Anthropocentrism

With regard to transcendence, simply put, if one is not able to transcend subjectivism one can also not complete oneself, subjectiveness is thus hard to make clear. If one does not go beyond familism and nepotism, one cannot perfect the family. If one does not go beyond narrow ethnic nationalism and regionalism, one cannot perfect the locality. If one does not go beyond narrow nationalism, one cannot have genuine patriotism. If one cannot transcend anthropocentrism, there is no way of achieving what one regards as man’s highest ideals. That is to say, the philosophy of man is not merely the philosophy of anthropology. Mou Zongsan’s “multiple level restrictions, multiple level breakthrough restrictions” follow just that line of thought. On the one hand it is very specific, saying that the outer concentric circles are absolutely open. If the outer circles weren’t open there was no way of developing a greater scope. Transcending anthropocentrism is an inevitable development in surpassing egocentricity. This is why it is said, “affectionate to relatives, benevolent

78 *Shangshu*, “Taijia”: 王拜手稽首曰：“予小子不明于德，自底不類。欲敗度，縱敗禮，以速戾于厥躬。天作孽，猶可違；自作孽，不可逭。” Quoted in Mengzi as: 天作孽，猶可違，自作孽，不可活。

to the people, and loving to creatures”⁷⁹, in other words, only after being close to one’s relatives, one is able to be benevolent to the people and love creatures. One can also say that if one does not strive for being benevolent to the people and loving to creatures, the values that start by being close to one’s family cannot be fully realized.

Some people say this hypothesis is too idealistic and essentially cannot become reality. My response is that this train of thought is very simple and can be put into practice in everyday life. On the way to reaching a harmonious state of society there is one most adverse situation, that is everyone harming themselves harming others. Another bad situation is when people benefit themselves and harm others. And then there is the situation of people benefiting themselves and not harming others, this resembles the *homo economicus* assumed by economics, who at least does not actively harm others. Then there is the situation of people not harming others and not benefiting themselves. The best situation is when people benefit themselves and benefit others. The foundation for this situation is to be someone who relies on himself. Confucianism does not stand for harming yourself and harming others and also not benefiting yourself and harming others but for being capable of benefiting yourself and not harming others, this itself has a certain value. If you can benefit yourself and benefit others, the value is higher. For example if you say you only love your own children, that has a value. But this value can be extrapolated and expanded towards the whole family and even society. When a man drowned, Yu thought it to be his own responsibility, when someone starved, Houji held himself responsible.⁸⁰ We normal people do not have this kind of compassion and kindness, but we can start from a concrete situation and only have to gradually extrapolate it, thus we can contribute to the harmony of society as a whole.

The Confucians are “affectionate to relatives, benevolent to the people, and loving to creatures”: this kind of graded love is a process of extrapolating from the inner to the outer, this is very understandable and also very realistic. To love someone else’s parents just as much as you love your own parents: this is a kind of demand and not a revelation of natural emotions. This is why Mozi’s road is impractical. In Christianity there is no graded love because God’s love is all-encompassing. It requires breaking the daily routine of ethical relations and everyday connections in order to build a completely new social association called “fellowship”. This is a group made up of all Christians together. Some people ask a very annoying ques-

79 *Mengzi* 7A: 孟子曰：“君子之於物也，愛之而弗仁；於民也，仁之而弗親。親親而仁民，仁民而愛物。”

80 *Mengzi* 4B: 禹思天下有溺者，由己溺之也；稷思天下有飢者，由己飢之也，是以如是其急也。

tion: Look at the followers that joined Confucius in his tour through the various states, what is their commitment to the family? Zengzi, a father and a child, and Zilu, Yanhui, what was their family situation? Therefore, I truly want to accomplish myself, to some extent restrict precisely the conditions that turn me into a particular living person and from that condition develop the self. I live in this world, Habermas called it “lifeworld,”⁸¹ this is the world of my life, the particular circumstances of life, it is the objective condition of my individual existence that I as an individual cannot dispel.

Wolfhart Pannenberg is a Christian theologian at Munich University. He believes Christianity is anthropocentric, without anthropocentrism there would be no Christianity. Because man was formed according to God’s image, therefore after the creation of man, God gave man all the creatures in top-to-bottom control. The English word for this is “dominion,” that is control and domination.⁸² This is anthropocentrism, in fact we can make this a footnote in our discussion of anthropocentrism. In addition I raise another point of view, an idea that has become gradually more popular in the English-speaking world: it is called “anthropo-cosmic vision”.

Man is an observer, participant and co-creator, therefore the relationship between man and Heaven is complementary. There is a presupposition here, namely to step out of anthropocentrism. The most extreme embodiment of anthropocentrism is the secular humanism, developed during the 17th and 18th century in the Western Enlightenment.⁸³ This value orientation has two blind spots, one is the ignorance of spirituality, and the other is the attitude that nature needs to be subjugated. The influence of the idea that man is the master of his own fate is still very big. The praise for a story like “The foolish old man moves the mountain” is just that. “Foolishness” is a very big value, for example Yan Hui “seemed foolish” or “great wisdom appears foolish”. But in “the foolish old man moves the mountain” there is no doubt that it means stupid. Yu’s taming of the floods very clearly has a positive value, and the foolish old man’s willpower requires the efforts of a few generations. But if we see through this willpower and recognize that it represents only the ignorance of wanting to conquer nature, then its persuasiveness vanishes.

4.2.4 Man and Nature

An African proverb that is very touching goes like this: “We have not inherited the earth from our forefathers, but rather have been entrusted with its riches by the

81 Habermas 1989.

82 Pannenberg 1983.

83 “Secular humanism,” also called “scientific humanism,” is a concept that is normally associated with atheism in theology, naturalism in physics, the theory of evolution in biology and relativism in ethics.

generations to come.” This point of view reflects a rich wisdom. “The foolish old man moves the mountain” simply stresses man’s willpower to conquer nature. It doesn’t compare to the tale of Sisyphus in Greek mythology⁸⁴ that at least conveys a feeling of a tragedy and illustrates that although man’s strength can never push the rock up on the mountain top, continuous effort still has a value. When he was 96 years old, Qian Mu published his last article, “Man is an Integral Part of Nature: The Contribution of Chinese Culture to the Future of Mankind”. His solution is that Heavenly law and human kindness complement each other. He believed the theory that man as an integral part of nature “is the biggest contribution of Chinese culture to mankind”.⁸⁵ “It is the destination of the whole traditional Chinese cultural thinking,” this was his realization of a whole lifetime. Qian Mu had many followers, but after the publishing of this article there was no response. I was astounded because when I read the article I was extremely moved. In Taiwan, there was almost no response to this article. Ji Xianlin was very moved after reading the article and wrote a response, and in this article he quoted every single of the more than 1000 characters of Qian Mu’s original article. Mr. Ji believes that Heaven is nature. In addition Zhang Shiyong as well as Li Shenzhi also responded and also stressed the integrity of man and Heaven.

I believe that man and Heaven are not only integrated, there should also be a transcendent aspect. Feng Youlan in his late life completed the new edition of his *History of Chinese Philosophy*.⁸⁶ In this work, he returns to Zhang Zai’s concept that “feud must be harmonized and resolved”⁸⁷ and approves of “Hengqu’s four propositions”.⁸⁸ Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi also had such themes. Before the 21st century, in the last years of the 20th century, these old gentlemen in their 80s all had this common understanding. But what deserves our attention is that the theory that man is an integral part of nature raises an existential problem: the saying, “man can enlarge the Way; the Way does not enlarge man,” can easily turn into anthropocentrism and exaggerate the power of man. The West calls this the arrogance of man. In the main tradition of Confucianism, this is a very

84 Cf. Schwab 1977.

85 Qian 1990.

86 Feng 2001.

87 Cf. Zhang Zai, *Zheng Meng*, “Tai he” 太和: 氣本之虛則湛無形, 感而生則聚而有象。有象斯有對, 對必反其為; 有反斯有仇, 仇必和而解。

88 “Hengqu’s four propositions” concisely reflect the Confucian ideal of Heaven and man, namely: 為天地立心, 為生民立命, 為往聖繼絕學, 為萬世開太平。They were first put forth by Zhang Zai (in *Zhangzi yulu*) as: 為天地立志, 為生民立道, 為去聖繼絕學, 為萬世開太平, then incorporated into *Jinsi lu* 2 by Zhu Xi, modified as: 為天地立心, 為生民立道, 為去聖繼絕學, 為萬世開太平。

modest remark, aiming to promote a sense of responsibility. As mentioned above, Confucianism has the notion of “fearing Heaven,” this is the opposite of arrogance.

The creative power of man is next to nothing compared with Heaven. All cultural achievements of man rely on man. Man plays a most important role in them. Even though it is like this, the creative power of Heaven is still incomparable. Heaven also has great destructive power, for example earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that can swallow the life and homeland of man. Whoever sees something like this will feel very vulnerable. So no matter how great a culture man produces, it is still almost nothing compared to the destructive and creative powers of Heaven. In the future, global warming, the rise of the temperature and the melting of the polar ice caps could flood over 40 large cities. This is precisely the power of Heaven. The famous ecologist Thomas Berry said, the arrogance of man is reflected in nuclear research: causing nuclei to split through continuous collision in order to research even smaller particles. Nature has no way of evading this power of man, but in the end it can release “poison” in the form of radiation. This is nature’s self-defense. One could also say it is nature’s retaliation; it is the response of earth to human destructive power. There is another problem, Tang Junyi quoted Liang Qichao’s word that “the world is infinite and the wishes endless”.⁸⁹ Man has philosophical reflection, but one cannot say that this reflection exerts immediate creative power over nature’s beings, this is absurd. But thoughts are not only thoughts, they are also action, just like Marx said he does not only want to interpret the world, he wants to change the world. However, saying that this world is the world of man, one cannot say man can create nature. This is man’s unattainable limit. Only setting out from an attitude of revering Heaven can continuously instill inspiration and enlightenment. In other words, man’s creative and destructive powers are next to nothing compared with Heaven. Heaven’s creative self is regarded with esteem also in scientific circles.

4.2.5 Immanence and Transcendence

Liu Zongzhou said that the firm belief in “exhausting one’s mental constitution, knowing one’s nature, knowing Heaven”⁹⁰ from the *Doctrine of the Mean* to *Mengzi* is a philosophy of communication between oneself and Heaven. Developed from the thought of “knowing Heaven,” it touches upon the question of immanent transcendence. Yu Yingshi, believing that immanent transcendence is not possible, talked about “introverted transcendence”. For others, like Roger Ames, it was entirely unacceptable. Immanence is immanence and transcendence is transcendence.

89 Cf. Tang 1977 (*Rensheng zhi tian*).

90 See also: *Mengzi* 7A: 孟子曰：“盡其心者，知其性也。知其性，則知天矣。存其心，養其性，所以事天也。殀壽不貳，修身以俟之，所以立命也。”

How can there be immanent transcendence? I believe what the *Doctrine of the Mean* reflects is just that line of thought. Therefore the special approach of the *Mengzi* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* are in my view among the clearest examples of the anthropo-cosmic vision.

In the first Chapter of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, it says: “What Heaven has conferred is called nature; and accordance with nature is called the Way.” If Heaven is a creative principle, then character is not only passive, it definitely has its own initiative. If not so, how can it develop on the path of the Way and education? This is connected to the mind. The particular feature of *Mengzi*’s philosophy is that the mind molds human nature, and human nature appears from the mind. The genuine value of human nature is that it comes from the mind, therefore human nature is defined by the mind, and the essence of human nature is the mind. But we cannot compare the mind to normal emotions like joy, anger, sorrow and happiness. I believe empathy is a deeper feeling, a more immanent and more transcendent original mind and nature, bluntly put: it is transcendental. It is *a priori* but it also needs to be realized in the world of experience. This kind of both *a priori* and experienced emotion seems like only God can have it. This relates to the question if man can have intuitive knowledge. Therefore the mind as in “human nature appears from the mind” is one of the “four sprouts” and not one of the “seven emotions”.

The connections between the “four sprouts” (compassion, sense of shame, reverential attitude, sense of right and wrong) and the “seven emotions” (happiness, anger, grief, fear, love, hate, desire) have provoked a very fruitful discussion in Korean Confucianism that was derived from the extremely important philosophical discussion between Yi Toegye (Yi Hwang) and Ki Kobong (Ki Taesŭng) (the so called “Four-seven Debate”).⁹¹ But Kant was only able to understand the “seven emotions” because in his tradition it was incomprehensible how there could be an “unstirred equilibrium”. This is also a question that Zhu Xi could not understand. Zhu Xi’s teacher Li Tong wanted Zhu Xi “to regard the unstirred manifestations of ‘Qi’”. Zhu Xi always wanted to understand this teaching, but later he said “I have let his old man down,”⁹² indicating that he had indeed no means of clearly understanding the scope of Li Tong’s teaching. Because he believed that emotions, once moved, are already stirred, in seeking the unstirred, he did not pay enough attention to what was already stirred. He became impatient for success until in the end he moved toward Zen Buddhism. Therefore he later taught that “self-restraint requires reverence”⁹³ The technique of reverence can always be used; it is a completely gradual

91 In Chinese academic circles one can refer to Lee 2005, as well as to Yang 2005.

92 *Zhu Xi ji* 43, “Da Lin Zezhi” 答林擇之 20.

93 This originated from Cheng Yi; cf. *Er Cheng yishu* 二程遺書 18: 涵養須用敬，進學則在致知。Afterwards Zhu Xi pursued this aim all his life. In *Jinsi lu* he stressed the skill of “reverence.”

teaching and not a sudden teaching. After one has mastered the technique of reverence, one can again gradually and through extending one's knowledge to the utmost see everything in a clear light. Because Zhu Xi stressed acquiring knowledge, only when he started epistemology could he have a breakthrough. This sort of breakthrough of seeing everything clearly of course has profound ethical meaning. Therefore he believed that those who were self-restrained and reverential were most capable of showing his ideas. After all, only the method of "lecturing for attaining knowledge" was indeed effective.

The above is seen from the perspective of transcendence, the following is seen from the perspective of immanence. We know that Kant's influence on modernity and on China was very profound. He raised questions of nature and of freedom. For example man is free, but man is a sinner. What can Confucianism respond to this? This is a very difficult question. Kant's train of thought is very complicated. He has three important presuppositions, namely, that God exists, that there is an immortal soul and that there is a free will. In a strict sense, freedom of will is the most important. Because of the freedom of rational man, one can create law. This does not depend on the existence of God or the immortal soul. The existence of God is not a prerequisite for the realization of values. Speaking from the perspective of freedom, man's intellect and reason are not confined by the existence of God or the immortal soul, but they are absolute. So, does the Confucianism have the possibility of developing absolute freedom? Take the sentence "the commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him."⁹⁴ This is precisely absolute freedom. One only needs to choose and can obtain it, there are no restrictions whatsoever. Everyone can obtain this sort of freedom through making an effort.

Kant believed that only God can have intuitive knowledge, man cannot. Because he wanted to establish a law, he approached everything from the theory of human nature. The "philosophy of mind and nature" and the Western tradition of rationality are completely different. Seen from the perspective of Western rationality, only thorough formal reasoning is incorruptible. In the study of mind and nature, there are complicated factors like "sympathy," it is not that pure. Mou Zongsan spent considerable energy on this idea, it has its value and deserves further exploration. But this does not mean that we shouldn't spend our residual energy to follow Kant, indeed he deserves new consideration. I believe there is a problem in the "self-negation of intuitive knowledge". According to my understanding, it must be the expansion and deepening of intuitive knowledge, without regarding intuitive knowledge only as a rational virtue. This would confine it to a relation with scientific rationality.

94 *Lunyu* 9: 三軍可奪帥也，匹夫不可奪志也。

The second generation of Confucianism of Mou Zongsan and others was unable to step out of this line of thought, mainly because the influence of science and democracy on them was too strong. Science, in their understanding, was science by the standards of empiricism as of the late 19th and early 20th century. Although today this is still the mainstream, science has to be noticeable and touchable, along with having to be quantifiable, these fundamental beliefs have not wavered. But nowadays scientists with creativeness and a sense for development have already surpassed this kind of empiricism, that is physicalism. Lao Siguang has recently written an article in which he criticized physicalism.⁹⁵ This is a work he wrote while he was at Princeton. People who believe in scientism also accept physicalism, this is to say that chemistry, biology and psychology are fundamentally all physics. If the fundamental scientific design is found, the whole universe will be clear at a glance. But today people with that view are few, because the more they seek for the fundamentals the more they discover that the small is not at all simple and the complexity of things cannot be reduced. Additionally, the idea that scientific rationality can get rid of dark spots is also not common consensus any more. Because getting rid of dark spots produces new dark spots. The more you know, the more you discover that there is always more to learn. The Enlightenment said that religion is a dark spot and that it is superstition. The development of science could get rid of it. The light of science could illuminate everything. But as Zhuangzi said, your chest keeps things safe very well but a big robber is going to steal the whole chest in an instant.⁹⁶ In other words, you can believe something is surefire without realizing that an even bigger force is attacking you, something you have not at all anticipated. Today prominent scientists are very modest. For example, the biologists have listed the human gene code. This is a big achievement. But although the gene code seems to be the map of the world, although it is very comprehensive, what are the dynamic relations among the genes? What we know is still very limited. We have just begun, this is what most biologists are thinking too.

The relation between the knowledge of virtue and the knowledge of the senses is what we want to consider anew. We always think that the knowledge of the senses can develop into science, but the knowledge of virtue has no relation to science and is even opposed to science. As a matter of fact, it is not that simple. One of the goals of Kant's rational research was to find a space to keep his faith. Why did his effort become a paradigm of Western philosophy that nobody can bypass? Because of his most encompassing, most profound elaboration on rationality, which no one can reach. We should study him in this point.

95 Lao 2007.

96 *Zhuangzi*, "Ma ti" 馬蹄.

4.3 The Question of Epistemology: How Can we Know?

The strongest ideology in China today is probably scientism. But we said above that science itself had a conscious change of direction during the late 20th and into the 21st century. This change is not mysticism but a new development within scientific rationalism. It is a new change of direction of a group of most outstanding scientists. These new developments and new insights caused science of the 21st century, or maybe I should say science of the second half the 20th century to be completely different from the scientism of the 19th and early 20th century. We are going to examine this question in different aspects.

4.3.1 The Complexity of Reason

In reason there is scientific rationality, instrumental rationality and of course there is, as Habermas said, communicative rationality, and then there is reasonableness. In Chinese there is not only reasonableness but also sensibleness. Reason and the common world are also connected to our everyday life. The development of science is in close relation to Western philosophy. It had two pivotal periods. One was Greek philosophy, including mathematics; that was the development of reason. The other was the empiricism of Francis Bacon, that was experimental science. This mode of thinking clearly bore the mindset of Enlightenment. If it cannot be quantified, if it cannot be observed, if there is no transparency, if there is no universality, then it is not science. Later complex systems emerged, for example fuzzy mathematics which complicated this question very much. In physics the most important development was the emergence of quantum theory. This was something Albert Einstein could not accept because he was a rationalist, and believed that God does not throw dice. Quantum theory discusses possibility, that is to say two incompatible theories can both be correct: it is A and also B. For example, after Niels Bohr proposed the wave-particle duality this became an important school of thought. In other words the appearance of phenomena is totally unpredictable. Although it cannot be anticipated, it is still a symmetric design, it is not chaotic, just not clearly observable.

Borrowing an example from classical economics, Hayek believed in market economy. He thought no human rationality can have a clear understanding of the complexities of the market. Why are market economy and planned economy different? Planned economy assumes that it is possible for a group of talented individuals to plan the sequence of economic performance. But Hayek believed that a market economy can absolutely not be planned. As long as government interferes, the results will be negative because the market is so complicated. Hayek wrote a

book called *The Constitution of Liberty*,⁹⁷ Deng Zhenglai translated it into Chinese under the title *Ziyou zhixu yuanli* (*The principle of the arrangement of Liberty*).⁹⁸ I believe that according to the meaning of “constitution,” a translation as “regulation” would have been more appropriate. In China there is the saying “regulate civil and military affairs,” which means basic rules and laws⁹⁹ and is furthermore a verb. Hayek believed the complexity of the market could not be sorted out through reason. A market economy has indeed an intrinsic design, this design cannot simply be grasped relying on reason. But it also does have structures that can be named. Under very complex circumstances, the light of reason can never shine upon a certain place. As mentioned above, the phenomenon is a complex system, what can be grasped are only side aspects which are not comprehensive. One can quantify it, but its real situation is not that easy to grasp. Li Huaci believes that ancient China did not have specificity, but instead had fruitful ambiguity.¹⁰⁰ The role of reason is tied with a loose string, but it should not be tied prematurely. This is like the relation between a fishing net and the net rope, there are gains and there are losses but in many places you lose more.

The anthropologist Mead¹⁰¹ was a student of Boas, she referred to two lines of thinking. One was the thinking of anthropology; the other was the thinking of digitalization. Everyone knows the thinking of digitalization. If for instance we want to understand Beijing University, even if we had all the data, including the most secret information, we could still not master it. For the understanding of anthropology this is only the beginning of cognition, and the thought of anthropology has to be a part of it. If a foreign student does not understand the culture of Beijing, the complex relationship between student and professor, the administrative organization and all sorts of other aspects, he cannot understand Beijing University. His description could not be persuasive. “Thick description”¹⁰² cannot grasp complex phenomena. If one wants to go into specific details, the awareness of the problem must not slip away for a moment. To penetrate the phenomenon does not suffice, but one has to be able to go beyond it. The research methods of anthropology and digitalization are very different. If the thinking pattern of someone is the one of digitalization, it is a very linear, pure thinking that does not accept the thinking of

97 Hayek 1960.

98 Deng 1997.

99 *Zhongyong* 30: 仲尼祖述堯舜，憲章文武，上律天時，下襲水土。辟如天地之無不持載，無不覆幬，辟如四時之錯行，如日月之代明。

100 Cf. Schwartz 1985.

101 Margaret Mead is one of the most famous female anthropologists in America. Together with Benedict she founded the school of American cultural psychology.

102 Cf. Geertz 1973.

anthropology. Seen from the point of anthropology, the thought of digitalization is very simple and clear, but it cannot grasp complex phenomena.

4.3.2 The Concept of “Embodied Knowledge”

The word “embodiment” has many facets in Chinese: embodied experience, embodied observation, embodied proof. The Confucianism of Song and Ming said “embody it,” meaning that you should experience what you cannot understand. In English, this is “embodied knowledge,” it derives from physical cognition. Taken as a complex system, physical cognition has to include the mind, the intelligence and the soul, these hard-to-understand connections between body, mind and soul. The understanding of the body also includes the understanding of the brain. In science some materialists ask, what is actually the mind? There is much progress in the research of the brain, but is the question of the mind already no longer important? I believe that the mind cannot be reduced to the brain. Harvard has a large-scale research project mainly about the cranial nerves, but scholars from all disciplines can take part in it. It is called Mind and Brain. We can take it as reference point for the questions we are pondering.

In order to understand an object, it is unavoidable to touch upon the complicated questions of subjectivity and objectivity. The normal understanding is this: For example in religious studies, the researchers often identify themselves with their object of study. For instance I am now researching Christianity, but I am a Christian, and because of this I am identifying myself with my object of study. My moral rationality and cognition are of course connected to this identification. Anthropologists always want to become participants. If, for example, you are not at Beijing University, you cannot understand Beijing University. But if you take part for a long time and intensively, you might almost become one of the people of Beijing University: if you dig into it and are unable to get out of it, in the course of time you will no longer be able to objectively describe your research target and are no longer an observing anthropologist. Such a “scientific” style of religious studies advocates scientific rationality as the only method of researching religion and believes the research of someone confessing faith in a religion is biased. Buddhists understand that Christians want objectivity towards Christianity. Seen from these two different methods, the connection between the research object and the main part of research is a big problem.

There is a trend that is impossible to explain rationally, but that is still very important. Biologists who research bacteria have no need and are unlikely to identify with the bacteria. Physicists who research molecules and atoms do not need to identify with molecules and atoms. But researching human affairs and religion is not the same. For example researching literature, researching Shakespeare and becoming an expert on Shakespeare of course requires immersing oneself in it. Scientific research

does not confront the research object and can still explain it. The clearest is astronomy. Astronomers only need a pencil to conduct reflections. But this is only one method of researching and one ultimately has to return to physics. Scientists who study the theory of relativity said that if you want to experiment, first you have to make a design. The experimenter makes a design and his design itself already portrays the margins of his research and sets the direction of the research. This design inevitably alters the research object. The more experimenters are aware of their design, the more beneficial for the research. Of course it has to be transparent, open to the public and trustworthy. This categorical research is very similar to sociologist research. Economics is getting more and more digitalized. Mathematics has seemingly no model of immediate significance that still has value. Of course it is very accomplished. Douglass North teaches institutional economics, a social science dominated by natural science.¹⁰³ The social scientific economics dominates other branches of disciplines. All sciences dominate humanities. But in scientific circles a group of very prominent outstanding scientists believes in many places the thought gets more and more complex, and more and more resembles the humanities. No one knows how the 21st century is going to be, but at least there needs to be dialogue.

4.3.3 The Knowledge of Seeing and Hearing

In the Chinese context, the idealist philosophy of the Song and Ming began discussing the question of “how can we know?” with the knowledge of hearing and seeing and the knowledge of virtue proposed by Zhang Zai.¹⁰⁴ Experience and observation are the knowledge of hearing and seeing. The knowledge of virtue requires knowledge of hearing and seeing, but it does not depend on it. The knowledge of hearing and seeing cannot reach the degree of the knowledge of virtue. The knowledge of virtue is a kind of moral rationality without regard for epistemology. Today the judgment in academic circles is that the knowledge of virtue cannot develop into science, only the knowledge of hearing and seeing can develop into science. Science discovered the question of “how?” as opposed to a simple “what?” The relationship between “how” and “what” is very complicated.

103 Douglass North was awarded the Nobel prize for Economics in 1993. North's most important contribution lies in founding a “system transformation theory” that includes property rights theory, nation state theory and ideology theory. He is a representative of the school of “New Institutional Economics”.

104 Zhang Zai, *Zheng Meng*, “Da Xin”: 大其心則能體天下之物，物有未體，則心為有外。世人之心，止於聞見之狹。聖人盡性，不以見聞梏其心，其視天下無一物非我，孟子謂盡心則知性知天以此。天大無外，故有外之心不足以合天心。見聞之知，乃物交而知，非德性所知；德性所知，不萌於見聞。

One of the most important questions is if Confucian virtues and scientific rationalism are compatible. To give too much prominence to moral rationality would disable one to grasp the scientific spirit of objectivity. This criticism has been raised towards Confucianism and moralism in general. Actually, morals and science are by no means contradictory. China has produced a group of outstanding scientists; they also have a very high level and deep understanding of virtue. To say that this impedes their scientific ability is only a very superficial description and has no philosophical significance. Did not Mou Zongsan's diligent work open up science from moral rationality? The influence of this idea is very strong. The meaning of "opening up" is that he developed a democratic science from the core of moral rationality. Mou Zongsan was strongly influenced by Kant. He put forward his idea of "self-negation of intuitive knowledge".¹⁰⁵ Self-negation in this sense means to intentionally let intuitive knowledge withdraw and temporarily make it inaccessible, regard it as background understanding and let scientific rationality gain an independent development. In other words, through the alienation of intuitive knowledge from the self, one opens up a space where science is able to develop. The development of science has to rely on the initial conscious self-suppression of intuitive knowledge and has to undergo a transformation. On another foundation, one can establish scientific rationality and after the establishment of scientific rationality intuitive knowledge can reemerge from its self-negation. Science and reason are unique, moral rationality itself did not undergo self-negation or self-alienation and cannot open up scientific rationalism. To say so would be absurd.

There is an insurmountable separation between moral rationality and rational knowledge as represented by science. I would like to ask whether or not intuitive knowledge really reflects moral rationality? From the virtue of knowledge taught by Zhang Zai to Mengzi's philosophy of the mind, what is the relation between scientific cognition and moral practice? Can intuitive knowledge only be of significance in the layers of moral rationality? If that is so, then indeed there is an insurmountable separation between moral rationality and rational knowledge, and Mou Zongsan's must be followed. They must undergo transformation, otherwise they are useless. If the separation between moral rationality and practical rationality is not as absolute as we think, if intuitive knowledge is not moral rationality in the normal meaning, then it is necessary to analyze this question further.

4.3.4 A Comprehensive Analytical Framework

I oppose materialism and foundationalism. I believe that in researching an object, subject and object are in complicated interaction. They are in a relation of dialogue

105 Mou Zongsan mentioned the "self-negation of intuitive knowledge" (良知坎陷) early in Mou 1954 and Mou 1961, and later in Mou 1975.

and not one of domination. Today I consider physics, chemistry, biology, psychology and so forth as different developmental stages of scientific rationality. Physics will research into the smallest molecules and atoms. The basic principle of physics is materialism. It teaches the division between subjectivity and objectivity, stressing that man and nature are categories that cannot be put together, believing that to understand nature it takes thorough objectivity, and that it can only be comprehended through the method of epistemology, and that physics is the sole foundation of scientific rationality. This way of scientific thinking is currently being challenged in many ways.

The other sort of thought analysis is not the analytical method of decisionism. It consciously understands the complex relation between research object and research method. Scientists are no pure observers, they also have to be participants, even creators. Without participation, research is impossible. You do not have to identify with atoms and bacteria but if you regard yourself as a scientist you cannot help but to have an affinity for nature in general. Xunzi taught that people are the masters of their own fate,¹⁰⁶ that means knowing it and understanding it and afterwards controlling it and using it, in any case taking nature as a material aggregate. This line of thought regards nature as extrinsic, as objective existence, as an objective aggregate that can be controlled through experiments. But could nature, quite to the contrary, not be regarded as a plentiful communion of subjects,¹⁰⁷ a common existence that has a physical one? This sort of non-extrinsic, non-objective thinking regards nature as an indispensable tendency in the process of self-realization of scientists. Is this not called subjectivism, or idealism? It certainly deserves consideration.

I analyzed early on that “personal” and “private” must not be confused with each other. Subjectivism and subjectivity must also not be confused. Subjectivism is the basis of profound research, subjectivity is wearing colored glasses. Subjectivism can also be colored, and also has a subjective aspect, but its goal is to eliminate subjectivity, reflecting a deep intrinsic autonomy. Researching an object is absolutely not a static structure but a dynamic process. This is becoming more and more accepted. The method of separating mind and material, stressing that materialistic and idealistic aspects are absolutely incompatible, has already lost its standing. Xunzi said from “Qi” to life, to knowledge, and to righteousness, every advance is a big leap. Life cannot be specified as “Qi”. “Qi” is at the center of life, but knowledge is the unity of life and body. One is called “emergence,” one is called “reduction”. The original is the foundation which advances in a qualitative leap. The relation between now and before is inseparable. I shall call this the “continuity of existence”. But it is

106 Xunzi 17: 大天而思之，孰與物畜而制之？從天而頌之，孰與制天命而用之？望時而待之，孰與應時而使之？因物而多之，孰與騁能而化之？思物而物之，孰與理物而勿失之也？願於物之所以生，孰與有物之所以成？故錯人而思天，則失萬物之情。

107 See also Berry and Swimme 1992.

impossible to understand its design through the process of the development that has already taken place. A new structure cannot be understood from within the process of events. This is not a crack in the continuity of existence, but rather a continuous as well as a completely new line of thought.

Thus scientific research and its object take on a new relation, and this requires that we enlarge our understanding of intuitive knowledge. If we only specify intuitive knowledge as moral rationality that is too one-sided. Wang Yangming said that intuitive knowledge is ubiquitous.¹⁰⁸ Grass and stones all have intuitive knowledge. Some people oppose against this, saying this would be mysticism, even romantic mysticism, a subjective idealism that has not undergone analysis and that is contrary to science. As a matter of fact it is not like that. The distinguishing feature of moral knowledge is not just moral rationality, but it can become a reference for scientific rationality. Scientists engaged in scientific research also need to embody knowledge. Moreover the “knowledge” of intuitive knowledge is omniscient and ubiquitous. The myriad things all have intuitive knowledge. So the highest stage is to regard the myriad of things as an integrated whole. This thought of Wang Yangming is not derived from Lu Xiangshan but from Cheng Hao.¹⁰⁹ Why is this intuitive knowledge not mysticism? Because it is an ability that everyone can realize. I mentioned above that man has the ability to observe, to admire and to participate in creation. This so-called fundamental ability is something that every normal human being possesses. One can ask a simple question: Is it possible that there are things in this world that have no relation to our mind? If our mind is not dead then it is not possible that there are things in this world without connection to it. If we concentrate our attention on the sand before our eyes or on a distant galaxy, then our mind immediately creates a connection to them. Our connection to them manifests that they were already contained in our mind. This is why we care for them. “Caring” is a distinguishing feature of Confucianism. We can say that Confucianism is monism, but it is a diffuse monism. Mozi taught universal love, Confucianism esteems hu-

108 Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu*: 朱本思問：“人有虛靈，方有良知。若草木瓦石之類，亦有良知否？”先生曰：“人的良知，就是草木瓦石的良知。若草木瓦石無人的良知，不可以為草木瓦石矣。豈惟草木瓦石為然，天地無人的良知，亦不可為天地矣。蓋天地萬物與人原是一體，其發竅之最精處，是人心一點靈明。風、雨、露、雷、日、月、星、辰、禽、獸、草、木、山、川、土、石，與人原只一體。故五谷禽獸之類，皆可以養人；藥石之類，皆可以療疾；只為同此一氣，故能相通耳。”

109 Cf. *Er Cheng yishu* 2: 醫書言手足痿痺為不仁，此言最善名狀。仁者，以天地萬物為一體，莫非己也。認得為己，何所不至？若不有諸己，自不與己相干。如手足不仁，氣已不貫，皆不屬己。故“博施濟眾”，乃聖之功用。仁至難言，故止曰“己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人，能近取譬，可謂仁之方也已。”欲令如是觀仁，可以得仁之體。See also: 《傳習錄》：“自‘格物致知’至‘平天下’，只是一個‘明明德’。雖親民，亦明德事也。明德是此心之德，即是仁。仁者以天地萬物為一體，使有一物失所，便是吾仁有未盡處。”

maneness and love but also stresses graded love. This is why Confucians oppose Mozi.¹¹⁰

Wang Yangming's arguments in *Daxue wen* are something we can all experience in everyday life. If you look at it from the perspective of man itself, moving from close to distant, the closest are the family members, only afterwards can one extend one's caring to strangers. This can be compared to the way of Christianity. God loves the common world, so you should learn to respect and love the world. It can also be compared to Kant's method; if people would all act like this, then it would become universally valid behavior, even though it is a formal principle. Returning to ordinary people, Wang Yangming said that human emotions start with living individuals. How can one progress from individual character to universality, how does one expand? Wang Yangming said everyone has a capacity to expand, a kind of potential. If you make this potential your indispensable technique, then you can become an accomplished person. The problem of the child about to fall into a well explains the closeness between humans. Man and man is not the same as man and animal. This argument indeed has an intrinsic consistency and is not mysticism. This is everyday common sense, it is not contradictory to scientific rationality. A scientist can be a qualified scientist even when he accepts the notion of Wang Yangming that everything is an integrated whole. Furthermore, if he applies that concept in his research he can become a great scientist.

4.3.5 From the Self-negation of Intuitive Knowledge to its Expansion

On the basis of what we understood above, we now consider the idea of the self-negation of intuitive knowledge. As a matter of fact, it was put forward in a situation of excessive criticism towards Confucian tradition, so it naturally contains a few mistakes. Thus I believe the expansion and deepening of intuitive knowledge could be a way of responding to scientific rationality. This is a question of epistemology. Moral rationality also has epistemic questions and scientific rationality, in the process of conducting scientific research, also encounters questions of fundamental commitment and value.

First we have to explain that intuitive knowledge is not completely moral rationality. For example aesthetics and science, when considering intuitive knowledge as an aspect of epistemology, can provide one interpretation of Wang Yangming's learning. Because Wang Yangming's learning starts out with the myriad of things as an integrated whole it is in many aspects epistemology. This is a question of embodied knowledge. Although it is not knowledge in the normal sense, embodied knowledge is also not knowledge in total violation to scientific rationality. There is

110 For this question, cf. the discussion between Mengzi and the Mohist Yizhi in *Mengzi* 3A.

a lot of space for development here. Michael Polanyi had the idea of personal knowledge.¹¹¹ Why is it called personal? This is very important. It is knowledge with the experience of existence. Yet this knowledge with the experience of existence is transparent, open to the public, it can also be discussed and challenged and of course can be proven or falsified. The idea of subjectivity is completely personal, it cannot be discussed, it cannot be mixed up with the moral practice and the responsible “private me”. Quite to the contrary, subjectivity of every person and objectivity as well as the world are in a close relationship to each other. Every individual is the center of a web of relationships. This center is the subject, but it is not the “private self” in a normal sense. It is not an egocentric self that can sever the ties to the external world. It is also not an individual that can only operate in the world of human relations, because it also has a transcendent aspect.

Many scholars are reflecting this question today. For example, the humanities, the natural sciences and social sciences have entered into an interactive dialogue. There are two standpoints. One is the belief that the methods of natural science, like quantification and so forth, are at the forefront of scientific research and directly influence social sciences. In social sciences, then, economics is influencing political science and sociology, which in turn immediately influence and irritate humanities. The other is concerned with the influence that humanities and anthropology exert on sociology and political science. In reality, the influence of anthropology on sociology and political science is already very strong. So do these thoughts ultimately have any influence on the people that are purely engaged in natural science? At the moment there is a trend towards a gradually rising influence of aesthetics on science. Take, for example, science and music: there are a number of scientists with very close relations to music. A lot of scientists are also musicians. Science itself is about differentiating. Formerly science was very much integrated. Physics was fundamental and mathematics even more so, after that came chemistry, biology and psychology. But today it is not that simple anymore. Materialism, decisionism, essentialism and fundamentalism are all subject to serious criticism. As a matter of fact, the space to rethink natural science from the point of humanities has already opened up.

In response to Western science, Mou Zongsan put forward the self-negation of intuitive knowledge. Is this the only way we can go today? Are there other possibilities? I believe there are other possibilities. Among the most important questions is the problem that Wang Yangming called “bringing about”. Bringing about intuitive knowledge is the starting point of intuitive knowledge itself. It is the realization of intuitive knowledge in everything. In the 1930s, Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan had a very fascinating dialogue. Feng Youlan said intuitive knowledge was a hy-

111 Polanyi 1958.

pothesis; Xiong Shili said intuitive knowledge was absolutely not a hypothesis and that even without the idealist Confucian school of Song and Ming, intuitive knowledge would have appeared.¹¹² Therefore I say that intuitive knowledge does not need to self-negate. For what reason is this so? This is not at all to say that there was no separation between scientific rationality and the knowledge of virtue. The knowledge of virtue is definitely not the knowledge of hearing and seeing, but the knowledge of virtue, no matter whether it is a structure or a function, can give a reference to scientific rationality. Of course a reference is no substitute, that would be absurd. I think there are a lot of possibilities for a further dialogue. It is not just a simple reference, in some places it might even become an inseparable component in the exploration of science.

To sum up, for the rebuilding of epistemology in the 21st century, the Confucian schools of *Qi*, *Li*, and *Xin* have definite value and deserve our further consideration.

4.4 The Question of Ethics: How to Act?

In what follows we will discuss two questions. One is, how to act, that is a question of ethics; the other is, what can one hope for. This is a question of theology or religious studies. Today the mainstream of sinology is comparing the virtues and ethics represented by Confucianism with the ethics developed in the West since Aristotle. The basic point of view is: Virtues and ethics as well as habits have to undergo a process of internalization before they can become a part of life. This thought is close to Xunzi but is also acceptable from Mengzi's position.

4.4.1 Study and Caring

First of all there has to be a process of learning. Learning how to conduct oneself as a human is a never ending process and it is an absolutely dynamic process. Confucius is an obvious example, he was "tireless in learning and untiring in teaching". To be "fond of learning," these words have a special usage in the *Lunyu*. In the *Lunyu*, only two people are called to be "fond of learning," one is Yan Hui, one is Confucius himself. He believes that "in a hamlet of ten families, there may be found one as honorable and sincere as I am, but none who is so fond of learning."¹¹³ His autobiography can be called the shortest "spiritual" biography in the world: "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without

112 Mou Zongsan recorded this dispute in Mou 1989, ch. 5: 客觀的悲情。

113 *Lunyu*, 5: 十室之邑，必有忠信如丘者焉，不如丘之好學也。

transgressing what was right.”¹¹⁴ It is all a process of learning. My judgment is this: These are not simply virtue ethics but also care ethics. What Wang Yangming said to be an integrated whole of the myriad of things is a good example. His hope is not distinction or knowledge but a sort of loving care. His loving concern is not only for man, but also includes all things. If said in modern language it is a new understanding of the relation between man and earth. The relation between man and earth needs to be newly considered. This question is being much discussed these days. The Earth Charter stated that “the existence of all life mutually depends on each other” and there needs to be “respect and concern for the integration of life”.¹¹⁵ You have to regard it as living creature and not as a dead material world.

4.4.2 Dialogue Ethics

Additionally, something I want to further expound on is that Confucian ethics are a kind of dialogue ethics, ethics that reflect the spirit of dialogue. Normally dialogue means Socrates’ dialogue. But from a Confucian point of view that is not yet dialogue. Because Socrates acts as the teacher it is already presupposed that he has a very clear understanding of the truth. He can use a method of pointing out the falseness of common views and step by step prove that the point of view of his student is incorrect and far from the truth and the essence. This way it is an absolute essentialism. As Strauss pointed out, only a handful of people can reach such a level. This kind of “dialogue” has profound implications. Western philosophy entirely follows this sort of thinking. Comparatively speaking, Chinese philosophy has a deficit in this aspect. It does not have such a process of thought differentiation in a strict sense, persisting step by step without letting anything be overlooked.

So why is Confucianism a civilization of dialogue? Because it stresses “close teachers and sincere friends,”¹¹⁶ so teacher and student are persistent. Xunzi also stresses “Eminent teachers and close friends”.¹¹⁷ This is interaction. In this interaction there can be fallibility, that is the possibility of making a mistake. The mistakes of the teacher might be plenty, even big. Therefore the student can question the teacher. The question that needs answering is: What kind of dialogue is Confucian

114 *Lunyu* 2: 子曰：“吾十有五而志於學，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳順，七十而從心所欲，不逾矩。”

115 See also: “地球宪章倡议”：《地球宪章》。Proposition of an Earth Charter: “Earth Charter”.

116 *Liji*, “Xueji”: 古之教者，家有塾，黨有庠，術有序，國有學。比年入學，中年考校。一年視離經辨志，三年視敬業樂群，五年視博習親師，七年視論學取友，謂之小成；九年知類通達，強立而不反，謂之大成。夫然後足以化民易俗，近者說服，而遠者懷之，此大學之道也。

117 *Xunzi*, 2: 故君子隆師而親友，以致惡其賊。好善無厭，受諫而能誠，雖欲無進，得乎哉！

dialogue? On the surface the *Lunyu* manifests that what the teacher says counts. When it reads “Confucius said,” that is the end of the discussion. But behind that sentence there is a deep mutual understanding. If Confucius and his pupils would not be in an association of trust, it would be similar to Jesus and his twelve apostles and it would be hard to understand the meaning behind every sentence. The formation of a point of view often undergoes a long period of conversation, of course including dialogue. Richard Rorty thinks that philosophy exists for the sake of edifying conversation;¹¹⁸ that is conversation of philosophical meaning; a new idea is something that appears like a shining ray of wisdom during a conversation. This is the job of philosophy. At the beginning of the dialogue there has to be tolerance, and there has to be recognition of the other side. The pupil is one side and the teacher is also one side. But one should not regard the student as a completely external other and one should not dispel his particularity. If his particularity were dispelled, this process would be a pattern of reduction. Confucianism is not like that. If we do not pay attention to other elements, for example the living world in every shade and description, but only pay attention to our meditation, then your ability to seek the truth cannot leave the embodied knowledge contained in intuitive knowledge.

4.4.3 The Highest Value

In Confucian ethics there are a number of most fundamental beliefs. One of them is: The world of everyday life has an intrinsic value. We cannot cast everyday life aside and seek for a higher truth. One can even say the highest value and meaning can be reflected in everyday life. This is different from Greek philosophy. From its point of view, how can a profound idea develop from the “rituals” of everyday life? Greek philosophy negates customs from the beginning on and dispels of the effectiveness and reasonability of conventions. But of course, reason can through practice become a convention. However, the basic view of Confucianism is: If the customs are abandoned then it is not possible to face the living world. But basic customs do not at all hamper the possibility and necessity to criticize and surpass these basic customs. Rites are also a form of creativity. “To transmit without creating”¹¹⁹ can be understood as hermeneutic creativity. “The rites of the Xia, of the Yin and of the Zhou all varied to some extent.”¹²⁰ *Lunyu*, chapter 10, talks about a lot of old rites. Some Confucius accepts, others he rejects. He makes an existential choice. Therefore rites are not just customs. But they have a close relation to habits. In other

118 See also Rorty 1981.

119 *Lunyu* 7: 子曰：“述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭。”

120 *Lunyu* 2: 子張問：“十世可知也？”子曰：“殷因於夏禮，所損益，可知也；周因於殷禮，所損益，可知也；其或繼周者，雖百世可知也。”

words, rites that have been preserved over a long period of time must have a value. There is no need to thoroughly renounce them. Confucius is opposed to starting over anew without any sense of history.

In this, Confucianism differs from other traditions. Buddhism is a new realm founded by Shakyamuni, Jesus Christ founded a new realm, and Muhammad also founded a new realm. Their new realms were unprecedented. Confucius also founded a new realm, but his new realm included large parts of the traditional teachings of people like Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu. He believed he himself could not reach the moral conduct and achievement of these people. Moreover, he believed he was only a translator, an intermediary. The characteristic of Confucianism to experience the real world meant that Confucian ethics had to be tied closely to the existing world. This is very unique. However, Confucianist ethics are not at all a product of secular humanism. Actually Confucius was loyally devoted to the spirit of tradition that brought into play great creative power.

4.5 The Theological Question: What Can be Hoped for?

4.5.1 Reflection and Criticism of Enlightenment

Concerning the question of hope, I think the most influential viewpoint is, to further develop science. This has a lot to do with Jürgen Habermas' notion of Enlightenment as an unfinished project. Although he has criticized the Enlightenment mentality, for example post-modernism and structuralism, he hopes to broaden the idea of Enlightenment. Besides, even science is criticized by environmentalism, ecology needs to be sorted out by science and technology. That is to say, even though science and technology are a cause of ecological problems, in many respects this problem must be solved through science and technology. Moreover, the value of democratic politics, market economy and civil society is apparent. However, it is not enough to solve the puzzle the 21st century is trapped in by expressing and putting the idea of Enlightenment to full use.

The reason is that there are several sides which have not been taken into account. The most obvious blind spots are: no sufficient attention has been given to nature, and the understanding of the spiritual aspect of human beings is insufficient. To give an example, one concept which can reflect the Enlightenment mentality is that of the *homo economicus*, and there are very sophisticated values behind this concept such as freedom, rationality, human rights, value of law and order and the value of dignity. These values are embodied in the concept of the *homo economicus*, representative of market economy. However, there are also a lot of values which are not given attention, such as the value of justice, responsibility, sympathy and the harmony of the society. These values are not reflected in the cultural and psychological structure of the *homo economicus*. Therefore, we should make some progress on the

basis of freedom, rationality, human rights, law and order and personal dignity. Hans Küng mentioned the concept of “universal ethics” which includes values mentioned before which are not covered by “individual economy”. Those values are the hope of human beings.¹²¹ There will hardly be cultures with peace or harmony in a society without universal ethics.

I consider the reflection and criticism of Enlightenment a procedure but not a hope. It is a way of looking at how we face predicaments from the perspective of genetics. However, analyzing from another viewpoint, we all benefit from Enlightenment: we would not be who we are without Enlightenment. I think there are two sides of Enlightenment. Somehow, some scholars, for example Seyyed Hossein Nasr specializing on Islam, negate Enlightenment drastically for the reason that there are conflicts between modernism and perennial philosophy. This is to say, if philosophy does not pursue eternal values or, like modernism and post-modernism, holds that essentialism is out-dated, then there is a problem.¹²² Philosophy aims at Truth with a capital T, and this has to be in correspondence with the idea of God and Allah. One example: the school motto of Harvard used to be VERITAS, and this means Truth, however, it is a lowercase and pluralized truth. Besides, there are three books representing the spirit of education of Sir Harvard among which two are open and the remaining one is closed. The open ones represent knowledge accessible with reason and study, while the closed one stands for the summit of wisdom and even the spiritual world above which is out of the reach of reason.

Let's have a look at original sin in Christianity. It is not like what we normally think of it. The theory of original sin believes that we commit sins because there is an unbridgeable gap between human beings and God. This is a disunion, so we have to return to God. There will only be salvation from the gap with God's mercy and love. Original sin exists in our human nature, and in fact, this is the division from God. Catholics have come up with a solution, which is the church, and the regular way of being saved was through the church. During reformation, Martin Luther believed one could be saved by faith. But a lot of aspects remain confusing to us, and we can only depend on the leap of faith. We have to accept this even in the face of unimaginable cruelty of it, and this leads us to the problem of theodicy.

In fact, Enlightenment spread the light of human wisdom. We can put it this way: Enlightenment is the most influential ideology of human history, but there are also some major shortcomings to it, for it is a kind of secular humanism. Western secular humanism arose from criticism of Christianity. A line of thought especially represented by Marxism maintains that the development of society proceeds in an irreversible manner, namely the five ways of production. Comte agrees with

121 Küng 1998.

122 Nasr 2007.

this, and he thinks that theology, metaphysics and science are the three stages of human beings. Both theories represent the same line of thought.

Secular humanism must be anthropocentrism, but it is different from the kind of anthropocentrism of Christianity. Christianity is anthropocentric, because according to Christian belief, man was created from the image of God. However, in secular humanism, humans have no relation to God, and the concept of humanity is seen from the perspective of the death of God. Like Engels mentioned, the reason human beings can make progress is that men can use tools and labor. Labor is dependent on human beings but not on God. The values we have created come from the fact that man, not just as a whole, can compete with Heaven, change Heaven, create a new environment and rule the world with energy. With this line of thought, I think both sides work together, because the value of transcendence – no matter whether transcendent or immanent – is being totally cut off by the death of God. It has become central and implies a totally different attitude towards nature. Because men can rule Heaven, the spiritual world has vanished and only the material world remains. Nature has become purely material.

As we have discussed above, the well-known human ecologist Thomas Berry, asking how to deal with nature, comes up with the idea that “the universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.”¹²³ This means to regard the universe as a group and society which is indivisible from our minds and lives which are subject to each other rather than as a collection of external things that we can control and rule. Simply put, this is to say that the humane regards the universe as an integrated whole. I have already given some examples showing that the infinity of human mind completely derives from the experience of daily life rather than being a mystic experience. There is nothing in the outside world which we do not care about in our minds. This is in correspondence with the saying of the members of Donglin society that “the sound of wind, the sound of rain, the sound of reading, everything enters one’s ear. [...]”¹²⁴ This may be called concerned consciousness.

Xu Fuguan thinks that concerned consciousness is the core value of ancient Chinese philosophy. This “concern” means “concern for the dynasty and the people,” but is has a deeper meaning. Luo Jinxi says that Confucius sighed before he passed away¹²⁵ and Tang Junyi quotes from Liang Qichao that “just like the world is endless, so are people’s wishes”.¹²⁶ One can say that as a species, human beings will come to an end. Those lifeless beings, including viruses and cockroaches, may live on, but not necessarily mankind, because our ability to adapt to the environ-

123 Berry 2006, p.96.

124 Cf. the *duilian* by the Donglin society’s leader Gu Xiancheng: 風聲雨聲讀書聲，聲聲入耳；家事國事天下事，事事關心。

125 Luo Jinxi, *Xu tan Zhi Quan* 1.

126 Tang 1977, preface.

ment is limited. Of course, we all wish to continue our lives. Taken a step further, “the world is limited, but our will is not,” means that there is an end to the universe, but not to our will. This will originates from concerned consciousness. This is different from the mercy of Buddhism. Buddhism is universal while Confucianism is humane. This line of thought has stages, but because there is absolutely no limitation to its stages, it cannot be anthropocentrism. And if it is not anthropocentrism, it can neither be biologism because it includes lifeless matter.¹²⁷ This is fundamentally different from “noneness” of Taoism and “emptiness” of Buddhism, but it is so inclusive that it covers every single aspect.

4.5.2 Dialogue Between Core Values of the East and the West

Another point is, Feng Qi once mentioned that “the ancient and contemporary battle of China and the West” is the topic of modern China. One of the biggest issues since the May Fourth Movement is the comparison between the negative traditional Chinese culture, especially the dregs of Confucianism, and the essential values of the West. That is why we lack self-confidence and feel there is nothing we can do to change that, and also that contemporary China at her earlier stage could do nothing but to learn from the West. However, I think the situation is quite different now. The values mentioned earlier, for example the Confucian virtues of mercy, justice, ritual, wisdom and sincerity, can enter into a dialogue with the core values of freedom, reason, law and order, human rights and personal dignity. Actually there can be a dialogue of the actual reflection of the core values in the society such as the dialogue on human rights. What is more important: political rights or economic rights?

By “dialogue of core values,” I mean that philosophical researchers like us should discuss the issues of freedom and equality, freedom and justice and rights and responsibilities in a deeper sense. Take responsibilities as an example. One of my basic viewpoints is that rights of litigation and protest for ordinary people should be developed from and designed after the basic responsibilities of the most privileged, and that ordinary people could have the right of making the claim to the privileged. It is more meaningful to the well-being of the society to build a society on this basis rather than on absolutely isolated personal rights. Suppose we are all given freedom and human rights, a billionaire need not care about a homeless or feel responsibility for this person, because he has nothing to do with this person. Why is there no responsibility? Because when one centers on individuality, what one is willing to do is altruism, and it derives from charity. There can be different kinds of charity, for example compulsory charity through taxes. However, I am not responsible for any-

127 Cf. *Zhongyong* 12: 天地之大也，人猶有所憾。故君子語大，天下莫能載焉；語小，天下莫能破焉。

thing, because as a *homo economicus*, do I have any responsibilities? Not really as far as I do not break any laws. I am successful because of good luck and my capability of doing things. But I have no duty for a wider sense of society. The situation is similar when it comes to reason and sympathy.

I hope to criticize and respond to the values of Enlightenment from the perspective of Confucianism. There can be some discussion on the contextual difference between China and the West. One example is that some values are not well practiced or brought to a certain level in the Chinese context. Being misplaced in time and space, many values of ours are not really practiced. And this brings up a question: We tend to absorb other values under the guideline of Confucianism; so will the promotion of Confucian values veil those values that other contexts of modernity represent? This is an issue of general concern and also an important topic in dialogue. I think what's more serious is the misplacement of levels different from time and space. Generally speaking, Confucianism is called an "Asian value" in the West and both Western and Eastern scholars agree that this saying is very one-sided. Let's take human rights as an example. It is an extremely powerful central value and the UNESCO, North America and the EU all perceive it as the most convincing universal value. However, Confucian values like loyalty, righteousness and team spirit, once politicized, can turn into slogans of authoritarianism carrying a lot of negative dimensions. A harmonious society can stand for "uniformity without harmony". Such criticism is not totally unpersuasive.

4.5.3 Faith in the Eyes of Confucianism

Let's go deeper into the analysis of the questions we studied earlier. One of the goals of Kant is to find some place for belief. He starts with rational analysis and ends up on the level of belief. He specifically emphasizes respect, which is a common value in his eyes. He holds two viewpoints, one has already been accomplished in the first criticism and the other has not been accomplished even in the third criticism. He also has three most important hypotheses, which are free will, eternal spirit and the existence of God. The problem of the relation between the two is very interesting and Kant has not sorted it out yet. After Kant, the well-known Danish thinker Søren Kierkegaard came up with an explanation. He gave a key example, which is the myth of Abraham, whom God ordered to sacrifice Isaac.¹²⁸ From a rational point of view, God's order is unbelievably ridiculous. Abraham gets a son as an aged man and is chosen to be the ancestor of his people. But now God orders him to sacrifice his only son for Him. Yet Abraham accepts God's will without a second thought no matter how odd and unreasonable it appears to be. Søren Kierkegaard

128 Cf. "Genesis" 22.

believes that this is precisely because the demand is so odd that Abraham could become the knight of faith.¹²⁹

For Confucian tradition, this is not understandable. Abraham was neither humane nor filial or wise, it was simply blind faith. Kant could not accept this idea either. Even if this is God's will, simply because of freedom, this would be totally impossible. In Hebrew tradition, this is also an issue, even in Judaism today, it still remains an unavoidable question which cannot be answered. For the truth is: No matter how wise human beings may be, they still cannot understand God. The most outstanding example is Job, who is and has always been a good man and gives no occasion for criticism in the world of the living. However, he has a very painful and unlucky life and he keeps blaming God for it. At last Job asks, what do you want me to do? What else do you want me to do?¹³⁰ This is a tragic story in Judaism and a complicated aspect of Jewish thought. Maybe a genius can only be created by this kind of misery and complication. People like Marx, Freud and Einstein all had very complicated minds. We also find this kind of moral struggle in *Mengzi*, the relationship of Shun and his stubborn and stupid father Gu Sou. This is tragic in a Chinese kind of way. If Shun, as a king, chooses the most upright Gao Yao as a judge, when Shun's father Gu Sou commits murder, how would he handle this? The solution *Mengzi* gives is this: a judge's job is to charge the murderer, and as a filial son, Shun should protect his father and help him escape to the sea shore.¹³¹

Another point of view is: our hope is based on the mercy and blessing of God. I do not think that Kant agrees with it. We can ask one most basic question: can we fulfill our hope by fighting for it, or is there nothing we can do about it? In the latter case, our hope is based on our faith in God, and if God is almighty, the suffering you are going through must be borne. There are less and less Christians who agree with this idea. Because of human will, human beings have already become a positive element in shaping evolution. There are two meanings to this: Firstly, humankind only comes into being through evolution, this is in accordance with the ideology which Xunzi mentioned above: There is Qi in everything and that is why plants have lives, animals can feel and human beings have righteousness. All these gradually appear through evolution. Secondly, now human beings have become an active power in evolution, but most of the active power is negative, and with respect to our hopes, it is totally negative. This is precisely because human beings have gradually become not only destroyers of humans themselves, but also destroyers of nature. The best example are weapons of mass destruction. Until today, we still own

129 Cf. Kierkegaard 2006.

130 Cf. "Book of Job".

131 *Mengzi* 7A: 桃應問曰：“舜為天子，皋陶為士，瞽瞍殺人，則如之何？”孟子曰：“執之而已矣。”“然則舜不禁與？”曰：“夫舜惡得而禁之？夫有所受之也。”“然則舜如之何？”曰：“舜視棄天下，猶棄敝屣也。竊負而逃，遵海濱而處，終身欣然，樂而忘天下。”

weapons of destruction which can destroy the earth tens of times, nor is the amount being reduced. This is hardly evidence of human rationality.

Human beings can change from being co-creators to being dictatorial destroyers, and in this they differ from Heaven. Why is that so? Because Heaven is innately good, it produces and reproduces, it moves unceasingly, this is its characteristic. Therefore in the Chinese tradition, evil does not come with ontology, and it does not exist independently of man. In the Bible, Paul commits a sin and claims that he did not do it but the devil living in his heart.¹³² The nestor of the Kyoto school, Nishitani Keiji, once made a Zen *ko'an* out of this example, asking the question: Who is the speaker? Is it Paul who committed evil? Is it the spirit of Paul? Or is it Paul who has amended his fault? This is a tough question for the Bible to answer. But such a problem cannot appear in Confucianism. This is to say that evil does not exist independently of the care for the human self. Confucius gives his answer to this: "They sought benevolence, and they got it," "I wish to be benevolent, and lo! Benevolence is at hand," and Mengzi also has a perfect solution to this by saying "to seek for the lost mind".¹³³

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