NEWSLETTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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From the Editor

This issue of the Newsletter on International Cooperation includes several articles that have been written for conferences in the past year, some sponsored or cosponsored by the APA's Committee on International Cooperation: [1] continuing our informal series of articles dealing with various issues in contemporary Islamic philosophy and history, we publish an article by Professor Nazeem Goolam, which he presented at the Twenty-Second World Congress of Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy in Granada, Spain, in May 2005; [2] two articles from a session on “Current Topics in Portuguese Philosophy” at the APA Eastern Division meeting in New York City in December 2005 are also published herein; and, finally, [3] a session at this same conference on “Philosophical Studies in China” is published here in its entirety.

Articles

Understanding Jihad in Islam
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1. Introduction and Meaning of “Jihad”

O you who believe, what is
The matter with you? that
When you are asked to go
Forth in the Cause of Allah
You cling heavily to the earth
Do you prefer the life of this world
To the Hereafter? But little is
The comfort of this life as compared
With the Hereafter...

Unless you go forth
He will punish you
With a grievous penalty
And put others in your place
But Him you would not harm
In the least. For Allah
Hath power over all things.¹

Where is the sense of honour of the Muslims, the pride of the believers, the zeal of the faithful?...They have become negligent and lazy...If, God forbid, Islam should draw rein, obscure her splendour, blunt her sword, there would be no one, East or West, far or near, who would blaze with zeal for God’s religion or choose to come to the aid of truth against error. This is the moment to cast off lethargy, to summon from far and near all those men who have blood in their veins...God-willing, the unbelievers shall perish and the faithful have a sure deliverance.²

These were the words of Salahuddin’s cry for jihad against the united might of Europe in 1191.

The word jihad is derived from the Arabic word al-jahd, meaning a struggle, or striving. It does not necessarily mean war or resorting to the use of the sword and the shedding of blood. The word jihad includes a striving, undergoing hardship and forbearance in great difficulty, while standing firm against one’s enemies. The actual words for war in Arabic are al-harb and al-qital.³

Jihad denotes the exertion of one’s power in the path of Allah and encompasses the struggle against evil in whatever form or shape it may arise. Al-Kasani, in his work, Bada’i al-Sana’i, states that in terms of the Shari’ah the word jihad is used in expending ability and power in struggling in the path of Allah by means of life, property, words, and other means.¹ In the same vein, the great Pakistani scholar Mawlana Abu’l A’la Mawdudi explained that jihad “was not war, but a struggle—a struggle not in the name of God but along the path set by God.”⁵

In Islam, the primary purpose of the human being on earth is to fulfill his or her duty to Allah, the Supreme Being, to strive and struggle in the enjoining of good (ma’aruf) and the forbidding of evil (munkar). No doubt, then, that the word jihad has been described as the most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam.⁶ Malik states that the word jihad, broadly speaking, means “to strive,” “to struggle,” or “to further the Divine Cause or Purpose.”⁷ Although different Muslim scholars have distinguished various types of jihad,⁸ wars of public interest, and wars against polytheists and apostates, one can struggle or strive to further Allah’s purpose primarily through four types of jihad, namely:

(1) that of the heart (faith);
(2) that of the tongue (good speech);
(3) that of the hand (good works), and
(4) that of the sword (jihad or holy war).⁹

The first three categories comprise what has been termed the “greater jihad,” that is, the struggle to purify oneself and to submit fully to Allah. The fourth category refers to the “lesser jihad,” or warfare. And it is this “lesser jihad” with which this paper is concerned.
2. The Qur’an and Ahadith on Jihad

The Qur’anic verses (ayah) on jihad were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) in Medina because the enemies of Islam refused to leave the Muslims at peace notwithstanding the fact that the Prophet and his followers had migrated thereto. In such conditions, it was imperative to defend the cause of Islam and the recently established capital of the Islamic state. According to Doi, the first verse (ayah) revealed concerning jihad was the following:

To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged, and verily Allah is Most Powerful for their aid.10

Johnson adds that the warrant for jihad in the sense of defensive warfare or military action can be traced to the permission given to the first Muslims in Medina to fight back against those who broke their solemn pledges. Allah speaks:

Will you not fight against them who violated their oaths, plotted to drive out the Messenger and took the initiative by first attacking you Do you fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom you should more justly fear If you believe.11

The treatment to be meted out to such unbelievers is very clear. Again, Allah speaks:

If they withdraw not from you, and do not offer you (guarantees of) peace and do not restrain their hands Seize them and slay them Wherever you come across them In their case We have provided you with Clear authority against them.12

But perhaps the most oft-quoted Qur’anic verses in respect of jihad are the following:

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, But do not transgress limits For Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever you find them And drive them out from where they have driven you out. For tumult and oppression are Worse than slaughter... Fight them until God’s religion Reigns supreme But if they cease God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.13

In his commentary on verse 190, Yusuf Ali states that war is permissible in self-defense and within well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigor, not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah.14 Strict limits must not be transgressed, thus, women, children, the old, and the infirm should not be harmed, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms.15

Commenting on these verses, Yusuf Ali states that although in general it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, good will, mutual understanding, and good faith, it will not acquiesce in wrongdoing, and its men will hold their lives as cheap in defense of honor, justice, and the religion that they hold sacred. He adds:

Their ideal is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, just as is exemplified in the life of the Prophet. They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty and a constant striving by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness. They know that war is an evil, but they will not flinch from it if their honour demands it and a righteous Imam (such as Muhammad was per excellence) commands it, for then they know that they are not serving carnal ends.16

Sayyed Qutb,17 too, after examining the theory of war and peace in Islamic international law, concludes that peace is the rule while war is the exception. Qutb argues that war should only be resorted to in order to achieve one of the following four objectives:

(i) to uphold the rule of Allah on earth, so that the complete submission of human beings would be to Him exclusively;
(ii) to eliminate oppression, extortion, and injustice by instituting the word of Allah;
(iii) to achieve the human values that are considered by Allah to underlie the purpose of life;
(iv) to secure people against terror, coercion, and injury.18

Thus, while some may regard jihad as the most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam, perhaps the word salaam (peace) is the most glorious word in Islam’s vocabulary. The striving and struggling is thus for the sole purpose of attaining a truly just social order based on Islamic law and precepts. Thus, in Islamic legal theory, as Majid Khadduri argues, jihad is a temporary legal device designed to achieve the ideal Islamic public order and to secure justice and equality for all people.19

Notwithstanding the fact that peace is the rule and war is the exception in Islamic legal theory, the Qur’an condones offensive military action in certain circumstances. Allah declares:

And fight them until there is no more Tumult and oppression And there prevails justice and faith In Allah everywhere But if they cease, indeed Allah Doth see all that they do. If they refuse, be sure That Allah is your Protector The Best to Protect and the Best to Help.20

As far as the ahadith is concerned, the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) had the following, inter alia, to say on jihad:

He who dies without having gone or thought of going out for jihad will be guilty of hypocrisy. (narrated by Abu Huraira)21

The one who fights so that Allah’s Word becomes superior is striving in Allah’s Path. (narrated by Abu Musa Al-Ash‘ari)22

Use your property, yourselves, and your tongues in striving against the polytheists. (narrated by Anas)23

The last-mentioned hadith is, in fact, a confirmation of the following Qur’anic verse:
Say, if it be that your fathers, your sons
Your brothers, your mates or your kindred
The wealth that you have gained
The commerce in which you fear a decline
Or the dwellings in which you delight
Are dearer to you than Allah
Or His Messenger, or the
Striving in His Cause—then
Wait until Allah brings about
His Decision; and Allah
Guides not the rebellious.24

3. The Status of Jihad

The status and spiritual rank of those who strive and fight in the Cause of Allah is such that Allah has made special mention of them and their status in the Qur’an. He declares:

Not equal are those believers who sit (at home)
And receive no hurt, and those who strive
And fight in the cause of Allah
With their goods and their persons
Allah hath granted a grade higher
To those who strive and fight
With their goods and their persons
Than to those who sit (at home)
Unto all in faith
Hath Allah promised good
But to those who strive and fight
Hath he distinguished
Above those who sit (at home)
By a special reward.25

4. The Doctrine of Jihad in Shaybani’s Siyar

The great Muslim jurist Al-Shaybani, who wrote in the eighth century of the Christian era, wrote a major work entitled Kitab al-Siyar al-Kabir. This was the first major work of its kind on the law of nations and international law and written 850 years before the so-called father of international law, the Dutchman Hugo de Groot, wrote his famous De iure Belli ac Pacis (On the Law of War and Peace).

The term siyar literally refers to the conduct of the state in its relationship with other communities—thus its translation as the “law of nations.”26 Shaybani’s first book on the subject, Kitab al-Siyar al-Saghir, was dictated to him by Abu Yusuf and embodied the views of Abu Hanifa. This work is thus known as the Siyar of Abu Hanifa. However, it was Shaybani’s Kitab al-Siyar al-Kabir that was his magnum opus.

Shaybani accepts the juridical division of the world into the dar-al-Islam (abode of peace) and the dar-al-harb (abode of war), as well as the idea that a perpetual state of war exists between the two. He argued that although any person entering the dar-al-Islam from the dar-al-harb may be killed, in practice, peaceful forms of interaction between the two territories are possible. Since the political territories of the dar-al-harb are not recognized as legitimate, temporary peace treaties—a truce or armistice—may be concluded with them to facilitate necessary interchanges (for example, commerce) between the two territories. Furthermore, harbis were to be admitted into the dar-al-Islam if it was advantageous to the latter.27 Shaybani paid particular attention to rules that set out the peaceful interaction between the two territories.

In respect of warfare or military action between the two territories, Shaybani followed the example of his teacher, Abu Hanifa, arguing that the unbelievers should not be attacked by Muslims simply on account of their lack of faith; they should be attacked only if they show themselves to be a hostile threat. His interpretation of the Qur’anic verse 2:190 is that only defensive jihad against the harbis is permissible. Shaybani’s conception of jihad is thus fundamentally one of defensive war for the faith.

5. The Concept of Jihad in Farabi’s Aphorisms

Al-Farabi was born more than a century after Shaybani and lived at a time when the juridistic tradition on jihad was well established. Johnson states that he also lived at a time when the spread of Islam had made the borders between the dar-al-Islam and the dar-al-harb relatively distant from the seat of the caliphate in Baghdad.28 Farabi’s concern, therefore, was not with the warfare that might occur on these borders but with the use of force that might be necessary for virtuous rulers of cities within the Islamic world. Thus, Farabi’s concept of warfare differed in certain important respects from that of jihad as defined by Shaybani and the earlier jurists.

In his Aphorisms Farabi lists eleven types of war (harb) that may occur and the ends for which they are waged and further distinguishes between just and unjust war. The following are some of his reasons for a just war:

(i) defense;
(ii) acquiring a good the city deserves;
(iii) reforming others;
(iv) retaking what is rightfully the city’s but has been taken from it;
(v) to punish those who have committed some crime; and
(vi) warfare against enemies of the city where their survival would be harmful to the city.

Each of these six types of war serve one of two purposes: acquiring some good for the city and establishing justice.

Farabi’s remaining types of war represent reasons for unjust warfare. These are:

(i) war for the sake of the ruler’s increased honor or aggrandisement;
(ii) pure conquest;
(iii) venting of rage or achieving some other pleasure through victory; and
(iv) overreaction to an injustice committed by others.29

These, then, were the reasons put forth by Shaybani and Farabi for engaging in just war. These are Islam’s reasons for a ius trium bellorum or a ius ad bellum. Johnson defines the ius trium bellorum concept as understood in the West as follows:

The ius ad bellum, as traditionally defined, requires a right authority to initiate force, a justifying cause, a right intention toward the enemy (hating the evil but not the enemy as persons), an overall calculation that the good brought about by this action will outweigh the evil that would result from failing to act, a situation of last resort, a calculation that there is reasonable hope of success in achieving the ends sought, and an overall purpose of restoring peace.30

From a comparative perspective it is interesting to have a brief look, too, at the medieval Christian debate concerning just cause for war and, more generally, at just war in western legal discourse.

6. Just Cause for War in Western Legal Thinking and Christian Thinking

Since the time of Aristotle, the distinction between just and unjust war has been made and it has been argued that war should be waged only for the sake of achieving peace.

Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas argued that the true reason for making war is “to obtain earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods.”31 Furthermore, St. Augustine...
argues that those who are attacked should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some wrong they have done. In his own words:

A just war is wont to be described as one that avenges wrongs, when a nation or state has to be punished for refusing to make make amends for the wrongs inflicted by its subjects, or to restore what it has seized unjustly.34

Just as in Islam, the purpose of war is the attainment of peace. Thus, Augustine adds:

We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war in order that we may have peace. Be peaceful, therefore, in warring, so that you may vanquish those whom you war against and bring them to the prosperity of peace.35

The only fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity is that in Islam the peace sought to be attained is for the Cause of the Ultimate Truth, based as it is on God’s Final Revelation to the human race. And, one may ask, is this not the Ultimate Peace?

Hugo de Groot, based on his secularized approach to the issue, listed three iustae causae for war. These were:

(i) self-defense; 
(ii) recovery of property; and 
(iii) inflicting of punishment.36

In the past century the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and the UN Charter of 1945 replaced the concept of just war with that of legal warfare, while the concept of war was replaced by “the threat or use of force.” Peace and security also became more prominent than justice.37

7. Jihad as Just War

Based on what has been stated in this paper, it is abundantly manifest that neither Islam nor any Muslim jurist has ever justified war for any worldly purpose such as territorial expansion, imposing their religion on unbelievers, or supporting a particular social regime. Zawati writes:

The classical sources38 of Islamic legal theory maintain that all kinds of warfare are outlawed except the jihad, which is an exceptional war waged by Muslims to defend the freedom of religious belief for all humanity and constitutes a deterrent against aggression, injustice and corruption.39

8. Jihad and Resistance to Colonialism

The classical doctrine of jihad has inspired many movements that have waged armed struggles against western colonial domination. With the rise of western capitalism in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, most Muslim peoples in various parts of the world were subjected to western colonial rule. Various economic, social, and political developments caused the Muslim populations to revolt against western domination.40 The following are instances of such struggle and revolt:

(i) Muslim resistance against British rule in India; 
(ii) Algerian resistance against French colonialism; 
(iii) The Mahdist movement in Sudan; 
(iv) Egyptian resistance against the British occupation of Egypt; 
(v) Sanusi resistance against Italian colonialism in Libya; 
(vi) The Ottoman jihad declaration of 1914; and 
(vii) Resistance to British colonialism and, now, Zionism, in Palestine.41

It is, perhaps, the liberation of Jerusalem as part of Islam’s Holy Land that is at the center of the battlefield of jihad today. Of course, the liberation of the Holy Land is a command of Allah and is obligatory upon all Muslims.

This paper will not go into any further detail as regards jihad during the era of colonialism. 9. Jihad Today against Globalization and Western Domination

There can be little doubt that Muslims worldwide believe that global conditions require a jihad today. In a world dominated by materialism and consumerism, a world drowning in western culture and values, Muslims are being robbed of their culture and their options of being governed according to their own choice and living in a more just society and world.42

Furthermore, the present declaration by the United States and its allies of a “war against terror” is seen by Muslims—and others—as nothing less than a “war against Islam.” In this climate, it is not difficult to understand the call for a global jihad.

In the present global climate there is, I would argue, no need for an offensive jihad. In the context of the declaration of “war against Islam” it is merely a defensive jihad that is called for. There can be no question that the jihad is just and justified. The only possible point of debate may be on the means employed. But who is following the rules? In a world in which there seem no longer to be any rules of international law or, more correctly stated, where such rules are not observed by the very people who drafted them, it would seem that no one is following them.

In 2002, Judge Richard Goldstone, the former chief prosecutor for UN war crimes tribunals, accused the United States of violating international law in its antiterror campaign. He stated that the Bush government was picking and choosing which international agreements it would honor while expecting the rest of the world to abide by all of them and said that he feared that the September 11, 2001, attacks would mark the start of a decade of U.S. regression in respect of international law. It is no wonder, then, that the United States opposed the creation of the International Criminal Court.

As regards Bush’s then-promised action against Iraq with or without UN approval, Goldstone said: “What will happen one day when somebody does it back to them?” Goldstone added that such violations could undermine the Geneva Convention’s principle of reciprocity, which may be summed up as “you treat my people decently and I will treat your people decently.” Goldstone also referred to the hundreds of prisoners of war taken from Afghanistan and held by the United States without trial in Guantanamo Bay. Of course, their rights in terms of the Geneva Convention were clearly violated by the United States. This is a good opportunity for the United States to go back to basics as far as international law and international humanitarian law is concerned. In this regard Shaybani’s Siyar on the treatment of prisoners in times of war would be a good starting point.

Since Goldstone’s statements things have only gotten worse. The crimes against humanity are becoming war crimes. One thinks of the recent treatment of prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq last year and last November’s horrific scenes in a mosque in Fallujah. I can couch it in no other terms than this: when a non-Muslim enters a masjid with his shoes on, uses vulgar language in this holy place, and then takes the blood of an unarmed Muslim, can there be any further degradation not only of Islam but of human dignity? Even they are fully aware
that the rules of engagement allow the use of force only when
faced with a hostile act, intent, or threat. In this environment
does it really matter, then, what form the *jihad* takes, what
means are employed?

It is worth bearing in mind that the stated purposes of
the United Nations are to develop friendly relations among nations
based on respect of the principle of equal rights and self-
determination of peoples, to achieve international cooperation,
and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and
fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex,
language, or religion. The United States clearly is not interested
in any of these purposes.

It does begin to seem that the only way forward is through
a strict interpretation of the verses on fighting in the *Qur’an*.
It seems that the only way forward is to “seize them and slay
them wherever you find them.” And since the *Qur’an* is full of
repetition for the sole purpose of emphasizing important issues,
two of these verses should be repeated here. First:

If they draw not from you, and do not offer you
(guidances of) peace and do not restrain their
hands
Seize and slay them
Wherever you come across them
In their case We have provided you with
Clear authority against them.\(^{43}\)

And, secondly:

Fight in the Cause of Allah those who fight you
But do not transgress limits
For Allah loveth not transgressors.
And slay them wherever you find them
And drive them out from where they
Have driven you out.
For tumult and oppression are
Worse than slaughter...
Fight them until Allah’s religion
Reigns supreme
But if they cease
Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.\(^{44}\)

Is there any other means—other than *jihad*, be it defensive
or offensive—left to achieve a just world order? Perhaps.

The most glorious word, it has been said, in the vocabulary
of Islam is *jihad* (struggle). But perhaps the word *salaam*
(peace) is more glorious than that. After all, the purpose of the
struggle is the attainment of peace, both temporary peace in
this world and eternal peace in the next world. Is it possible,
therefore, to harmonize “struggle” and “peace” and to engage
in a peaceful struggle? Perhaps.

10. Through Dialogue amongst Civilizations or Global
Convivencia?

It was Iranian President Mohammad Khatami who articulated a
distinctive alternative approach to relations between Islam and
the West. The militant *jihad* or clash of civilizations perspective
offered stark alternatives of victory or defeat. In the words of
Esposito:

His vision combined a nonmilitary jihadist defense of
Islamic identity and values with a call for civilizational
dialogue by which all societies could benefit through
the exchange of information and ideas.\(^{45}\)

When he denounced America’s use of sanctions against
Iran and other countries, he said that America attempts to
impose its own domestic law on the world, but neither Iran nor
the world will tolerate a master anymore. In this way Khatami
combines a strong affirmation of Iran’s views and principles
with a simultaneous critique of U.S. foreign policy through the
advocacy of civilizational dialogue and of improved Iranian-
U.S. relations.\(^{46}\)

At the start of the new century, albeit in the Christian era,
Khatami believes that there is a need for the creation of a new
civilization. Esposito explains further:

However, this call for dialogue must be seen within
the context of his particular worldview, which differs
from that of many in America and Europe. Many in the
West assume that dialogue with the West means that
eventually non-Western peoples will see the advantages
of western civilization and become more westernized.
This would be a complete misunderstanding of
Khatami’s vision of dialogue, which is not a passive
policy of accommodation but a competitive strategy
for strengthening and transforming Islamic civilization.
It transcends a militant vision of jihad offers a way to
avoid destructive conflict. Dialogue with the West is
an important way of strengthening Islam. Khatami’s
vision holds out the hope that, as the West evolves and
does not become too strong, Islam will regain its position as the
leading progressive world civilization.\(^{47}\)

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim
also had a similar vision of civilizational dialogue. He termed it
*convivencia*. Cornerstones of *convivencia* are pluralism
and tolerance based on mutual respect and understanding.
*Convivencia*, meaning “living together,” has deep roots in
medieval Islamic history. Ibrahim finds support for his approach
not only in history but directly from the *Qur’an*. Allah says:

O mankind, indeed We have created you
From a male and a female
And have made you into nations
And tribes so that you may come
To know one another (not that you
May despise one another).\(^{48}\)

Esposito explains further:

Convivencia, for Ibrahim is an Islamic form of
pluralism, a vision quite different from the typical
Islamist programs that make a place for non-Muslims
in a traditionally conceived Islamic society. It is based
on the primacy of social and economic justice and
equality, recognized as fundamental to other religions
as well as Islam. This pluralist vision is the foundation
for his call for civilizational dialogue.\(^{49}\)

As Anwar Ibrahim himself has stated:

For us, the divine imperative as expressed in the Qur’an
is unambiguous. Humanity has been created to form
tribes, races and nations, whose differences in physical
characteristics, languages and modes of thought are
but the means for the purpose of *lita’arafu*—“getting
to know one another.”\(^{50}\)

11. Concluding Remarks

Akbar writes that George Bush has multiplied the number of
Muslims who believe in *jihad* and that for Muslims the *jihad*
will only end when they are convinced that their lands have
been rid of American domination and are truly *dar-ul-Islam*
once again.\(^{51}\)

It is apt to end with the words of Ijaz Khan Hussein, a
volunteer in the war in Afghanistan:

We went to the jihad filled with joy, and I would go
again tomorrow...If Allah had chosen me to die, I would
have been in Paradise, eating honey and watermelons and grapes, and resting with beautiful virgins, just as it is promised in the Qur'an. Instead, my fate was to remain amid the unhappiness here on earth.\textsuperscript{32}

The \textit{jihad} goes on. The struggle continues. The struggle along the path set by Allah continues.

\textbf{Endnotes}

2. MJ Akbar, \textit{The Shade of Swords}, 80.
3. ARI Doi, \textit{Shari'ah The Islamic Law}, 437
4. See HM Zawati, \textit{Is Jihad a Just War?} 14
7. \textit{Ibid}.
8. For example, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya distinguished four types of \textit{jihad}: the struggle against the self; the struggle against evil; the struggle against non-believers; and the struggle against hypocrites, while Al-Mawardi divided \textit{jihad} into two general categories.
15. \textit{Ibid}.
17. He was influenced by Ibn Khaldun’s theory on war.
18. HM Zawati, \textit{ft 3 supra} 11
25. \textit{Surah 4} Al-Nisa, verse 95.
26. “\textit{Siyar}” means law of nations.
27. Khadduri, 39.
29. See \textit{ft 13 supra}.
30. Johnson, 72.
31. \textit{Ibid}. , 73.
32. \textit{Ibid}., 43.
34. JB Scott, \textit{op. cit.} 192.
35. JB Scott, \textit{op. cit.} 193.
36. HM Zawati, \textit{ft 3 supra} 105.
37. \textit{Ibid}.
38. These sources include Abu Zahra, Ibn Taymiyya.
41. For a detailed study of these movements and struggles, see chapter 3 of Peters’s book.
42. JL Esposito, \textit{Unholy War}, 27.
43. \textit{Surah 4} Al-Nisa, verse 91. See also \textit{ft 12}.
44. \textit{Surah 2} Al-Baqarah, verses 190-193. See also \textit{ft 13}.
45. Esposito, 137.
46. \textit{Ibid}.
47. Esposito, 138-39. See also Islam, Liberty and Development.
49. Esposito, \textit{ft 42 supra} 136.
50. MJ Akbar, \textit{op. cit.} 271.
51. MJ Akbar, \textit{op. cit.} 213.

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\textbf{An Expressivist Point of View on the Inner and Outer Relation}

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If one says that one never knows whether someone else really felt this way or that, then that is not because perhaps after all he really felt differently, but because even God so to speak cannot know that the person felt that way.

\textit{Wittgenstein, Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology}, II, 85

The quoted sentence reveals the problems with which Wittgenstein has been obsessively involved in the last period of his philosophical activity and doubtlessly contains an element of scepticism about the knowledge of other minds, which I intend to develop in the present occasion. The interest of the Wittgensteinian treatment lies not only in the topic of scepticism but mainly in the anthropological perspective which, to my mind, that scepticism that I qualify as moderate (we shall see in which sense) defines.

In a very succinct way, I would like to offer a series of reflections on the subject of the knowledge of other minds, communication, and the relation between inner and outer. I will refer almost exclusively to the Wittgenstein of the last notes
on the philosophy of psychology, in particular those selected in the second volume of his *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology* (1992). My purpose is to show or, at least, to argue in favor of two ideas. First, that what we call *inner* owes its existence, on the one hand, to communicable expression, particularly linguistic *expression*, and, on the other hand, to the possibility of *dissimulation*; and, second, that the mind’s new image, thus created, leads to what I would call its partial but insuperable closure to the other’s point of view. However, this last characteristic of the mind shall not be seen negatively, nor does it necessarily possess a metaphysical status, but rather it mirrors, in the terminology of Wittgenstein, our form of life. In a certain sense I would like to continue the final words of Saul Kripke in the Postscript of his *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, where he says (contrasting the self of the *Tractatus* with the self of the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI)): “In the *Investigations*, the special character of the self, as something not to be identified with any entity picked out in any ordinary manner, survives, but it is thought of as deriving from a ‘gramatical’ peculiarity of the first person pronoun, not from any special metaphysical mystery” (S. Kripke, 1982, 145).

Wittgenstein died in the April of 1951, and on the fifteenth day of that month he wrote the following: “Is the impossibility of knowing what goes on in someone else physical or logical? And if it is both—how do the two hang together?” For a start: possibilities for exploring someone else could be imagined which don’t exist in reality. Thus there is a physical impossibility. The logical impossibility lies in the lack of exact rules of evidence. (Therefore, we sometimes express ourselves in this way: We may always be wrong; we can never be certain; what we observe can still be pretence.) But of course it isn’t true that we are never certain about the mental processes in someone else. In countless cases we are. And now the question remains whether we would give up our language-game, which rests on “imponderable evidence” and frequently leads to uncertainty, if it were possible to exchange it for a more exact one which by and large would have similar consequences. For instance, we could work with a mechanical “lie detector” and redefine a lie as that which causes a deflection on the lie detector. So the question is: Would we change our way of living if this or that were provided for us?—And how could I answer that?” (*LWPP*, 2, 94-5).

This understanding of the meaning of the form of life becomes intuitive when we answer, without major difficulties, to questions as: Despite the inconvenience sometimes caused by the impossibility of knowing the most recondite motivations of the other, would we be willing to renounce our form of life, where we do not always know what the other intends? Naturally, this question has a great quantity of variations; for instance, being a fact that we prefer to deal with sincere people (or people that have a disposition to be sincere), would we prefer to exchange this form of life for another one, where insincerity was unknown by men, or could simply be eliminated (imagine a society where one could get a vaccine against insincerity, as if it were a disease), etc.? In fact it is not probable that any of us would exchange his actual form of life for that other, no matter how strongly we consider dissimulation and lies a burden of our human condition that is hard to bear. I think that this idea of the form of life as something that one has to bear, to tolerate, is part of the understanding of the concept itself, and is what we could call the primary attitude to the other and which makes him a human being for us. In Wittgenstein’s words, “My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul” (*Philosophical Investigations*, II, iv, 178). With this Wittgenstein means that the fact that the other has a soul is not a matter of opinion and that I simply behave with that presupposition. Therefore, no scepticism is introduced in this primitive background of our form of life relation that makes us look to the other as an owner of a soul. Our form of life seems to comprise only the possibility of this spontaneous and unsuspicuous relation with the other human beings, which is testified to by the attribution of mental states, feelings, beliefs (which is from the sphere of psychology).

Therefore, that scepticism is not present in the relation with the other seems to be evidence of our form of life. However, the question is more complicated, and we have already been alerted to it by the questions formulated above, which contemplated another aspect of the human form of life, from which we would certainly not want to prescind: we are certainly not willing to exchange a world where something of the other, his inner life, is ineluctably hidden, for another world where everything that is interior becomes complete exteriority. It is thus possible to speak here of an *anthropologically rooted valorization of the inner*. Wherefore, when we consider what happens in the other minds (we could use here the term *Seele*, soul, used by Wittgenstein), another fact arises, which seems to contradict that initial certainty. It is thus fundamental to preserve this bivalence of the concept of form of life, that is, on the one hand, the evident and secure relation with the other as owner of a mind, on the other hand, the necessary valorization of an irreducible subjectivity, which, desirably, is not completely externalized.

This being established, it is important to stress two things relatively to the status of the other minds: on the one hand, the affirmation of them as owners of an inner, something to which no sceptical argument can be directed (for instance, a sceptical argument that would work here, could be that I can never be sure that the other is not a zombie or an automaton, an argument that Wittgenstein does not forget, but to which he doesn’t give much importance); on the other hand, it is important that such inner does not stop possessing a certain closure relatively to the other and, in that sense, he is extremely interested in arguing in favor of a moderate scepticism relatively to the knowledge of other minds. The defence of this double interest would not be possible without the intervention of something that in humans is an unsurpassable *medium* among beings with some linguistic capacity: precisely, *linguistic expression*. We shall understand it in Wittgenstein’s technical sense, that is, the exteriorization of experiences that the human being first concretizes under the natural forms of scream, gesture, etc., and later substitutes by linguistic expression. Therefore, the child’s scream of pain is substituted by the expression, “I’m in pain,” through a gradual process of learning. “I’m in pain” is different from “I’m 1 m and 80 cm tall,” or “I have a scar in my right hand,” which are descriptive enunciations, not expressive ones. However, at the level of the anthropological roots of our form of life, it is the expressive form that is more original and inescapable, either in the communicational sense and in the affirmation of the first person. Then no one can look directly inside the other, as between the other and me there is always the expression. “But that which is in him, how can I see? Between his experience and me there is always the expression!” (*LWPP*, 2, 92), recalls Wittgenstein. I would like to accentuate here the unitary and mediatory role of linguistic expression: it is with it that I communicate with beings with whom I recognize unity. “I’m in pain,” “I desire p,” “I believe that p,” are not mere descriptive information of objects or events, but externalizations. The exploration of these two roles will enable him to preserve the two fundamental values of the concept of life’s form, to which I have already referred. What I’m going to say next shall take into account this double and fundamental interest of Wittgenstein. At this point it is important to recall our problem: in order to preserve our form of life it is required on the one hand to have an evident and secure relationship with other people as owners.
of a mind, but at the same time you are not allowed to abandon the concept of an irreducible inner, which, desirably, is not completely externalized.

In the PI Wittgenstein refutes the existence of private objects and language. Without entering in details about the sections of the PI dedicated to the refutation of a private language (243-303), we can say that one of the main results of the critique developed there is a refutation of the sceptical position relatively to the knowledge of other minds. After all, the sceptical position is a consequence of an image, which presupposes the existence of a kind of objects/experiences that fill the mind, to which even I can invent a private language, but that are closed to the other. But as you reveal the absurdity of this image and the impossibility of a private language for private experiences you refute simultaneously the sceptical argument, which lives from that image. In order to deconstruct it Wittgenstein seems to adopt himself a sceptical position (he agrees with the argumentation of the sceptic regarding the illegitimacy of the referred extrapolation), but his solution is not a sceptical one, giving place to the complete exteriority of language, through which we communicate and influence each other. In a certain sense the radical sceptical problem is eliminated. Some famous declarations of Wittgenstein in the PI, according to which “nothing is concealed” (PI, 435) or “an ‘inner process’ stands in need of outward criteria” (PI, 580), seems to go clearly in the direction of an annulment of the inner and the disappearing of the dichotomy inner/outer itself. That would be the price to pay for the refutation of scepticism relatively to other minds and the institution of meaning as use of words in a communicational situation, not implying from that that meaning derives from any designated private inner object. In one of his last notes on the philosophy of psychology, Wittgenstein even says that “The ‘inner’ is a delusion. That is: the whole complex of ideas alluded to by this word is like a painted curtain drawn in front of the scene of the actual word use” (LWPP, 2, 84). Even though the interpretation of this observation is not obvious, it is possible that delusion here corresponds to the illusion of a scenic profundity created by a painted curtain that corresponds, in the present analogy, to the use of language. The words, or better, their use, create the illusion of inner profundity.

But since the human form of life and the concept of the inner are not separable, we are now naturally led to the problem: What kind of inner is restored by this anti-sceptical strategy? After all, how can complete linguistic exteriority, resultant from the refutation of the total closure of the mind to others, account for the complexity of experiences and, in general, of everything that constitutes the matter of psychology?

One must take into consideration that one of the most original and fundamental parts of our linguistic activity is expressive, in opposition to another part that is also present in that activity, but which is of a descriptive kind. Such is the difference between “I desire p” and “p is thus and thus,” the former corresponding to an expressive language-game, and the latter to a descriptive one. The former is prior in the order of language learning (the child first desires p and only after he describes it) and remains as a primary and irreducible use of language. A child falls down, feels pain, and naturally expresses that sensation through crying. Adults approach, comfort him, and teach him to use the word “pain” as a linguistic substitution of pain’s natural expression. The child does not begin by describing the pain; rather, he begins by expressing it, first through crying, and only later linguistically. A substantial part of linguistic learning and training is expressive, as they express or exteriorize sensations, experiences. We do not begin by describing our sensations, that is, the language of sensations is not descriptive, even though it may serve as material for descriptive language games, as when we try to describe a pain to the doctor. That is precisely what Wittgenstein notes in the following observation: “If you trained someone to emit a particular sound at the sight of something red, another at the sight of something yellow, and so on for other colours, still he would not yet be describing objects by their colours. Though he might be a help to us in giving a description. A description is a representation of a distribution in a space (in that of time, for instance)” (PI, II, ix, 526). This expressive use of language, especially concretized in psychological verbs, for instance “to fear,” “to believe,” “to desire,” etc., in the first person of indicative present, constitutes the raw material of psychology, which is quickly expanded and complicated in the most diverse language-games, either expressive or descriptive. This is a crucial topic in the reformulation of the relation inner/outer in Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language and of psychology: the material of our psychological life, at least the one that matters from the point of view of communication, is not made by internal experiences in themselves, that is, is not expressible, but expressions of experiences. In the limit of psychological life, there is no experience as such, but expressed experience, either in a natural expressive way, for instance, a scream as expression of fear, or in a linguistic form, as in the expression of the first person of indicative present: “I’m afraid.” That is why I do not identify sensations with objective criteria, for in that case I would be turning them into objects describable in a space (the referred scenic profundity of an inner). Another notable characteristic is that the expressive use introduces an asymmetry between first and third persons, or the irreducible authority of the first person, which cannot be substituted by the third. While “I’m 1m 80 tall” and “He is 1m 80 tall” are sentences that can perfectly be intersubstitutable without loss of meaning (which denotes a symmetry between the perspectives of the first and third persons), sentences like, for instance, “I’m in pain” and “he’s in pain” are asymmetric relative to the authority about the veracity of what is said. What differs profoundly is the image of the mind itself. The previous image of the mind was that of a box or a profound scenic space; but now, in a mind constituted by experiences and sensations that are not separable from the correspondent expression, the inner corresponds instead to what in the other mind I suppose dissimulated or possible of being dissimulated. The theme of dissimulation (Verstellung) occupied Wittgenstein, I would say obsessively, in his last writings and, by itself, is an autonomous topic where philosophy of mind and philosophy of language converge. To dissimulate is a special case of our form of life, where we find an expression instead of what would be the genuine expression: I say that I believe in p when I do not believe in p, that I feel pleasure when I don’t feel, and so on. Only a being with a relatively complex control of language can dissimulate; that’s why a child until a certain age does not dissimulate, or a dog cannot hide the joy of seeing his owner through the presentation of another expression, a forged expression, we would say. But what is notable is that such a special case means that the other minds constitute to each other a partial closure: many times, there is the possibility of dissimulation, even though the normal case is the genuine expression, making no sense to suppose that the other is dissimulating something. I see someone breaking a leg and complaining with pain, a situation where it makes no sense to consider the possibility of dissimulation. However, we know that such a situation of evidence relative to the expression’s genuine character is not always revealed and, in many other situations, the possibility of dissimulation is always present. On the contrary, when the outer is completely transparent, with no opacity, that is, with no indicant of dissimulation, then the inner simply disappears. That’s why we do not ascribe an inner to a child that cannot dissimulate yet, or to any other being that
always expresses itself genuinely. But as soon as exteriorization becomes opaque and the possibility of dissimulation arises, then there the inner is born. We can thus see that if the refutation of private language and of the inner as a box is associated to a complete exteriority of language, language, by its expressive use, reintroduces the subject, or a certain inner where we recognize will and intentionality (without which we could not speak of dissimulation either). Also, here we find a partial closure and a moderate scepticism relative to the knowledge of other minds. This question is perfectly summarized in one of the last observations of Wittgenstein:

‘Can one know what goes on in someone else in the same way he himself knows it?’ Well, how does he know it? He can express his experience. No doubt within him whether he is really having this experience—analogous to the doubt whether he really has this or that disease—comes into play; and therefore it is wrong to say that he knows what he is experiencing. But someone else can very well doubt whether that person has this experience. Thus doubt does come into play, but, precisely for that reason, it is also possible that there is complete certainty” (LWPP, 2, 92).

It is thus this doubt, or better, this game between doubt and certainty relative to the other’s expression that generates his inner. Notice that the general condition for that is the communicational relation and the asymmetry of perspectives. But the moderate scepticism and the partial closure of minds to each other shall not be seen as something negative, a limitation of our forms of life. On the contrary, that is the proper relation between human beings. “I presuppose the inner, inasmuch as I presuppose a human being” (LWPP, 2, 64). And in this drop of philosophy we find concentrated an anthropology constructed by his philosophy of language and mind.

References

The Productive Inactuality of Benjamin’s Concept of Criticism
Maria Filomena Molder

The only sleight of hand feasible to us is to relinquish our own existence in order to exist.

Goethe

Introduction
Philosophy is an activity of a contemplative nature, which did not achieve the stability of its own determinations, even among its makers, the Greeks.¹ As Benjamin puts it, philosophy defies itself each and every time with the problem of its own self-representation [cf. The Origin of German Tragic Drama]. The condition for such contemplative form has always been an exercise of distance in relation to the known, the inherited, the most common convictions, the self-evidences, becoming rather, whether directly or not, a questioning of itself. The best diction of this belongs to Heraclitus: “I have deciphered myself” [DK 1, 175]. To search oneself is a journey that is feasible by anyone (despite the disdain Heraclitus felt for the masses), a search that implies the cleavage of oneself, a self-affection regime that is characteristic of intelligence (the one who knows and the one whom is known), which the moderns came to consecrate as conscience and reflection. The researches on logos, its conditions and principles, on language and politics, on the imagetic expressivity of life, that is to say, art, are inscribed in this questioning process. It is an effort to bring back life by converting it into problematic matter through its operators, that is, the concepts, a conversion that brings about its own inherent risks: solipsism, scepticism, nihilism. And Benjamin was someone who knew well scepticism, struggling against it constantly. “Florence, Baptistry – On the portal the Spez [Hope] by Andrea de Pisano. Sitting, she helplessly extends her arms toward a fruit that remains beyond her reach. And yet she is winged. Nothing is more true” [One-way Street].

For the formation and the development of a concept, the language in which it is shaped into being is not indifferent (letter to Hofmannthal, January 13th, 1924). One must dig through language, through the atmosphere that nourishes the first expressions, the latent living associations, the proverbial existences. We cannot disregard nor simply jump over them, nor drop all these obscurities, the predictions, the already known, the guesses, the losses, the chiaroscuro that allows for the life of languages, or, to put it in another way, comprehension in philosophy “knows the blessed efficiency of an order by virtue of which its insight always strive very specific words whose surface has been hardened on the concept, but dissolves when it comes into contact with the magnetic force of this order, revealing the forms of linguistic life locked within.” Philosophy forms concepts, but to form concepts is not its main goal. Rather, it is to be able to understand, through the midst of the constellations of concepts, something from our own lives. Concept must be dissolved (its hardened scab), for its scab precludes or obfuscates the energy of language and therefore, the relationship with reality. However, without concepts, one cannot reach reality. To quote Goethe, “he who fears the ideas ends up losing the concepts.”

Consequently, Benjamin regards philosophy as a releasing contemplative activity, for it discards the rotten parts, it morifies the self-evidences. In such a way that concepts become proficient means to dig up the hidden treasure that one must bring to the light of day, to break the enigma into which life becomes, as soon as we become aware that we are alive, tearing open a distance from ourselves. Regardless of the fact that production of concepts is not the main goal of philosophy, it would be worthless to attempt reaching that goal without the formation of concepts, without using them in argumentation. To understand something about life or to transform life into a vision is the same thing as dissolving philosophy. Or to put it another way, at its limit, the goal of philosophy is its own dissolution. And this is a goal at the heart of Walter Benjamin’s critical experience.

Let us ponder the relationship between philosophy and art or poetry, within the framework of which the most disparate points of view came into being, from the very beginning: from Heraclitus’s disdain, Plato’s declared conflict, Aristotle’s defence, and Plotinus’s common irradiation. And in an intimate connection with the arts, intensifying it to cosmic limits, we see the convergence of everything related to lightness, to playfulness, to contingency (Dionysus gazing at himself in the mirror, the child playing dice, the laughter of the gods), whose most shining facet is to be found in the beautiful apparition, in beauty.
Criticism, in Benjamin, is an original fashion to establish a relationship between philosophy and the arts, between the problem and the work, and in which beauty comes to the forefront, as the sweltering blaze of the fusion of that which we are looking for and that which we have found. To search for oneself is inscribed in the remembrance act (to remember is like digging). For that reason, criticism is inseparable from history, and a critic is always an historian. “Each epoch is condemned to be modern,” which brands in a novel atmosphere the relationship between “we and them,” which from Goethe to Nietzsche stands for “the Ancients and the Moderns.” But in Benjamin it means, “the ones who have died and us, who live,” which, although it is also implied in “the Ancients and the Moderns,” is not its most evident facet. His aesthetic categories were legated to him (by Goethe, Kant, Hamann, Schlegel, Novalis, among others), as accepted in any form of knowledge: semblance/appearance, expression-less, similitude, imitation, play, affinity, primeval picture (Urbild), beauty, the ideal of the problem.

However, against all appearances and attached theories, there is no reception/receptor theory in Walter Benjamin (“No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the audience,” as stated in *The Task of the Translator*). Benjamin is not interested in the subjective features of the critic’s role. His effort is toward objectivity. But if one can trace back this requirement to Goethe and the Romantics (from, quite surprisingly, opposing principles, to wit, that of the work of art’s criticizability and non-criticizability), it will gain certain determinations in Benjamin that did not stem from either. The merging point is put forward in the pages of the *Arcades Project*: “The true method of making things present is to represent them in our space (not to represent ourselves in their space)” [*I*, p.2].

The surmise of this paper is that Benjamin’s critical thought has constant, although not unaffected, characteristics, which were maintained throughout his oeuvre. Taking into account, furthermore, the seemingly disturbing elements introduced by some texts of a polemic, programmatic, and even humorous nature (many of which were posthumously published, and which also have a very distinct bond with Kraus’s purposes and styles). Nevertheless, these last texts do not put into question his unique, unmistakable traits.

For the Romantics, “art is a determination of the medium of reflection” [*The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism*]. Reflection is a medium, that is to say, a self-generating element. Reflection is the supreme form of self-affection, which the Romantics considered absolutely creational. Art criticism is the knowledge of the object (the work of art) one accomplishes in that medium. The poetic feeling is a self-affection: “the essence of the poetic feeling lies perhaps in the fact that one can’t oneself wholly from within oneself” [Schlegel]. Poetry “is a self-forming existence” [Novalis], a self-poiesis.

The moment when thought generates observation and when it becomes the thought of the thought, we’re facing a critical kernel (cleavage and self-affection). Amongst the Romantics, the critical act raises the work of art to its own self-comprehension. From Goethe’s ultimate intention, criticism of an artwork is neither possible nor necessary…and an apodictic judgement of Works of art is possible for an artist who has an intuition of the archetype…in the theory of Romantic art one cannot avoid the paradox that criticism is valued highly than Works of art…The absolutizing of the critical activity…extinguishes the plurality of Works.” Benjamin uses this opposition between the Romantics and Goethe to enlighten the history of the concept of criticism as a history of the problems.

From Goethe, Benjamin brings up the notion of the Urphänomen [Primeval Phenomenon], and transfers it “from the domain of nature to that of history” [*The Arcades Project*, N 2a,4]. What is the Primeval Phenomenon? This is the inseparable condition of the conditioned, which one only discovers by observing the conditioned. For Goethe, and Benjamin agrees with him in this—and so does Wittgenstein—“the facts are theory already.” If we observe something closely, we will end up by gazing directly into its own method of knowledge, which implies, at one and the same time, that the observer will find in him or herself new organs. On the other hand, the Primeval Phenomenon is always constituted by a particular polarity of an
impossible synthesis; that is to say, a pair of opposed terms that can assume many faces but never be overcome. The gleaming or dialectical image understood as a magnetic connection between a now and its past is a Goethean irradiation.

There is a moment in which the reading of the work makes visible the life that existed there. The literary work is presented to us as a sarcophagus, that is, our life is only acknowledged in the sarcophagus, not in itself: life can only be captured in our own effort of capturing it. The reverence for the work of art is only natural, for the work is the sarcophagus of humankind’s comprehensive expression: “Every perfect work of art is the death masque of its intuition” (Letter to F.C. Rang, January 10, 1924). Philosophy’s goal is thus, for Benjamin, to unearth the very truth content of the work. Let us refer to Goethe’s Elective Affinities in order to make clear what’s at stake here.

In this text, the constitution of the critic’s act is inscribed in the relationship between the critical interest and the philological interest for, to start with, criticism is always related to reading. Benjamin considers the philological act a commentary through which it becomes possible to ascertain and evaluate the relation between the material content and the truth content. It is not possible to arrive at the truth content without going through its material content. However, in the authentic works of art the material content is intimately related to the truth content. On the contrary, in the works of art in which the material content is disconnected from the truth content, we become immediately aware that something has perished or will soon perish in it. One could also say that history prepares the works for their own criticism. If the empirical, conceptual element of the material content is not absorbed by its inner unfolding, it simply becomes what it is superficially, it becomes detached in its strangeness, and it ends up becoming a mere historical curiosity. A work must be prepared for its own criticism and it has to produce the conditions of its own criticizability. If not, then it’s no better than a washing machine instruction manual. A commentator is a sort of analyst: he or she breaks down a text, from which they will then attempt to recognize life. The critic, on the contrary, is like a paleographer, a commentator of a higher degree, engaged in a superior philology. It is, as it were, a decipherer of enigmas. For the commentator, Benjamin uses the image of the chemist analyzing the ashes, and for the critic, the image of the alchemist that has the expectation of beholding the flame of life in those ashes. To quote a Hasidic proverb, “if you want to find fire, look for it among the ashes.”

Trying to know the work of art is thus like making the acquaintance of “a person who is handsome and attractive but who carries a secret with him or herself.” To gain access to such a person, one seeks out his or her siblings. The siblings of the work of art are the philosophical problems. The secret of art, just as the secret of life as well, is a visible secret. There is an intimate relation between art and life. However, it is not analyzable. It can only be happened upon. But what is it? Both situations, it’s something right in front of us. It is not veiled. There are no secrets in philosophy, only paradoxes, a limit to any given argumentation, a crown, as it were, simultaneously of thorns and of glory. It is the question upon the unity of the problems of philosophy that cannot be spoken. Wittgenstein said that a question without an answer is a question that cannot be put into words. Benjamin refers precisely to a question that one cannot put into words for it is a question without an answer, but he also points out that it is not a good option to simply discard it. “The concept of this nonexistent question seeking the unity of philosophy by inquiry functions in philosophy is the ideal of the problem...” The ideal of the problem can be contemplated but not discussed; i.e., if we find that no answer is possible, then it means that the question is not possible. The unity of philosophy is an expectation that philosophy itself cannot meet through the use of an answer to a possible question. The ideal of the problem is the name Benjamin gives to this wandering expectation.

To solve an enigma, we approached the inexplicability of the ideal of the problem. “The ideal of the problem, however, does not appear in a multiplicity of problems.” The unity of philosophy does not correspond to a hypothetical common denominator stemming from the comparison of many problems, but on the contrary it “lies buried in a manifold of works, and its excavation is the business of critique.” The task of the critic is then to dig up the ideal of the problem (the truth content): “For critique ultimately shows in the work of art the virtual possibility of formulating the work’s truth content as the highest philosophical problem,” a facet of the answer to that impossible question. It is the critic’s treasure, a treasure only he or she can unearth. And after happening upon the inaccessible character of that which he or she wishes to understand, and making an effort in seeking out the siblings of the “handsome person,” a step for a closer intimacy, the critic must trace the same path backwards. Another way to put it is to say that the siblings, or the philosophical concepts, cannot uphold themselves in the unity that binds them together, and so in order to survive and to prevent collapse turn to that which is most enigmatic and secret: forms and images. We are close to the goal of philosophy.

Beauty is a fundamental concept (and surely one of the reasons for my consideration of Benjamin’s inactivity), without which the critical comprehension of anything at all would be disfigured. The experience of modernity did not necessarily
condemn Beauty, but it gave it a somewhat bitter taste, it attached to it a sort of heroism. The poet, in his duel against beauty, declares himself vanquished. Before the fall, he cries out in horror. That is the discipline of the rapier duellist (Baudelaire, Le Contileur de l’artiste). But in modernity beauty is a concept in suffering, as children with difficult births.

In Goethe’s Elective Affinities Benjamin presents life as a semblance that triumphs and falls, and it is life, with its associated concepts, such as the kernel, growth, limit, that constitutes the access matrix to the beauty of art. But one must not understand access as coincidence. On the one hand there is no beauty without life, and on the other hand life is incommensurable with art. Life is not an aesthetic phenomenon. Nietzsche’s thought tends to be Greek, but not Benjamin’s. However, the latter follows the Greeks’ intuition that anything that is worth to be known is beautiful and that any object of knowledge is an object of love. Furthermore, for both Kant and Plato, beauty exists for us, without necessarily meaning with this that beauty becomes relative, but rather that beauty founds the only possible human community.

“Accordingly, there dwells in all beauty of art that semblance—that is to say, that verging and bordering on life—without which all beauty is not possible.” The semblance of the work or art is extant because it touches the limits of life; it’s on the verge of entering life. In the work of art, beauty appears as the imperishable bond between the semblance and the unexpressed or the inexpressive (the heart of the touched life). Essence can only be recognized in its relation with semblance. The “apparent beauty”—the covering layer—and the “essential beauty”—the covered—are connected as closely as a fruit and its skin. “Thus in the face of everything beautiful, the idea of unveiling becomes that of the impossibility of unveiling. This is the idea of art criticism.”

What is art criticism made of? The analytic procedure is not to peel the skin off. The core is not dug up in detriment to its anatomy. Depth is reached by sifting the surface. “The task of art criticism is not to lift the veil….” One must sift the material content to reach the truth content. Beauty is the sole object in which it is possible to demonstrate the absence of a conflict between semblance and essence—in this case, the covering and the covered—a conflict that usually means that the one annihilates, subverts, or weakens the other.

This also avoids any sort of conceptual confusion, in which beauty seems to be an idea that appears unexpectedly; on the contrary, it must be “intuited as a mystery,” meaning that beauty is not a consequence of the analysis of the material content (as for instances, the genres of metaphors or of rhymes, all the space-time content, and so forth), but rather that it is the analysis of the material content, the compulsory condition to find out that we will never solve the mystery. “Without at least an anticipated apprehension of life in the detail through the structure, any inclination towards beauty is but a reverie” [The Origin of German Tragic Drama].

If the work of art knows no death, no last breath, no ultimate extinction of its semblance, then the reason for it is that it is not life, but the noblest of life’s sarcophaguses. We must emphasize that this fleeting gaze cannot be divorced from an understanding of the work of art as an object of knowledge. Such is the reason why the critic is an historian as well, whose task is both the duty of the work of art as an object of knowledge. Such is the reason why the critic is an historian as well, whose task is both the duty of the work of art as an object of knowledge.

The model for the Angel of History is Paul Klee’s Angelus Novus [On the Concept of History]. What are the particulars of this angel? This is a powerless angel. He cannot fly for his wings are stretched to their limit, he cannot fold them closed for a storm is blowing, pursuing him future-wards. The storm is blowing from Paradise, and Progress is its name. The Angel would like to linger by the debris that is incessantly piling up at his feet, he would like to correct the devastation: with his back turned upon the future, he would like above all to stop. The Angel’s dignity (the power of flight and his role as an intermediary) is disfigured and questioned in this text in an ironic, humorous manner: at one time, it strains the habitual notion (progress as a road to Paradise) and it rejects the ideology of progress (breaking the finalistic system which the notion is built upon). The utmost figure of Benjamin’s scepticism, the Angel of History is a powerless critic who is not able to gaze upon the flare of life and who cannot do justice to the ruins of life.⁸

Within the same text, we learn that opposing the Angel we find the conviction that “our coming was expected on earth,” which one can translate as, “What did our progenitors leave us?” This is the context in which remembrance arises, that is to say, the conditioned compulsion of recognizing oneself by acknowledging the other, an other that is no more. To be precise, Benjamin is a critical rationalist who is very aware of the fact that he cannot resort to theological concepts as arguments (to begin with, because he is not a believer, and secondly, for it is a philosophically unacceptable situation), but who cannot simply thrust aside what his own experience of remembrance has brought him, namely, a theological vision: the historian’s duty is to search for life, history itself is related to the relationships between the present (the ones who are living now) and the past (the ones no longer on earth, but who were alive once). Any act of knowledge is an act of self-knowledge also. We look behind ourselves to meet the gaze of the ones who make our face visible (ad plures ire) and at the same time we construct a more intimate image of those whom we’ve separated from history’s continuity, creating a fissure. These acts are dependent on our gaze. It is when it becomes legible that the past becomes our past, and it is only in the present of our interests that it becomes legible. It is a present of cognoscibility that hastes the polarization of the dialectical image, the primeval phenomenon of history.

“It is said that the dialectic method consists in doing justice each time to the concrete historical situation of its object…to the concrete historical situation of the interest taken in the object” [The Arcades Project K, 2,3], and our interest is formed within the object itself, when we face it for the first time. These are the issues of the condition of the very possibility of history.

Goethe presents a form of inactuality that has passed unto Benjamin, although through what he learned from the Romantics. He considers art the only power capable of facing up to nature, being the latter a “force devouring forces,” but at the same time as the source of all art.

Let us consider now Benjamin’s letter of December 9, 1923, to Rang. More often than not, art history is the history of forms and contents, as the works of art are only present as examples or illustrations. For this reason, Benjamin considers that there is no such thing as art history; the same is considered of history of philosophy, if one follows this historicist and classificatory connotation. The works of art are not influential, are not deducible, and are not extended the one through the other. The conditions of a work of art are inscribed in the work itself. They can, however, like Leibniz’s monads, reflect each other. In Benjamin, the conceptual constellation is a cluster of magnetic attractions. “There remains an intense relationship among works of art,” that is to say, the works of art are reflected upon each other, but remain untouched, unaffected. “It is true as well that the specific historicity of works of art is the kind [untimely, intensive interpretation] that can be revealed not in “art history” but only in interpretation…that stress the timeless connections.” In effect, “in human life, not only does the
concatenation of temporal events contain essential causal links, but we may also say that, were there no such links to constitute development, maturity, death, and similar categories, human life as such would not really exist. With works of art, on the other hand, the position is different. Art is in essence ahistorical. Still, if such approach is related to the Romantic requirement of making criticism from the immanent conditions of the work itself, it also guides us toward the consideration of the work of art as pertaining to the magical realm of nature (one could bring to mind Béla Bartók’s Cantata Profana).

The “stars that shine their light into our night” are works of art. The night keeps returning, and therefore there is no last work, no last poem. The work of art is a sort of resistance against an ultimate obliteration by the night. It is the light of day, of the sun, of human history, the redeemer. Actually, in this letter Benjamin makes very clear how hard it is to bring close this redemptive purpose and human creativity.

Consequently, one witnesses here a tension between the notion of art as nature and the notion of art as history, because our lives, which can be delivered, are related to history and not to nature. Thus, the work of art plays no role in relation to the redemption of our lives. Only our actions count. The works of art may shine into our ever-returning night; they can act as the stars of our night. But the philosopher’s task is channelled down to the criticism of the works of art, for the secret of the relationship between our lives and our night is concealed within them. Criticism is thus a redemptive task: it retrieves from the realm of death something that belongs to the living only, the comprehension and the demonstration of a facet of human life in a visible image. Nevertheless, the world of revelation is unrelated to the work of art. We are not facing a conflict here, for there are no contradictory notions at stake here, one seeking to subdue the other. We are not facing a hesitation of some sort either, for it is not indecision Benjamin is feeling, he is not being forced to choose one or the other. There are but two irrefutable evident notions, whose bond seems to be a paradox, upon which Benjamin builds his own understanding of both the works of art and their relationship with life.

Actually, it is such relationship that allows the paradox to be at the forefront of things. Let us remember what Francis Bacon said to David Sylvester that if happiness was possible or if one felt no suffering, then works of art would cease to be. Or Goethe, referring to Pompeii (discovered, archeologically speaking, in the year of his own birth, 1749), “not many disasters have brought so much joy to men.” In both cases, there is a double form: the envy of the fact that art must be not-life, which was early on considered as a bond to the devil, and the indifference to life by art, or its affinity with nature’s depth. In the March 2, 1912, entry of Kafka’s journal, the writer also searches for the confirmation of what he himself knew better than anyone, and that is coincident with this disturbing experience: “Who can tell me if it’s true or believable that it is my literary vocation the sole reason for my general indifference towards everything and, consequently, my insensitivity?”

A few conclusions: Benjamin’s point of view is incompatible with idealism because the required act of submersing oneself with the object implies that the resulting subjectivity is a relationship with the object of knowledge and not the judgmental tool of the object. It must be in accord with the requirements of the given object of analysis (according to his letter to Rychner, of March 7, 1931). The danger is to end up captive of the text-monad, of the chemistry of the ashes. One must break the magic circle (the chemist’s fulfilment) in order to behold life in the ashes. This explains why criticism is both a boundary and a distance experience, an experience of asceticism, which follows a regime: we are not entitled to project upon the work of art our own self-evidences, our desires, reducing thus the work of art to a moment of a forged familiarity with it. We must avoid considering the work of art as a depository of everything we pull along from our own lives. At its limit, the work is mortified but remains unaffected and unblemished.

It is in this context that the concept of objectivity appears. This means discovering the work in the work, being the work itself the one that holds the criteria of the interpretation, being the work its own evaluation rule that the critic must follow. It is not the subjective comedy into which my living days are coalesced at all. In effect, criticism is as an awakening act. Not because our life is a dream but because dream, the transformation into an image, belongs to the one who is not alive anymore. The awakening from the dream into which the past life has become, to behold anew the life in the works of Pessoa and Shakespeare and Montaigne, without bringing the authors to life. Why are the works of art ruins, debris? They become as such in the precise moment they’re finished, and even more so when the ones who’ve created them are no longer alive. They are almost returned to life every single time we read them, every time we listen to them. However, if we want to compose a truthful criticism, we must, in that particular moment, start off with a commentary, and then with the mortification of the work of art, that is to say, to produce ruins after a different fashion, by intensifying its own determination as ruins. Everything that we can see of life is life understood, life expressed, it is art. It is not much, but it is everything. Art does not deliver life, despite not having access to any other resource to light the night. The flame of the life of another casts light upon my night.

Epilogue

We have come to know of an experience of an augural vision in Benjamin, whose failure was necessary and nourishing to all his conceptual movements. We learn it, for instance, from two sources: in Benjamin’s Berlin Childhood around 1900 and in his Christmas 1923 letter to Florens C. Rang. Benjamin goes back to his childhood memories, recollecting the vision of the Christmas Angel, which took shape in front of Benjamin for a brief moment, despite the laudatory verses that the child uttered in awe under his breath; a fleeting moment also due to himself, according to Benjamin’s own words: the Christmas Angel did not ask for recognition by song, but rather by silence. It was one of the rare moments, still according to his own words, that he could see as a child his own perceptible life gazing at himself. Reading Benjamin’s oeuvre, we arrive at the understanding that all the concepts he created to expound what coming across truth means, being its peak the critical experience of beholding the flare in the ashes, later on rephrased with the “fulgurating image” concept, are but metamorphoses of this Angel’s manifestation and its subsequent disappearance, in the briefest of moments, when the one that wished to halt the Angel uttered welcoming words. I do not know of any other philosophy with such an expressive account of a failed relation with a vision, in which for the very first time a religious content took shape, “invisible or only visible for a moment.” A presence that filled up his childhood room, the breath that made him recite Alles Jahre wieder...
For the mature Benjamin, the most convenient concept for a truthful expression must be a physiognomic concept: the object must have a face. What ensues is that a concept is liable to become an image. It is a physiognomic concept of philosophy that surprises the mimetic temperament as a necessary condition for knowledge: concepts are always halfway between image and speech. This is a fruitful notion of thought, most suitable to art criticism, whose task is not to reduce to idiocy what it analyzes, and notwithstanding the analytic activity, accept the fact that the prey must be caught live (what Hofmannsthall calls the utmost characteristic of genuine intelligence).

Before I finish, a few words on the human body. In the *Origin of the Trauerspiel*, Benjamin ponders on the ban on the representation of the human figure (Moses). Benjamin considers it to be not only or not chiefly an objection to idolatry, but rather the acknowledgement of the human body’s irrepresentability. Considered as a moral safe haven, the human body cannot be reproduced at all. This is the evidence that the body is in fact the place upon which death may descend. Hence, it is the place also of the relationship with God. The body is moral due to the idea of life as a gift. That is why mortality, the risk of life that constitutes the body, converts it into a moral place. The incommensurability between life and art is given within the very place of the living body, in which the gift of life and the risk of life are joined. It is in the body that the boundary between art and life is drawn. In the words of Goethe, once again, “Nothing sets us apart from life more than the works of art and nothing draws us as close to life as works of art.”

Benjamin would have liked to be considered as “the principal critic of Germany” (according to a letter to Gershom Scholem, January, 30, 1930).

**Endnotes**

1. Phaedrus, 278 d: “Wise, I may not call them; for that is a great name which belongs to God alone. Lovers of wisdom [or philosophers] is their modest and most befiting title."

2. Under the firm conviction that “our coming was expected on earth,” despite the inflexible scepticism that the Angel of History suggests, as we shall see.

3. Which, even disregarding the metaphysical principles of Romanticism, has strong consequences in contemporary art.

4. A term that I do believe Benjamin took from Goethe, who applied it to the comprehension of what beauty could be as well.

5. One will find in Kafka a specific form of madness that makes him a sibling to the Angel of History. Let us refer to Benjamin’s letter to Gershom Scholem, of June 12th, 1938, on Kafka and the lack of understanding of his work by his personal friend and editor, Max Brod. In this letter, Benjamin demonstrates that empathy is not a critical method, and saintliness is not an aesthetic category. “Kafka’s work represents tradition falling ill,” which is an experience of decomposition of any *tradendum*, of dislocating any gesture of trust. That is the reason why in Kafka there are no remainders of wisdom.

6. In this day and age nothing is thrown away but everything is destroyed. History is just like the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, in which all the secrets are kept in sealed boxes in an endless warehouse, under ideal temperature.

7. This is not to say that the circumstances of the production of a work of art are unimportant. However, and taking the *Divine Comedy* as an example, its epochal conditions, the very life conditions of Dante have been all well absorbed, transformed, converted to the laws of the work. Perhaps this will help us to approach a likely imminent criticism.

8. The Romantics are persuaded that the reference of a work of art is the work itself, which is of course a way of passing over the paradoxes of the relationship between the work of art and life (which many moderns/contemporaries have appropriated). This is quite problematic. For Wittgenstein, on the contrary, the true interpretation of a poem or a painting would be another poem and another painting. At its limit, this is the acknowledgement of criticism’s utter unfeasibility. In the case of poetry, however, we have a further distinction: recitation, which rises above the problems of criticism.

**Bibliography**


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**PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES IN CHINA IN VIEW OF CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

**Introduction**

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This special section, “Philosophical Studies in China in View of Constructive Engagement,” focuses on introducing and evaluating the status quo and development direction of philosophical studies in China, especially in view of their constructive engagement with their own past (traditional Chinese philosophy) and philosophical ideas from other traditions for the sake of making joint contributions to a common philosophical enterprise. This column has resulted from a special session on the same theme held at the 2005 APA Eastern Division meeting, the first one with this focus that has ever been sponsored by the APA’s Committee on International Cooperation under the leadership of its current chair, Ernst Lepore.

The column consists of five articles, three of which were written by the three speakers at the aforementioned APA session, Dunhua Zhao, Xiangleong Zhang, and Bo Mou; the remaining two were written by Jinfen Yan and Weimin Sun, who also served as commentators at the session. It is hoped that these five articles can present to the reader a more or less comprehensive picture of current philosophical studies in China.

Let me give some needed clarifications. First, though the term “China” in the column title “Philosophical Studies in China” largely means geographical China, what is covered in the contributors’ articles goes beyond that in view of the coverage of the related term “Chinese philosophy.” “Chinese philosophy” here refers to the whole Chinese philosophical tradition that
consists of both traditional and modern Chinese philosophy. The former means various movements of philosophical thought in China from its pre-Han period to the early Qing Dynasty. The latter includes two portions: (1) modern developments and studies of these various traditional movements of thought, which have been carried out in China and in other regions of the world; (2) a variety of movements of thought that have emerged, during the period from the late Qing Dynasty through the present time, in the greater Chinese philosophical circle whose members primarily mean those native Chinese philosophers within and outside geographical China, including those native Chinese philosophers who currently teach and/or work in other regions like North America. The two portions are related through the constructive engagement between some of those modern movements of thought and (studies of) traditional Chinese philosophy as addressed in Zhang’s and Mou’s articles. Second, the first three articles by Zhao, Zhang, and Mou are not limited to a specific area of research but by default cover general, central areas of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, and/or philosophy of language and mind, etc.); in contrast, the remaining two articles by Yan and Sun focus specifically on studies of ethics and of logic in China. Third, considering the constitution and interest of the prospective readership of the APA Newsletter, what are presented to the reader here are some distinctive and significant research on traditional Chinese philosophy instead of historical studies: that is, comparative engagement of such studies with continental philosophy and analytic philosophy, which are respectively partial contents of Zhang’s and Mou’s papers.

All five contributors to this column had their first-hand experience and knowledge of philosophical studies in China while receiving their Ph.D. degrees in the West. Zhao and Zhang are faculty members of Department of Philosophy, Peking University in China; Zhao is its current chair, and Zhang is current president of the International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy (ISCSWP). Yan and Mou worked at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, during the late 1980s. Yan now teaches at the University of Toronto–Scarborough, and Mou teaches at San Jose State University. Sun received his undergraduate and MA training in China before studying in the United States; he now teaches at California State University–Northridge.

Special thanks go to Ernest Lepore, chair of the CIC, who has initiated this CIC special session and actively sought the substantial funding for supporting two invited guest speakers from China. I am grateful to Zhao and Zhang for their careful preparations and the timely completion of their talks and updated versions. I am also grateful to Yan and Sun for their valuable contributions: besides contributing her own detailed and stimulating critical comments, Yan read Zhao’s paper on his behalf when he was unable to make the trip; Sun offered helpful critical comments on both Zhang’s and Mou’s papers; and Yan and Sun also contributed to this special section.

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Some Progressive and Problematic Features of Current Philosophy in China

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1. Brief Review

By “current philosophy in China” I mean philosophical studies since the 1980s when China adopted the policy of reform and opening up. In order to see the progression of philosophy in those years, it is better to review contemporary Chinese philosophy in the previous time. The beginning stage of Chinese contemporary philosophy was characterized by its creativity, variety, and fruitfulness. I take it as the second “golden stage” of Chinese philosophy, being second only to the “one hundred schools” stage more than 2,200 years ago. Active figures in the time between the 1920s and 1950s, such as Hu Shih, Feng Youlan, He Lin, Cha Hong, Zhang Dailian, etc., are proved to be founders of contemporary philosophy in China. All of those masters and the later Neo-Confucians in Hong Kong and Taiwan, by combining the heritage of traditional thought with newly introduced ideas of Western philosophy, laid a firm and broad foundation for philosophical studies even until nowadays. The philosophical prosperity disappeared, however, in the 1950s when Marxism became the dominant ideology of China. Marxism in China in the time between the 1950s and 1980s, like in the Soviet Union, was distorted as “Communist Party philosophy” and “Communist Party philosophy is simply the philosophy of struggle.” This kind of philosophy climaxed in the Cultural Revolution, as expressed in the propaganda slogan: “Endless happiness in the struggle against heaven! Endless happiness in the struggle against earth! Endless happiness in the struggle among people!” (all quoted from Mao’s sayings).

2. Progression

The new policy since the 1980s has rendered Chinese scholars more flexible in thinking. Philosophy is going forward along with economic and social progress in China. The following progressive features are remarkable.

(1) Marxist philosophy is grounded on its own basis. People are no longer content with the system of “dialectic materialism and historical materialism,” which was first outlined by Stalin in History of the All Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course, and fixed in the orthodoxy textbook. In order to get out of the shadow of Stalinism, some Chinese Marxists propose “humanist philosophy,” “practical materialism” to highlight the essentials of Marxism; some interpret Marxism mainly as a political and moral philosophy, with the central problem how to get rid of alienation not only in capitalism but also in socialism; some believe that the reasonable ground of Marxism can only be founded either in the original texts of Marx, or in dialogues with “Western Marxism.” In other words, the right way of doing Marxist philosophy is either “going back to Marx” or “being contemporary with Marx.” In studies of Marx’s texts and Western Marxism, questions raised in Western scholarship become hot points for debate. Is the “dialectic of nature” a legitimate concept? How far does Marx differ from Engels and Lenin? How is the young Marx related to the later Marx? Is “praxis” an ontological notion for Marx? Did Marx provide a materialist worldview? Needless to say, debates around those questions manifest difference not only in exegesis but also in ideology. Leftists (old and new) and rightists (old and new) give conflicting answers to those questions. Sometimes the Party leaders are concerned with, even occasionally interfere in, the academic debate. Even though scholars were rarely punished for their opinions, we should not satisfy ourselves with the minimum degree of freedom. Further progress is to be made for free expressions in all academic affairs.

(2) Specialists in Chinese traditional philosophy and Western philosophy are liberated from the bondage of the materialistic model of interpretation. This model was set up by Rhdanov who was the Party Secretary in charge of ideology under Stalin. In 1948, he defined the history of philosophy as “fighting between two campuses, the materialists and idealists, usually, the former are progressive and the latter counter-revolutionary.” His definition was accepted by Chinese philosophers for more than thirty years. Western philosophers,
except for Hegel, Feuerbach, and those few who were praised by Marx and Engels, were accused of counter-revolutionary idealism. Classical philosophy was interpreted as nothing but footnotes for Marxist works, and contemporary Western philosophy was condemned as the ideology of the decadent, impotent, and decaying bourgeoisie. In the same model, all concepts of Chinese traditional philosophy were divided into the dichotomy of two categories, i.e., “matter” (or “existence”) and “spirit” (or “thinking”). By a criterion of whether the alleged “matter” is prior to “spirit,” the label of “materialist” or “idealist” were imposed on all Chinese philosophers.

After abandoning Rhdanov’s definition in the early 1980s, some dramatic changes were undertaken. Western philosophy and Chinese traditional philosophy have become independent disciplines. Chinese and Western philosophers in the past are studied in detail and evaluated on the basis of their own, not in accordance with their relation to Marxism or materialism in general. Their thoughts are accepted as the precious heritage of human culture and living elements in modern life. The three main streams of Chinese traditional philosophy, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, are pervading all cultural discourses, from academic studies of humanity to the medium and folk culture. Among Western philosophers, the figures of the “cultural fever” are contemporary Continental philosophers such as Sartre, Nietzsche, Freid, Heidegger, Foucault, and Derrida in the sequence of time from the early 1980s to nowadays. Western classical and modern Analytic philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, and Wittgenstein, are studied mostly in the interest of academic research.

(3) Philosophical studies have expanded to become a comprehensive field. In the discipline catalog made by the Ministry of Education, philosophy is a discipline of the first order, including eight disciplines of the second order: Marxist philosophy, Chinese philosophy, foreign philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, logic, philosophy of science and technology, and religious studies. This division is not very reasonable; it can nevertheless show how comprehensive philosophy is in China today.

Philosophy departments in China cover the specialties that are common in departments or schools of the universities in the West; for example, Marxist studies in political science, Chinese philosophy in Sinology or Asian studies, aesthetics in literature, and religious studies as an independent department. This difference explains the reason why philosophy departments in China are usually (though not always) larger than those in the West.

For the purpose of interdisciplinary studies of religion, Peking University established the first department of religious studies among state universities in China in 1995. Due to the fact that the discipline of religious studies is a division of philosophy, the department of religious studies is affiliated with the philosophy department. This model of the two joint departments at Peking University was soon adopted by other universities. By now about twenty universities have established departments or institutes of religious studies within philosophy departments. The prosperity of religious studies in philosophy is caused partly by the national fevers of religious culture and of Christian studies.

Marxist philosophy parallels other disciplines of the second order, which means the independence of each philosophical discipline from others. Admittedly, this independence can be both advantageous and disadvantageous. Its advantage allows Western philosophy and Chinese traditional philosophy not to obey to Marxism. They can be developed by and for themselves. It is disadvantageous, however, when the independence results in the separation of different disciplines of philosophy. Philosophy in China now is like Shakespeare’s King Lear, who divided his kingdom into three parts occupied by each of his three daughters but nevertheless found no place of his own. The current Chinese philosophers are not doing philosophy in general but are experts in one of those eight disciplines. Experts in Marxist philosophy need not study Western philosophy. Even in their talking about “Western Marxism,” the background knowledge of contemporary Western philosophy is not often available. Experts in history of philosophy specialize in one philosopher or one philosophical school either in China or in the West but do not often cross the boundary between China and the West to do comparative studies. Many experts in ethics or aesthetics do not have sufficient knowledge of Western or Chinese philosophy; many experts in logic consider analytic philosophy a foreign field; and many experts in philosophy of science take the “dialectics of nature” as their major interest and treat logical positivists, Popper, Kuhn, etc., as Western philosophers belonging to the subject matter of another discipline. I share with some Chinese intellectuals the worry that the separation of disciplines has impeded the exchange and dialogue that are essential to, and necessary for, philosophical development.

3. Problematic Issues

Due to the lack of a fruitful dialogue, Chinese philosophers in each discipline have encountered a number of tricky problems. For example, Marxist philosophers have come up against the following questions. Is Marxism merely a revolutionary ideology that contends with the Western philosophical tradition, or does it result from the historical development of Western philosophy? Is contemporary “Western Marxism” truly a continuation of Marxism, or just a distortion of it? Are Western philosophers after Hegel able to provide rich resources for its further development?

Current studies of traditional Chinese philosophy are asked to deal with some key questions about the nature, subject matter, and methodology of this discipline. Was there philosophy in the genuine sense of the word in the ancient China? Is Chinese philosophy “Westernized” philosophy in disguise? Is it possible to do comparisons of philosophies without an oriental or an occidental bias, and if so, how is this to be done?

Chinese studies of Western philosophy have been recently challenged by the difficulty of translation of a few key terms. In the last few years, dispute has focused on the meaning of Being (and its equivalents of to on, esse, Sein, étant in the European languages). Can “Being” be translated unequivocally into one Chinese word, or is it a concept with many meanings correlating to several words in Chinese? If the former is the case, which one in Chinese is correlated to “Being”? “Existence” (zunzai), “is-sim” (“shi”), and “there-is” (you) are all candidates; which one is most fitting? If the latter is the case, how do we understand the unity of metaphysical thinking in different contexts? These are questions relevant not only to the translation of Western philosophy, but also to the understanding of ontology in ancient China. The fact that there is no correlation of “Being” to a single Chinese term is taken as an evidence of the absence of ontology (“science of Being”) in ancient China.

In view of the complexity and profoundness of those questions, answers cannot be given in a satisfactory manner within the confines of the second-order disciplines. This situation shows the urgent need to break down the isolation of Marxist philosophy, Chinese traditional philosophy, and Western philosophy in China’s philosophical studies.

4. Convergence and Divergence

Zhungzi said, “From the point view of difference, liver and gallbladder in the body are like two distant countries; from the
point view of similarity, all things are one and the same.” Those words illustrate a paradox of comparative philosophy: whether convergence or divergence is to be adopted. Since the time of Hegel, divergence has been prevalent in the West.

Strangely enough, the same question has been raised by Chinese philosophers themselves, as a reaction to the occidentalist notion of philosophy. When Derrida visited China in 2002, he said to the public, “China had no philosophy, but only thinking.” This is praise for China in accordance with the deconstruction of philosophy by his discourse of writing (“thinking” this time). But his praise misled some specialists in traditional Chinese philosophy to reach the conclusion that “Chinese philosophy” is not a legitimate concept. They argued that Chinese and Western thoughts are so divergent that the two differ in essential nature, mentality, or mode of life. According to them, philosophy was a creation by Westerners to express their thinking and living experience; as such it is characterized by logical thinking, conceptual analysis, dichotomy of binary concepts, and the quest for truth and exact knowledge. None of those directed Chinese thought; the contrary was true for the ancient Chinese. In the debate some defended the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy by arguing that this is a philosophy with Chinese characteristics; that we should get rid of the Westernization of philosophy; that we Chinese should “think our own thoughts and think by ourselves.”

In my opinion, both parties in the debate on the “legitimacy of Chinese philosophy” share common presuppositions that Chinese and Western thoughts differ in essence; that there is an essence that accounts for what is “Chinese thinking” or “Western thinking.” The two parties disagree only on the question whether the alleged Chinese essence was philosophical or not. The crucial point is that the presupposed contrary essences simply did not exist in Chinese and Western philosophy. Oppositions between logical and figurative thinking, conceptual analysis and overall synthesis, dichotomy and unity, exact knowledge and enigmatic discourse, orientation to truth and focus on morals, are neither necessary nor sufficient to differentiate Chinese and Western philosophy. Most pre-Socratic philosophers and modern ones like Pascal, Nietzsche, like Confucius and Laozi, all gave rise to many enigmas, while Mencius, Mozi, Xunzi are as logical as Plato and Aristotle. Augustine and Dong Zhongshu had a common style of writing and an overall worldview, yet both were interested in analysis of terms. Zhu Xi and Aquinas were both synthetic and analytic. Needless to say, most great philosophers, no matter whether they are Chinese or Westerners, were concerned with both of truth and goodness.

I do not thereby deny the respective unities of Chinese and Western philosophy. Each unity is not, however, caused by a distinctive essence, but by the systemization of its history. In the Western world, a systematic account of history of philosophy began in the second half of the seventeenth century, in the writings of George Horn of Leyden, Thomas Stanley, and Jacob Brucker, etc. Hegel later set up a model for the unity of philosophy through its history. The systematic account of Chinese philosophy did not appear until Hu Shih and Fung Youlan undertook this task in the 1920s. It was an accident that both studied in the United States, and they wrote a history of Chinese philosophy when coming back. This fact does not mean that studies of the history of Chinese philosophy were “Westernized” from the very beginning. The Western influence, if there was any, was simply on the unity of Chinese philosophy through the writing of its history. Wang Guowe, a founder of modern Chinese academics, said correctly that even in the time when there was no name of philosophy, it was actually present. The actuality of Chinese philosophy needs to be fixed by disciplinary studies. Chinese philosophy became a discipline recognized by international academic circles only when historical materials were gathered and arranged into a unity. But this does not mean that there had been no Chinese philosophy before its unitary history was written, just as Western philosophy had existed long before the writings of its history in the seventeenth century.

5. Particularism and Universalism

When Max Weber criticized Chinese culture in terms of particularism in contrast with the universalism of Puritanism, he could never imagine that his assessments would be reversed after 80 years. While universalism is denied as a Western prejudice by postmodernism, particularism is hailed as a high value for the Chinese identity. Particularism of this kind is called a “Chinese characteristic.” Since the Party claimed socialism with Chinese characteristics as its course and doctrine, the label has been popularized by bureaucratic intellectuals as a symbol of “political correctness,” as a cheap tag stuck on every discipline. We have now: market economy with Chinese characteristics (abbreviated as Cc hereafter), Marxism with Cc, economics with Cc, jurisprudence with Cc, legal science with Cc, social science with Cc, political science with Cc, and philosophy with Cc, of course. It is quite unusual for social scientists and philosophers to be proud of scholarship with a particular national characteristic and not seek for universalized knowledge. I once compared Chinese with Jewish thinkers: both have old traditions and cultural identities. Jewish thinkers, by contrast, inspired by a sense of worldly mission, always aim at universal truths. If they were devoted to theories with “Jewish characteristics,” there would be no Marxism, no Freudianism, and no relativism theory.

The particularism pervading Chinese academics is related to the cultural relativism that developed into a kind of ethnic nationalism in many developing countries after the Second World War. As Anthony Smith observed, ethnic nationalism of this kind is characterized by the formation and persistence of collective cultural identity, the myth of common ancestors and descent, the sentiment of ethnic centrality and superiority, the mobilization of masses against colonization, and the traditionalism of elites. We are witnessing all of those characteristics in the “philosophy with Chinese characteristics.”

Conservationists of Chinese traditional philosophy have attempted to prove the uniqueness of the “Chinese mentality” with the alleged evidences of “unique origin” of the Chinese people more than two millions years ago, and “continuous progression” of the Chinese civilization for more than ten thousand years. In order to emphasize the modern role of Chinese traditional philosophy, they try to justify its superiority over Western philosophy by spreading an arrogant prediction that the twenty-first century is the Chinese one, or the unfounded news that many Nobel prize winners gathered in Paris and published a declaration that human beings would not be able to survive without Confucius’s thought. To my and many others’ ears the most beautiful song in our age is: “We are the world; we are the children.” But what we are hearing is the incongruous sounds: “We are the Chinese; we are the oldest.”

Leftists of Marxist philosophy employed “Chinese characteristics” as the latest means to prevent the bankruptcy of socialism as happened in the Soviet Union and the eastern block. They see globalization as a new conspiracy of imperialism to exploit and oppress developing countries. To resist it, they combine the Marxist doctrine of class struggle with “post-colonial theory” to mobilize the masses. Ironically, those Marxists seem to forget that Marx in The Manifesto of the Communist Party spoke of counter-globalization as “the
great chagrin of reactionaries,” as “one-sidedness and narrow mindedness.” He also praised the role played by the bourgeoisie in globalization: “The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery, with which it batters down all Chinese walls”; “It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production... so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeoisie, the East on the West.” Those seemingly “politically incorrect” words were nevertheless those of Marx, many of whose followers have committed a sin against Marx’s ideas of globalization.

Fashionable learners of Western philosophy are enthusiastic about postmodernist critiques of Western tradition of the universalistic claims to truth, “logocentrism,” and absolutism. All of those are for them the approval for cultural particularism and the relativism of value and truth. They are proud to find that some postmodernists appeal to Chinese traditional thought for their particularist and relativist approaches. The dictum “Western post-modernism is the Chinese pre-modernism” suggests the inner link between the critical rationalism in the West and the traditional conservatism in China.

I share with many scholars the viewpoint that the universalistic potential of Chinese philosophy is important not only for Chinese but also for all humans. It cannot be all the same to all of us if human rights and democratic institutions are nothing but the prejudice of a particular civilization in a certain historical stage or if they are based on intellectually shared convictions.

6. Ideology and Its Critique

In the above we have seen how leftist Marxism, counter-globalization, postmodernism, ethnic nationalism, and traditional conservatism have merged all together to satisfy the need of the ideology of neo-totalitarianism. In the debate against this sort of ideology, some intellectuals have been engaged in liberalization, enlightenment, cosmopolitanism, and antitraditionalism. On the one side, current Chinese philosophy is seen as a battlefield of ideology between those conflicting -isms. On the other side, many Chinese philosophers adopt a nonideological position and want to do “pure” philosophy. As a consequence, they withdraw into the irony tower, doing exegesis of philosophical texts without reference to public affairs. The “pure” philosophy has caused common people to question the use of philosophy. Western philosophers often meet this challenge with the dialectics of “nothing but everything”; similarly, Chinese with that of “great use of no use.” But the equivocation of meaning cannot conceal philosophy’s crisis in its public trust and social functions.

China is now undertaking an epoch-making transformation in all domains of social life, in economy, politics, education, folk culture, etc. In this crucial time, social injustice and violence, defrauding, corruption, environmental pollution, abuse and misuse of power are common in social life. Chinese intellectuals and philosophers in particular should occupy themselves with the question of how to participate in modernity; this question seems to be outdated in the West, but is really updated and urgent in China.

The philosophical concern with public affairs cannot but be involved in ideology. Although the term “ideology” has a bad reputation at present, it is by no means that all ideologies are equally bad; most probably, some are better than others. For example, though the ideology of democracy has admittedly suffered many defects and demerits, it can still be evaluated as “the best choice we have to make in order to avoid otherwise worse solutions.”

The choice is always difficult to make in the battlefield of ideology. There is no prior reason why nationalism is better than cosmopolitanism, and vice versa, or why liberalism is better than Marxism, and vice versa, etc. Whatever choice is made, a vision of the critique of ideology should be presented. Critical theory pointed out the dilemma that the critique of an ideology is already embedded in another ideology. In the Chinese context, the critique should be carried out not only upon the condemned “worse” ideology but also upon the preferably “better” one. Due to the complexity, difficulty, and wideness of social problems in the Chinese modernization, no single ideology can be chosen once and for all to solve all problems. Reasonable choices have to be made to deal with concrete problems in circumstances. Marxism, for example, might have been proved to be wrong on certain problems; it does not, however, completely lose its potential effectiveness to solve other problems. Nationalism can be used for domestic solidarity, and so forth. The plural use of ideologies will change their relations. The struggle for ideological dominance is expected to be compromised in order for certain problems to be solved. Needless to say, philosophical dialogues can play active and even decisive roles in such change. The task of Chinese philosophy today, in my opinion, is not to follow the fashion of de-ideologization in the Western world, nor to sustain ideological struggle for the outdated Marxism, but to integrate all useful elements from different ideologies by critical reflection and fruitful dialogue.

7. Local and Worldly Philosophy

Philosophy has been usually classified into German and French (or Continental), British and American (or Anglo-Saxon) philosophy, as well as Indian, Japanese, Arabic, and Chinese philosophy, etc. The national or geographical mark for philosophy implies an ambiguity between a local philosophy and philosophy in a location. I thus distinguished between Chinese philosophy and philosophy in China. Given the far-reaching and fundamental changes in China brought about by Western civilization and Marxism in the past century, purely “Chinese” philosophy in the local sense of the term no longer exists today; philosophy in the present China consists of Chinese, Western, and Marxist philosophy. As almost all local philosophies have been introduced and absorbed in China’s philosophy, it becomes one of the most promising arenas for worldly philosophy.

The word “worldly philosophy” was given by Fung Youlan in an article published in The Philosophical Review in 1948. He predicted there that “in my view, the worldly philosophy to come must contain more rationalism than Chinese traditional philosophy, and more mysticism than Western philosophy.” He was talking about “worldly philosophy” in the sense of the comparison and blending of Chinese and Western philosophy. After more than half a century, we are now prepared to do worldly philosophy in this way.

As a matter of fact, much stress has been laid on foreign language teaching in China over the past decades, and philosophy departments have popularized the study and teaching of foreign philosophy. English is more popular in China than Chinese is in English-speaking countries, and the Chinese know much more about Western philosophy than Westerners do about Chinese philosophy. Knowing about both sides well, Chinese philosophers are in a privileged position to do comparative philosophy. Indian philosophers, of course, have also enjoyed such a position for many years. Nevertheless, the common ground of the Indo-European languages has obscured some fundamental differences between Eastern and Western philosophy. By contrast, I am confident that similarities and differences emerge more clearly in comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy.
The orientation toward worldly philosophy does not exclude Marxism but accords with Marx’s notion of philosophy. Marx, in his youth, predicted the future of philosophy in these words, “Philosophy then ceases to be a particular system in relation to other particular systems, it becomes philosophy in general in relation to the world, it becomes the philosophy of the contemporary world...it is the living soul of culture, that philosophy has become worldly and the world has become philosophical...and become citizens of the world.” According to the young Marx, the world philosophy is philosophy in general, not a particular system vis-à-vis other particular systems. The worldly philosophy is general in the sense that it is not only interdisciplinarity but also cross-cultural, going beyond various barriers set by local philosophies.

The potential for comparative philosophy and Marxist philosophy in China to become worldly philosophy can be realized only if certain conditions are fulfilled. Those conditions include shifts from a divergence approach to a convergence one, from a narrow-minded particularism to a broader vision of universalism, from nationalist totalitarian ideology to its critique, and to increasing cooperation with the international community of philosophers.

Studies of Continental Philosophy in China and Its Comparative Engagement of Traditional Chinese Philosophy

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In this paper, the so-called “continental philosophy” is taken in its broader sense, referring to the major continental philosophical schools after Hegel. I will, however, limit my discourse to several important figures within this scope whose philosophies have the strongest impacts on contemporary Chinese thinkers. We shall see how Chinese intellectuals receive them and try to identify the various effects of this reception on contemporary Chinese studies of philosophy and ancient Chinese tradition.

1. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in China

Wang Guowei (1877-1927) was a brilliant scholar in studying Chinese antiquity. But he spent his 20s and 30s in studying German philosophy, and since 1903 published several articles about Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in the journal, Educational World. Even after he devoted himself totally to antiquity, Schopenhauer’s doctrine of “will as the essence and suffering source of life” and the artistic way to get rid of suffering was still his philosophical inspiration. Under the influence, he wrote the famous Comments on Ci Poems of the World and Remarks on Red Mansion Stream, successfully combining a fresh interpretation of the Chinese texts and his lively comprehension of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. When he recollected his transferring from pure philosophy to aesthetics and literary criticism, he wrote:

I got involved into and fed up with philosophy since long. Most philosophical doctrines can be characterized as “the lovely are not trustable, and the trustable are not lovely.” I know what is truth, but I still love the great but illusive metaphysics, dignified ethics and pure aesthetics. To pursue the trustable ones, however, we have to appeal to positivism in epistemology, hedonism in ethics and empiricism in aesthetics. In recent two or three years, this dilemma, i.e., knowing it trustable but being unable to love it and finding loveliness in it but being unable to trust it, troubled me most and pushed gradually my hobby from philosophy to literature.¹

This paragraph shows the deeper state of mind shared by part of the Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century when facing Western culture and a new reality, which is best expressed by Wang as “the lovely are not trustable and the trustable are not lovely.” In traditional Chinese culture, there is no such dilemma. For Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism, the trustable (ren, dao, and wu) are exactly the most lovely. Facing Western-Japanese invasions, testing the “trustable” forces of Western positivistic sciences and technology, while being unable to leave the loveliness of his own tradition, Wang manifested this dichotomous feeling through, as mentioned above, listing the two sorts of Western learning and philosophy. In Schopenhauer, however, he found a philosophy that is as lovely as the Chinese ones and thence can communicate with them intimately, and at the same time can deal with the positivistic challenge somehow through its relation to Kant’s Critique. Certainly, Wang did not solve the dilemma completely. This fact may have some connection to the tragedy of his committing suicide in 1927.

Nietzsche came to China also quite early. In the outset of twentieth century, Liang Qichao and Wang Guowei exposed Nietzsche and praised him very much. Lu Xun, in several essays written in 1907, enthusiastically admired Nietzsche as “the individualistic hero” who freed individuality from all bounds. Until the new cultural movements, Nietzsche was spoken of highly as the symbol of rebelling against traditional culture. In 1915, Chen Duxiu in “Addressing Youth,” the Foreword of New Youth, cited Nietzsche’s writing on the noble and slave moralities to call young people to oppose the “feudalistic autocracy.” Since then, there were quite a few ones worshipping Nietzsche among the cultural radicals, such as Fu Sinian, Tian Han, Mao Dun, Guo Moruo, etc. Guo Moruo, for instance, in his poem A Praise of Gangsters, called Nietzsche “the revolutionary gangster” for condemning traditional gods as well as destroying all idols, and shouted three times, “long live” him.²

These followers of Nietzsche were both attracted by Nietzsche’s brilliance and dominance and utilized him to provoke an atmosphere of cultural revolution. However, the cultural direction that they were heading was actually opposite to Nietzsche’s. The tradition which Nietzsche tries to overturn is the core values of traditional Western culture, i.e., its metaphysics, theory of knowledge and truth, scientific claims to objectivity, and a religion of worshipping an omnipotent God that is hostile to life. Most of these values, e.g., those of science and epistemology, were actually pursued vehemently by the advocates of China’s new culture movement. It can be said, therefore, that they shared only certain formal and, to me, superficial similarities with Nietzsche’s followers in the West, but departed from them in substance. Both had an antitraditional attitude but they crossed each other on their ways to a new cultural world. The Chinese thereby entered into a modern world and the Western Nietzscheans to a postmodern one which shares something with the premodern Chinese traditional culture.

2. Sartre and Other French philosophers

Chinese scholars and writers began to study French existentialism no later than the 1940s. Famous poets and scholars were said to be influenced by the new philosophical tide. After 1949, existentialism was treated as a “bourgeois reactionary thinking-tide.” Ironically, Sartre’s and some other existentialists’ philosophical works or novels began to be translated into Chinese and became well known in the country due to the need
of criticizing them politically. The translations of *Nausea* and *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* were among those influential even during the cultural revolution (1966-1976).\(^3\)

After 1976, the psychic state of Chinese intellectuals—collapsing faith, disappearing idols, darkening idealism—was somewhat like that of French or European ones after World War II. Sartre’s descriptions of human psychology looked extremely profound to quite a few young people. Also, Sartre’s analysis and appreciation of absolute individual freedom fit the spiritual pursuit of some young people for a real self that cannot be fooled anymore. In this situation, a “Sartre fever” occurred in China during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many students, even having not read Sartre’s philosophical works, were strongly attracted by the Sartrean slogans as “Human beings are destined to be free,” “Other people are your hell,” etc. In 1981, Sartre’s drama *Dirty Hands* (*Les mains sales*) was put on the stage in Shanghai. It described a case of murder happening within an East European communist party and caused vivid associations in audiences with what happened during the cultural revolution in China. It aroused huge interest and was soon criticized by the party-controlled media. But that only gave the drama and Sartre more fame.

During a leftist movement of “Clearing Spiritual Contamination” in 1983, Sartre was certainly targeted as one of the contaminating sources. In literature, some works by talented young poets and writers such as Zhao Zhenkai’s (his writing name for poems is Bei Dao) novel *Waving*\(^4\) was said to be affected by existentialism.\(^5\)

Since the middle of the 1980s, more substantial translations of Sartre’s works in both literary and philosophical forms were put into press. In 1987, Sartre’s main philosophical book *Being and Nothingness* was published in Chinese by San Lian Press, Beijing,\(^6\) which marked a new stage of Sartre’s study in China. In recent decades, in China, many of the original works of contemporary French philosophers have been translated into Chinese, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Claude Levi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas, Gilles Deleuze, A. J. Greimas, Gaston Bachelard, etc. For instance, I find on my bookshelf five translations of Merleau-Ponty’s books appearing in the last five years.

### 3. Husserl Studies in China

After the fever of Sartre and that of Nietzsche in the 1980s, and after the “bloody dusk” at the end of the decade, in the 1990s, Chinese philosophical minds entered into a period of studying carefully the philosophical reasons of these postmodern thoughts, which can be called “a time of phenomenological investigations,” vigorously going on until now. In it, the studies of Husserl and especially Heidegger played crucial roles.

The first Chinese who introduced Husserl into China theoretically, as far as I know, is Yang Renpian. His “Introduction to Phenomenology” was published in the journal *The Bell of the People* in 1929.\(^7\) From 1949 to the end of the cultural revolution (toward the end of 1970s), there was little, if any, study of Husserl. After the spring of 1980, there appeared several papers on Husserl’s phenomenology. The translation of Husserl’s works was delayed until the middle of the 1980s and greatly improved during the 1990s. The small *Idea of Phenomenology (Husserliana) vol. 2* was translated by Ni Liangkang and put into press in June 1986. Its first print was as big as sixteen thousand, and in September of the same year there was a second print with thirty-five thousand books. In the history of Husserl publication, this perhaps set a world record in regards to the publication number of a single work within one year.

In the 1990s, the translation of Husserl increased steadily, of which two were especially worth mentioning. They are the translation of the *Idea I* (Shang Wu Press, 1992) by Li Youzheng and that of *Logical Investigations* (Shanghai Translat Press, 1999) by Ni Liangkang. Up to now, almost all Husserl’s phenomenological works published during his life have been rendered into Chinese. This fact indicates that Chinese translations have so far been able to provide a preliminary but solid foundation for Husserl study in China.

Ye Xiushan’s book *Thinking, History and Poetry: Studies of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophies* (1988)\(^8\) exerted discernable influence on the intellectual circle then. Ye was an expert on the history of Western philosophy, especially ancient Greek philosophy, and after his research interest turned to contemporary continental philosophy during the 1980s, he was able to show insights in studying the latter by finding certain hidden relations between the classic and the contemporary. In the Chinese works of studying Husserl, the most influential and highly qualified ones came from Ni Liangkang. His *Phenomenology and its Consequences: Husserl and Contemporary German Philosophy* (Beijing: Sanlian, 1994), *Self-Recognition and Reflection* (Beijing: Shangwu, 2002), and *The Interpretation of the Phenomenological Concepts in Husserl’s Works* (Beijing: Sanlian, 1999) are weighty in exposing Husserl.

### 4. Heidegger and Hermeneutic Studies in China

Xiong Wei played an important role in introducing Heidegger into China. In 1933, attending Heidegger’s course in Freiburg University, Xiong Wei “was quickly attracted by Heidegger’s style of teaching.” Back in China, he published a paper entitled “Speaking, Speakable; Unspeakable, Non-speakable” in 1942,\(^10\) mentioning Heidegger perhaps for the first time in a Chinese academic journal, and applying Heidegger’s later thinking on language to deal with the issue of “ineffability” of the ultimate reality raised by Daoism and Chan Buddhism. By 1963, some translations of Heidegger’s papers by Xiong and some other scholars had been put into press.

In 1987, a Chinese version of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, supervised by Xiong, was published by Beijing Sanlian Press\(^11\) with a print of fifty thousand. But a much bigger tide of translating Heidegger came from a Zhejiang scholar, Sun Zouxing. Since 1994, his numerous translations of Heidegger’s works has continued with an impressive quality. Quite a few works on Heidegger written by foreign scholars have also been rendered into Chinese. For instance, there have been no less than three translated books discussing Heidegger’s Nazi problem.

The publications about Heidegger written by Chinese scholars have been much more than those about Husserl. They, plus the translations of Heidegger, played a leading role in the study of Western philosophy in 1990s mainland China and produced a wide effect in intellectual circles. For instance, we can find the effects in studies of Chinese traditional philosophy, Marxist philosophy, and aesthetics. Even a retired man who has been collecting Beijing vernacular cited Heidegger’s saying that “Language is the house of Being” in a broadcast interview to explain his motive.

Jin Xiping’s *A Study of Heidegger’s Early Thinking* opened an important research area in Heidegger early works. Zhang Xianlong’s two books on Heidegger, *The Thinking of Heidegger and Chinese Dao of Heaven* and *Heidegger’s Biography*,\(^12\) continued the study by using some important materials of Heidegger’s Freiburg and Marburg lectures, as well as Theodore Kisiel’s *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* (University of California Press, 1993).
5. Comparative Studies

The study of phenomenology in China since the 1990s, especially the study of Heidegger, by disclosing the postmodern significance of contemporary continental philosophy, has corrected more or less the distorted images of Nietzsche, Sartre, etc., mentioned above and, in contrast, opened a dialogue with traditional Chinese philosophies. The methodological Eurocentrism, i.e., the assumption of a Western standard such as Plato’s or Hegel’s that deprecates Chinese traditional philosophy, began to lose its force. In the 1990s, along with the development of phenomenology in the old nation, the relations between phenomenology in the broad sense and eastern, particularly Chinese, ancient philosophy have aroused more and more interest.

Zhang Qingxiong published in 1995 his The Neo-Consciousness-Only Philosophy of Xiong Shili and the Phenomenology of Husserl. Its third part is a direct comparison of which the third chapter concentrates on the structure of consciousness. He finds three similarities between Xiong (as well as the Consciousness-Only Buddhist school to certain extents) and Husserl: (1) Consciousness is always a consciousness of something, and so every consciousness has a correlated structure of noesis (the acts of consciousness) and noema (what is constituted by the acts). (2) The noema is no other than the content of intentional consciousness and directed at the noesis. (3) Both noesis and noema, as two sides of the consciousness, are totally in consciousness. Furthermore, both share a view of how the acts of consciousness come to awareness. The Consciousness-Only school asserts that an act of consciousness is recognized by the act itself rather than by another consciousness or a spiritual entity. It is therefore called “the dimension of self-consciousness,” compared to a lamp lighting both other objects and itself.

Since 1995, Zhang Shiyi, who had studied Hegel’s philosophy for about forty years, published two books and several papers to discuss the significance of the change happening in contemporary Western philosophy and its impact on the relation between Chinese and Western philosophies. He sees Heidegger as a crucial figure in altering the relation: “If we take Hegelian philosophy as the apex of the subject-object dichotomous philosophy in the modern west, Heideggerian philosophy may be construed as the important beginning of the thoughts of uniting Heaven with human beings and of anti-traditional-metaphysics in the contemporary west.” For Zhang, certainly, the Heideggerian unity of Heaven with human beings differs from the traditional Chinese one, since “Heidegger’s philosophy has passed over and implied the ‘subject-object dichotomy’, and so is a higher ‘unity of Heaven with human beings’.”

Wang Shuren went further to propose “image-thinking” as a methodological backbone of traditional Chinese philosophy and culture. He wrote: “The thinking movements of taking image in creating Chinese characters, and of image-transforming and flowing in the Book of Changes, was always the mainstay of Chinese traditional way of thinking.” In 2005, Wang published Returning to Original Thinking: The Chinese Wisdom in the Perspective of Image-Thinking, which tries to uncover deeper features of image-thinking by examining the Changes, Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, Chan Buddhism, Chinese ancient treatises of poetry, calligraphy, and painting. The author cites Heidegger quite a few times to illustrate the crucial methodological problems.

Zhang Xianglong’s two books, Heidegger and Chinese Dao of Heaven (already mentioned above) and From Phenomenology to Conclusio, are on the comparative path as well.

In recent years, there occurred in some young scholars a new trend to reinterpret ancient Chinese literature and culture through the methodological horizon of contemporary continental philosophy. For instance, Dr. Ke Xiaogang published his book of A Comparative Study of Heideggerian and Hegelian Thoughts of Time, which is a profound interpretation of Heidegger and therewith criticizes Hegel’s view of time. It is men like Dr. Ke who are now playing active roles in a group of young scholars who take the title of “Pilgrimage to Holy Mountains” on the internet, which devotes itself to re-understanding the ancient Chinese world through a new field of vision.

Up to now, therefore, we can say that the paradox of “the trustworthy” and “the lovely” faced by Wang Guowei has begun to disappear. It maintained its power in the antitraditional interpretation of Nietzsche and the optimistic dialectic of Hegel but melted away in the current awakening, which has been caused at least partially by a lively dialogue with continental philosophy in the contemporary West. The “loveliness” of Chinese traditional culture and philosophy began to look trustworthy. After one hundred years of groping, Chinese intellectuals have started a new and hopeful orientation that holds the possibility of “from Xuan Zhuang to Hui Neng,” or “from introducing the west to generating new Chinese.”

Endnotes

— International Cooperation —


7. The Bell of People, 10:1 (1929).


10. It was published in the journal of National Central University, Literature, History, Philosophy, No. 1, 1942.
Analytic Movement in Modern Chinese Philosophy and Its Constructive Engagement with Traditional Chinese Philosophy

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My purpose here is to give an evaluative examination, instead of a mere descriptive account, of analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy. With this purpose, my focus is on two things: (1) to spell out a framework by which to characterize the development of analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy; (2) to introduce and explain the nature and characteristics of one significant enterprise of the constructive engagement between analytic philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy.

1. Analytic Movement in Modern Chinese Philosophy

1.1 Preliminaries: Identity of Analytic Philosophy and Analytic Methodology

To effectively and reasonably characterize the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy, we need to first have a reasonable understanding of the identity of analytic philosophy and capture what methodologically underlies and unifies various strands and thoughts that are usually considered as parts of analytic philosophy, though the issue is controversial.

In many cases, a movement of thought in philosophy is largely or in some crucial aspect characterized and identified in terms of its distinguishing methodological approach. To effectively and clearly characterize the conception of analytic methodology, there needs to be a meta-methodological framework of conceptual and explanatory resources for examining the structure and content of a given methodological approach. For this purpose, I introduce a three-dimensional framework. Briefly speaking, a methodological approach as a whole can be looked at from three related dimensions: its dimension of methodological perspective that is intended to point to (or provide a path leading to) a certain aspect/layer/dimension of an object of study, its dimension of methodological instruments that are employed to somehow implement the methodological perspective, and its dimension of guiding principles that are assumed by the agent who takes the methodological perspective and instruments for the sake of regulating her understanding of the relation between the current and other methodological perspectives and instruments.¹ A certain methodological perspective and its related methodological instruments can be compatible with different methodological guiding principles (adequate or inadequate). What constitutes the (descriptive) identity condition of a methodological approach lies in its characteristic methodological perspective (and its related instrumental methods) instead of those different or even competing guiding principles.

By “analytic philosophy” I mean any philosophical inquiries that take analytic methodology. By “analytic methodology” I mean a methodological approach, understood broadly, that, historically speaking, has been presented and illustrated by a mainstream tradition in Western philosophy in a more or less systematic and manifest way but also more or less presented in other major philosophical traditions, like the Chinese tradition. In its manifest version in the Western tradition, roughly speaking, it refers to the methodological tradition from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle via Descartes, British Empiricism, and Kant to the contemporary analytic movement.² In the Chinese tradition, it manifests itself in (strands of) many ancient thinkers’ works as well as in many contemporary authors’ works in their studies of Chinese philosophy, such as those of Gongsun Long and the Mohist. (If one considers analytic strands and elements, one can find them out in almost all the ancient Chinese thinkers such as Zhuang Zi and Confucius. This matter of fact is related to one significant point concerning the nature and status of the analytic perspective and the analytic way of thinking, which will be addressed below.) Nevertheless, as far as Chinese philosophy is concerned, it is in modern Chinese philosophy where analytic philosophy manifests itself in the form of a movement of thought whose characteristic features will be explained below.

Conceptually speaking, analytic methodology or the analytic methodological approach consists in the perspective dimension and its instrumental dimension. Though an agent who carries out the analytic methodological approach also often presupposes or subscribes to a certain methodological guiding principle (adequate or inadequate), the analytic methodological
approach, historically speaking and conceptually speaking, is not necessarily related to any *ad hoc* methodological guiding principles that have ever been subscribed to by those who have carried out the analytic approach. Nevertheless, prescriptively speaking, applications of analytic methodology should be guided and regulated by those adequate methodological guiding principles.

By “the perspective dimension of analytic methodology” or “the analytic perspective” I primarily mean a being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective, which is intended to point to and capture the being aspect of an object of study (or, more generally speaking, any object of thought involved in reflective inquiries), which constitutes the “metaphysical” foundation for a rational (intersubjective) dialogue in philosophical inquiries. The term “being aspect” as a blanket term is used here as a collective noun which covers the constant, stable, regular, definite, universal, or unchanging aspect/dimension/layer/element of an object of study. The being aspect of an object of thought is fundamentally captured by the two basic laws of logic, i.e., the law of identity and the law of noncontradiction. In contrast to the becoming aspect of an object of study, the being aspect has its meta-metaphysical status or semantic-ascent nature in the following sense: whether or not there really exists contradiction in nature or in the real world, the presentation of such contradiction in our language and in our thought should, or has to, be coherent observing the two laws of logic at least for the sake of mutual understanding and critical evaluation. In the foregoing senses, it is this being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective that constitutes the “metaphysical” foundation for a rational (intersubjective) dialogue and thus mutual understanding and critical engagement. It is this methodological perspective whose adequate metaphilosophical understanding would provide a reasonable explanation of how a rational dialogue is possible and thus contribute to the explanation of how the constructive engagement via a rational dialogue, mutual understanding, and critical engagement is possible. It is this methodological perspective that fundamentally unifies various analytic strands and treatments in analytic philosophy.

The instrumental methods or instrumental resources of analytic methodological approach refer primarily to the methods of conceptual analysis, logical analysis, and linguistic analysis together with their involved conceptual tools, which have been developed for the sake of logical argument, coherent explanation, and rigor assessment when the analytic approach has been taken. One unifying thing that fundamentally underlies all these, in my opinion, is the being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective.

What distinguishes analytic philosophy from other types of philosophy (philosophical inquiries) are neither what kinds of problems are treated nor whether reasoning/justification is to be sought (or whether “a reasoned resolution” of problems in philosophy is to be sought?). Many of those problems which analytic philosophy treats are common issues in philosophy, though not all of them (such as the issue of paradoxes). All philosophical inquiries, if they deserve to be thus called, seek “reasoned” resolution of, or argumentation and justification for resolution of, the problems under examination based on the human being’s rationality. What distinguishes their different approaches lies in their distinctive reasoning paths or argumentations; and such distinctive reasoning paths and argumentations per se are sensitive, or related, to the nature and status of the aspect of the object of study that they set out to capture.

### 1.2 Stages and Levels of Analytic Movement in Modern Chinese Philosophy

One criterion for an independent and distinguishing identity of a movement of thought lies in its creative orientation, approach, or enterprise that would distinguish the involved portion of the movement from other movements of thought [including other similarly-titled movements of thought in other region(s)]. Based on this criterion and for the considerations to be explained below, the analytic movement of modern Chinese philosophy is thus labeled; in view of this criterion, the constructive engagement enterprise of the analytic movement of modern Chinese philosophy in regard to classical Chinese philosophy, as one creative distinguishing agenda, will be highlighted in the following discussion.

The development of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy might as well be classified into three stages and is characterized in terms of multiple-level dynamic process.

1. **(1) Reflective-introduction / Reflective-introduction**
   - stage
   - dimension

2. **(2) Reflective-application / Reflective-application**
   - stage
   - dimension

3. **(3) Creative-development / Creative-development**
   - stage
   - dimension

Several notes are due. First, a stage indicator, “introduction” in the “introduction stage,” “reflective-application” in the “reflective-application stage,” or “creative-development” in the “creative-development stage,” gives one distinguishing feature of the stage under examination, which is either the primary focus of *pattern* (e.g., the introduction stage) or one of the primary focuses or dimensions of *pattern* (e.g., the reflective-application stage and the creative-development stage) by means of which the current stage distinguishes itself from the previous one(s) and which constitutes a further development from the other dimension(s). Second, in the timeline, a former stage has been replaced by the immediately subsequent stage, and the reflective inquiry that is identified by the stage indicator of the former stage has not thus disappeared but has then become *one dimension* of the multiple-level body of reflective inquiry that is identified and highlighted in terms of the stage indicator of the subsequent stage. Third, what is primarily focused on when I give the foregoing characterization of the development stages of the analytic movement is not certain individual scholars’ personal projects but some characteristics of the “patternized” activities of a significant portion of the community of scholars who have carried out the analytic approach in their philosophical inquiries and who can effectively conduct (mutual) critical evaluation of each other’s philosophically interesting research results.

#### 1.2.1 Reflective-introduction stage / dimension

The pioneer work at this stage was done by some scholars in the late Qing Dynasty after the Opium War (1845). Most of those scholars are native Chinese, but some Western scholars/missionaries who then lived in China also contributed to this process. There are two peak periods and their respective subsequent stretches. One is around the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and its subsequent stretch until the beginning of the “Cultural Revolution” in the mid 1960s. During this time, the works of almost all the major thinkers of the pre-twentieth-century Western analytic tradition were translated...
and introduced into the Chinese philosophical circle. They include Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Berkeley, and Kant’s representative works.

The other is around the 1980s and its subsequent stretch until now. During this time, some systematic efforts were made to translate and introduce the representative works of most of the major figures in contemporary analytic philosophy together with many good introductory or research books on those figures’ thoughts or on topics in the core areas, including philosophy of language and mind, metaphysics, and epistemology, of contemporary analytic philosophy. The original works include those of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Strawson, Quine, Davidson, Searle, and Kripke.

This process still actively continues but at present goes with some distinguishing features. First, with the current progress of the analytic movement stepping into its constructive development stage, the reflective-introduction activity has become one important dimension of the whole analytic movement. Second, related to the previous feature, it is often the case that a translator is also an interpreter and constructive-engagement researcher simultaneously. Third, some of these reflective introductions have recently focused not merely on Western resources but also pay due attention to the analytic resources in traditional Chinese philosophy. Indeed, the last feature is contrasted to the introduction practice of the first peak period during which the Western resources in the analytic tradition were exclusively focused on. There are some reasons for this. First, that happened in the background of a trend among many scholars during that time who critically reflected on why China was then so weak and invaded by Western strong powers and how the intellectual resources had contributed to their strength. Second, there has been a stereotyped understanding of the nature and constitution of traditional Chinese philosophy that renders traditional Chinese philosophy’s lack of analytic strands and thought. This mentality has had some scholars neglect and ignore analytic resources in their own tradition.

1.2.2 Reflective-application stage / dimension
As I see it, there are two major fronts of the reflective application of the analytic methodological approach in modern Chinese philosophy. One front is to consciously and explicitly apply a variety of instrumental methods and conceptual resources that have been developed in the analytic philosophical tradition and many of which have more or less become academic norms in various areas of philosophical inquiries.

Another important front of such reflective application is on studies of traditional Chinese philosophy and its related comparative studies concerning Western philosophy. I tend to distinguish such reflective application of analytic methodological approach into two types. One type is that of application of those analytic instruments (instrumental methods and conceptual resources) which have been developed in philosophy in the analytic tradition and which have already more or less become well-accepted academic norms in writing philosophy. The other type is of application of the analytic perspective, together with the foregoing analytic instruments, which is intended to point to and capture the stable, definite, constant, universal, and unchanging aspect of the object of study, including logical relation, logical implications, and coherence of involved ideas.

It is noted that, when the reflective application in interpreting ancient thinkers’ thoughts in classical Chinese philosophy has become one level of the creative constructive-engagement portion of the current creative development stage in view of study of traditional Chinese philosophy, the reflective-application approach and the constructive-engagement approach are often combined into one project as two related aspects. On the one hand, the constructive-engagement projects often involve first carrying out an interpretative project to understand and elaborate ancient thinkers’ ideas and their due implications in terms of contemporary analytic conceptual and instrumental resources; on the other hand, an interpretative project and its objectives in reflectively applying analytic resources is often guided by some more general purposes and agenda in the constructive-engagement enterprise.

1.2.3 Creative-development stage / dimension
Such creative work of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy, as I see it, consists in two kinds on four fronts.

One kind of creative research work consists of creative research projects in the traditional core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy. There are two fronts. One front is composed of creative research projects in the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy on a variety of front issues of contemporary analytic philosophy. Generally speaking, creative development research projects in this connection have been carried out largely by those native Chinese philosophers who have pursued their Ph.D. in graduate programs abroad (most of them are in the United States) and whose dissertation writings focus on some significant issues of the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy. Some of them have already published their research results, either out of their dissertation or from their new research projects in this connection, in well-respected, blind-reviewed international journals in the field of analytic philosophy. These publications can be taken as evidence for the quality level.

The other front of the first kind is composed of creative research projects in studying the thoughts of some significant figures of the analytic tradition. As far as their research agenda are concerned, many Chinese scholars at home who work in analytic philosophy focus more on some significant figures in the analytic tradition (such as Wittgenstein, Frege, Russell, Quine, or, recently, Davidson) than on those issues under current discussion in the international journals in analytic philosophy, for some understandable reasons. It is very promising that, at the current stage, some of these Chinese scholars base their research primarily on carefully reading the original texts instead of the second-hand literature and have published some interesting research results in Chinese publications. Although these research results are basically published in Chinese and are not easy to be directly approached by international experts in relevant areas, one thing is certain: carrying out such research work primarily based on carefully reading the first-hand originals instead of the second-hand literature is no doubt in a right direction and very promising.

The other kind of creative research work of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy consists of creative research projects in constructive engagement between the analytic approach and traditional Chinese philosophy. Such a kind of creative research work, on two fronts to be indicated, is especially significant and philosophically interesting. Let me say more about this front in a separate section.

2. Constructive Engagement of Analytic Philosophy and Traditional Chinese Philosophy
One significant enterprise of the current stage of the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy, which distinguishes itself from the analytic movements in other traditions, lies in its constructive engagement enterprise concerning traditional Chinese philosophy. In so doing, the analytic movement in modern Chinese philosophy has contributed to the development of analytic philosophy per se on two fronts. First, it has deepened our understanding of the nature, characteristics, scope, and limit of the analytic methodological approach
through its meta-philosophical and meta-methodological inquiries into philosophical methodology via comparative examination of analytic methodology and certain representative methodological approaches in Chinese philosophical tradition. Second, it has brought some new, distinctive perspectives, insights, and visions in treating some issues and concerns in the core areas of analytic philosophy. Among others, two international conferences carrying out such constructive engagement agenda have been recently held in China: one is the conference, “Davidson’s Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement,” held in Beijing, June 8 and 9, 2004; the other is “Searle’s Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement,” held in Hong Kong, June 14 and 15, 2005. Both of them were organized by the International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy (ISCWP) and co-sponsored by the APA’s CIC as well as the conference hosts (Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, respectively).6

The agenda and reflective practice of this constructive-engagement enterprise has also distinguished itself from some traditional way(s) of carrying out studies of Chinese philosophy and comparative Chinese-Western philosophy. Indeed, comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophy is not new. Reflective application of analytic methods (especially those instrumental methods) in studies of Chinese philosophy is not new either. What distinguishes the current constructive-engagement enterprise between analytic philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy from the previous comparative projects and has rendered the former philosophically interesting and significant lies in a number of connections. (1) It has brought in a variety of substantial points of views and insights that are somehow projected from a general analytic methodological perspective (the being-aspect-concerned perspective) in treating some classical issues and concerns in traditional Chinese philosophy; that is, more than reflective application of analytic methodological approach, it also emphasizes the constructive engagement between substantial points of view; insights, and visions that have been developed from both traditions on those commonly concerned issues of philosophy. (2) A systematic, in-depth meta-philosophical discussion of the relation between analytic and Chinese philosophical tradition concerning philosophical methodology and the nature of philosophical inquiries has provided a necessary theoretical and meta-philosophical preparation for a comprehensive, systematic constructive engagement enterprise concerning analytic philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy. (3) It has formed up a collective enterprise with systematic efforts instead of some individual scholars’ personal projects. This indicates the degree of maturity, the in-depth nature of theoretical preparation, and an eligible community that can provide decent academic criticism and carry out effective critical discussion—these are definitely or even necessarily needed for any philosophical enterprise that is expected to be constructive in nature, effective in implementation, and fruitful in research results. (4) It is more comprehensive, including the engaging examination of some fundamental or significant issues and concerns in those central or important areas like epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, etc., instead of only focusing on issues in moral and political philosophy. (One stereotypical understanding of the nature and scope of traditional Chinese philosophy is to render it valuable only in regard to moral and political issues.) (5) The participants are limited to neither those who major in traditional Chinese philosophy nor those who are native Chinese philosophers but also include some scholars from mainstream philosophy in the English-speaking countries; in this aspect and to this extent, this enterprise has already become an international project and constitutes one effective way to form the world philosophy. (6) The current constructive engagement agenda and fruitful research results have raised a higher standard for the philosophical scholarship of studying traditional Chinese philosophy: philosophical (instead of merely historical) studies of Chinese philosophy needs for in-depth understanding and mastery of the developments of contemporary philosophy in various central areas (not limited to moral and political philosophy) together with their conceptual and explanatory resources, instead of treating them as irrelevant and alien; such understanding and mastery is not a mere preference but a must for the purpose of constructive engagement.

It is noted that the foregoing enterprise of the constructive engagement between analytic philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy would bear positively or even significantly on some other engagement fronts between analytic philosophy and other philosophical movements in view of the world philosophy. One such front is that between analytic philosophy and Continental philosophy. It might be arguably right that the reflective practice of modern Chinese philosophy has some characteristic edges to contribute to this enterprise, though the conflict between the two traditions has been traditionally considered to be an “internal” one within the Western tradition. For one thing, generally speaking, many modern/contemporary Chinese philosophers have been exposed to a variety of philosophical traditions when they received their basic philosophical education/training. Second, with consideration that many ideas and approaches in the classical Chinese philosophy and continental philosophy have been considered to be in a similar methodological track or kindred in spirit, the reflective practice in carrying out constructive engagement between analytic philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy in the analytic movement of Chinese modern philosophy might have provided some positive experience, helpful insights, and effective approaches. It is especially philosophically interesting and reflectively constructive to look at the relation between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy from the third eye of Chinese philosophy.

Endnotes

1. For a detailed discussion of this, see my article, “An Analysis of the Structure of Philosophical Methodology: In View of Comparative Philosophy,” in Two Roads to Wisdom—Chinese and Analytic Philosophical Traditions (Open Court; 2001), 337-44.

2. As far as the coverage of analytic tradition in Western philosophy is concerned, I agree with Davidson in understanding it in a broad sense. Davidson understands “analytic tradition” in a broad sense tracing back to Socrates’s elenches method. The remaining question is what kind of methodological perspective fundamentally underlies, and makes possible, all these crucial features of the elenches methods (rational dialogue for seeking critical engagement, mutual understanding and thus reflective progress, etc.); as I intend to explain below, it is the analytic being-aspect-concerned perspective in a metaphorically minimally loaded sense, as I will discuss below. It is noted that some scholars tend to identify the analytic philosophy in a narrow sense, i.e., the contemporary analytic movement; in this way, their focus is more on some distinctions between a variety of analytic methods within the analytic tradition understood in the above broad sense. For this kind of treatments, for example, see Michael Corrado, The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy: Background and Issues (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975) and D. S. Clarke, Philosophy’s Second Revolution (Open Court, 1997).

5. One suggestion is that these Chinese scholars at home might consider turning the central thoughts and argumentations in their Chinese research results into research papers in English and submitting them to academically respected, blind-reviewed international journals for the sake of critical evaluation and engagement.
6. Two pieces of textual evidence for the collective research results in this connection are two anthology volumes: Davidson's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement (forthcoming by Brill, 2006) and Searle's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement (under preparation).

The Study of Ethics in China

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The main tendency of the study of ethics in contemporary China, especially after 1978, is rationalism with onset pluralism. The expressions of this tendency are consequentialist or utilitarian, and teleological transforming from principle-based ethics to virtue-based ethics; from emphasizing other values to individuals’ virtues. Contemporary Neo-Confucianism and Sinified Marxism played different roles in this transition.

Contemporary Neo-Confucianism

Contemporary Neo-Confucianism considers as its mission the inheritance of Confucius’s and Mencius’s orthodox transmission (daotong) and the reviving of Confucianism. It is mainly characterized by the rational thought of the Song-Ming Confucianism, especially the theories on mind and human nature. With Confucian thought as its mainstay, it is a school of thought that absorbed and assimilated Western philosophy in seeking modernization for Chinese society and Chinese philosophy. As a philosophy of the Chinese national bourgeoisie, it appears to express a complex intention: namely, that in order to realize modernization it is necessary to develop science and democracy while still maintaining Confucian humanism so as to avoid the ills of contemporary Western society. This school arose after the May Fourth Movement of 1919 and has three generations, according to some researchers. The first generation includes Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili, He Ling, Feng Yulan, etc. Among them, Feng Yulan’s ethical theory of the realms of human life is worth noting. Feng stressed how Chinese culture and Western culture cast light on each other but do not contradict each other. Contemporary Neo-Confucians have advocated proceeding from “sageliness within” to a new “kingliness without”; they advocated science and democracy. This appeared in 1958 in “A Manifesto for the Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture,” jointly published by four overseas Neo-Confucians, Tang Chun-i, Mou Tsung-san, Hsu Fu-kuan, and Chang Chun-mai. These scholars are representatives of the second generation of contemporary Neo-Confucians. That event expressed a historic rethinking of Chinese philosophy and culture and exhibited the would-be lofty aspirations and great ideals of “fanben kaixin” (returning to the essence of the tradition and opening up a new path by way of science and democracy), so as to make Confucianism active in contemporary thought and make it understood in the world and able to serve the world. The “Manifesto” earnestly demands that “those who study Chinese learning and culture in the world must affirm the real continuing vitality of Chinese culture,” and “with sympathy and respect” regard past history and culture “as one kind of expression of the objective life of the human spirit.” It declares, “the theory of mind and nature is the core of Chinese thought, it is also the real reason of tianren hede (Heaven and human beings are one in virtue).” It affirms that the history of Chinese culture reveals that in the past it over-emphasized moral cultivation and was lacking when it came to the Western concepts of democracy and science. Between zhende, moral cultivation, and liyonghousheng, which is exploring the utility of things and making all people wealthy and rich, there is a need for the links of science and democracy. Among the third generation, most frequently mentioned are Yu Ying-shih, Liu Shu-hsien, Cheng Chung-ying, and Du Weiming. Yu Ying-shih goes through modern Chinese history and tells us that the very first attack on Confucianism was made by the Taiping Rebels’ movement of 1851, in which revolutionaries made use of Western Christian conceptions to criticize their own value tradition. They destroyed Confucian temples and prohibited Confucian books. Then “administering the world and making every effort for social utility” (jingshizhijiyoung) became the main principle of action, which in a practical way advanced “kingliness without.” Having been criticized for a century or so, Confucianism lost its previous glorious reputation. In 1988, Du Weiming and thirty-three other scholars from all over the world met in Singapore and further discussed the development of Confucianism. After that “construction” of Confucianism has become a main tendency among overseas scholars though some scholars insistently claim that using Western philosophical and ethical terms and concepts to construct Chinese philosophy and ethics is merely “notional.”

Ethics as an Independent Philosophical Discipline: Neglect and Dilemma

Ethics as an independent philosophical discipline in China has a very short history compared with the appearance of the practical “ethical concerns” in Chinese thought represented by Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, which have been classified into normative and descriptive ethical domains by some.

The first textbook of ethics Lunluxe Jiaokeshu authored by Liu Shipei, a professor of Beijing University, and published around 1905-1906. The first translation and commentary book The Principle of Ethics/Lunluxe Yuanli authored by Cai Yuanpei. The former established the foundation of the study of Chinese ethics, which analyzes and discusses Chinese family ethics and human relationship; the latter influenced Mao Zedong and other young Chinese Marxists. But until the early 1980s ethics had not attained in Chinese philosophy the autonomy it had in the West long ago. The academic study of ethics in China had been long dominated by what can be called Sinified Marxist Ethics or Ethics with “Chinese characteristics.” “The blast of the cannons of the Russian October Revolution of 1917 propelled Marxism into China.” During the war times, Sinified Marxist ethics could draw on Marxist class struggle theory, Stalin’s theory of war, and Mao Zedong’s thought to educate people to win the war and to establish a communist China. Liu Shaoli’s Lun Gongchandangyuan de Xiuuyang/How To Be a Good Communist (July 1939) brought Confucian moral self cultivation into Marxist ethics. In 1949, the “socialist construction” began. But the academic study of ethics faced a series of repressions. In 1952, ethics and sociology were cut out of university curriculum, and ethics could draw on Marxist class struggle theory, Stalin’s theory of war, and Mao Zedong’s thought to educate people to win the war and to establish a communist China. Liu Shaoqi’s Lun Gongchandangyuan de Xiuuyang/How To Be a Good Communist (July 1939) brought Confucian moral self cultivation into Marxist ethics. In 1949, the “socialist construction” began. But the academic study of ethics faced a series of repressions. In 1952, ethics and sociology were cut out of university curriculum, and ethics could draw on Marxist class struggle theory, Stalin’s theory of war, and Mao Zedong’s thought to educate people to win the war and to establish a communist China.
to ethics, selected sayings of them became the most valuable resources for ethicists to build the first textbook on ethics when the time allowed them to initiate an independent discipline of ethics. In 1982, the first textbook of Sinified Marxist Ethics was published. This book built a Sinified Marxist ethical system and criticized “Western bourgeois ethical theories” such as existentialism, positivism, and Neo-Thomist ethics, as well as “Chinese bourgeois ethicists” Wu Zhihui, Zhang Dongxun, Liang Shuming, Hu Shi, etc. Following that more and more textbooks and studies in the tradition of Sinified Marxist Ethics appeared like mushrooms after a rainstorm. Around that time the first national Association of Study of Ethics was established in Beijing and its journal of Ethics and Spiritual Civilization (Lunlixue yu Jingshen Wenming) published. Western works on ethics began to be translated and collected. Ethics as a subject began to be listed in the university curricula. This had been a flourishing period for the academic study of ethics, but with the acceleration of the Reform, it came to appear that these Sinified Marxist ethics exhibited definite shortcomings as far as where reality went. As a result, Chinese ethics now finds itself in a difficult position. This is the consensus of almost all contemporary Chinese philosophers.

The tendency toward a general convergence of Western and Chinese cultures has brought Western culture to bear in China with very great force and has left Chinese ethics the ability to continue only with considerable difficulty and at a loss as to how to proceed. Between the inherited tradition and “modernized” ideas from the West, moralists in China find themselves in a dilemma. Some have made the point that “the basic reason why the teaching of ethics has fallen upon hard times is that the outmodedness of the old ethical system divorced from practice”, and “For a long time in the field of Chinese ethics, there has existed to different degrees, a tendency to scholasticism.” Some ethical works do not study the moral phenomena of real life. They do not want, or are even afraid, to treat the changes in morality that have appeared with the Reform, instead hankering after following imitating, and annotating the moral system of the old textbook, The Principle of Marxist-Leninist Ethics, written by A. F. Shiskin, a philosopher from the USSR, in the early 1960s. Its stated methodology is “principle comes first before anything.” They either reason on the basis of quotations out of classical Marxist works so as to derive their conclusions about what “ought to be,” or else they search out examples from society to “justify and prove” some Marxist tenets and conclusions. Some consider that “if Chinese ethics has to make a theoretical breakthrough and concentrate on a key point so as to proceed in a new way, the debate between Yi (righteousness) and Li (utility, interest) is the point where the breakthrough must come.” They disagree with putting utility and morality on an equal footing and regarding each as possible positions. They insist that the solution must now be chosen from among the various utilitarian theories, but absolutely not from the deontological theories. Later an essay claimed that a theory of Rule-Utilitarianism and the Principle of Social Fairness provides a foundation for the standard of moral value acceptable in present-day China. This idea, as mentioned above, does have a number of supporters. Many moralists have noticed the difficult position of Chinese ethics and have been looking for a new way forward. The famous discussions among five ethicists, as reported in the newspaper Guangming Daily, January 30, 1989, “The Dilemma and the Breakthrough of Ethics,” evoked strong repercussions from all over the China. In the course of the discussions some scholars had asked: Does any “Marxist ethics” really exist?

The Demands of Society

The needs of society are the basic motivation for the development of ethics. Since the 1970s in China one after another appeared: the “Pan Xiao phenomenon,” the “Sartre phenomenon,” the “Nietzsche phenomenon,” the “Freud phenomenon”[5]; then we may add, the “Xiaohai phenomenon,” the “utilitarianism phenomenon” and others. In 1980 Pan Xiao, a twenty-three-year old influenced by Western ideas, wrote an article in the Chinese Youth in which she said all individuals are “subjectively for themselves but objectively for others,” the general benefit of others results from the pursuit of self-interest by each. Her article sparked a national debate, especially among youth, on what outlook to adopt toward life. The “Xiaohai phenomenon” is now stoking the fire with facai (getting rich) in everyone’s heart. The people are directing their thoughts to the questions, “How can I get rich as soon as possible?” “How can I morally justify my wealth or that of others obtained by xiaohai?” and “What are the moral ways of making money?” All these phenomena have reflected the general moral perplexity and resentment of the people while the process of social change has been going on. The people would like to keep the way of “narrow utilitarianism” at a distance, but they live under the double pressure of a social environment marked by the tendency to limit attention to considerations of personal material advantage and the pain of seeing their own personal interests unfairly pushed aside. The expression “narrow utilitarianism” refers to two one-sided understandings of utilitarianism. One of them emphasizes only the interests of society, ignoring or denying the interests of any smaller group or the individual, and especially criticizing any concern for personal interests as “individualism,” which is equated with egoism. The opposite tendency sets itself in total antagonism to material interest and maintains that morality is everything. It is a sort of asceticism. In recent years in China the factors mentioned above things have gone to the other extreme and emphasized the interest of the individual and the narrow group, immediate material advantage, and material interests, while ignoring the interest of social collectivity, comprehensive assessment of long-term interests, and spiritual values. The approach of “prudentialism” holds, “always look out for the money angle” and “if you have money, you have everything,” and so it is against caring for anything else.

Distribution

The real philosophical or political development of the theory of Liyi (interest), according to Donald J. Munro, occurred in China only in the twentieth century. Under Western influence Liyi is now often used interchangeably with those other words so important in the consideration of purposive action, xuyao (needs) and yuwaang (desire); there is a central thread of stress on the public good in Chinese tradition which runs through both premodern accounts, going back to the Confucianism of the Song and Ming periods, and Maoist accounts of the pursuit of human interests: individuals and small groups are considered in relation to larger units, especially social units of which they are integral parts. The larger unit is called “the whole,” often referring to the entire public (D. J. Munro, Journal of The History of Ideas, Vol. XLI: 2). Since 1978 Deng Xiaoping economically “opened the door,” but when it came to ideology, he strongly denounced any tendency to give up Marxism. Scholars who have built a moral system not completely within the bounds of the “Four Principles” are criticized. Chinese neo-utilitarianism may be treated as one attempt that is partly along these lines and is partly the construction of Chinese and Western utilitarian traditions. One scholar explains that rule-utilitarianism not only upholds the principle of utility but also emphasizes the importance or uprightness, it determines moral norms and the mode of conduct according to the principle of utility. At the
same time it regards following moral rules as the effective way of achieving the end of utility. By citing Rawls’s statement that in most cases, the principle for obligations and duties should be settled upon after those for the “basic structures,” the scholar comments that what makes an individual’s rights and duties in social interaction “just” derives from the social structure and its rule-governed expectations. Therefore, the scholar says, to investigate justice one should first look at social fairness. He tells us that there are three kinds of criterion for judging distributive justice in the history of Western ethics: judgment according to people’s blood, lineage, and rank; according to their abilities and gifts; and according to people’s needs. His principle of social fairness is a precept, which he favors as one of the operative standards of moral value—it is “distribution according to work” under the principle that everyone has free and equal political rights. He makes political equality the necessary condition of economic equality because he considers that in present-day China it is only through developing democracy, safeguarding the observance of legality in practice, and eradicating arbitrary power that the principle of “distribution according to work” can really be made to work without being distorted. He points out that economics is now the central concern of all Chinese people; the principle of distribution should be taken as the core of social justice. He has drawn up a formula for distribution:

\[
\text{A’s ability } \times \text{ A’s efforts} = \text{ Os to A (post, salary, etc.)}
\]

\[
\text{B’s ability} \times \text{B’s efforts} = \text{ Os to B (post, salary, etc.)}
\]

( Os: the opportunities available)

**Consequentialist Approach: “Black cat or white cat, whichever catches the mouse is a good cat”**

We can say that a deep reason for the emergence of Chinese neo-utilitarianism is found in the political changes in China in the recent past. It is hard to ignore the political influence on Chinese ethics. The Communist Party leads everything in China. If we recognize that Mao Zedong was the head of the first generation of central leadership, and his Revolutionary Utilitarianism with its slogans of “serving the people whole-heartedly” and “uttering devotion to others without any thought of self” did perform an important role in “socialist construction” and was developed to the extreme of Sinified Marxist asceticism, then Deng Xiaoping, the head of the second generation of the central Party leadership, was the author of an informal expression of neo-utilitarianism: “Black cat or white cat, whichever catches the mouse is a good cat.” His apparent meaning was that people’s ideological coloration is unimportant compared to producing useful results. Here we can find perhaps the strongest roots of Chinese neo-utilitarianism. A distinct consequentialist tendency is expressed, together with a determination to accomplish the “Four Modernizations” in industry, agriculture, science, and technology, and self-defense of China. In late December 1978, the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, under the leadership of Deng, decided to begin a new period of modernization. During this period there were five national philosophical debates, which functioned as the immediate background to the major decisions of the Central Committee. The first of the five was: “Practice Is the Only Criterion for Judging Truth.” A huge debate extended over all of China. In 1992, the Party held the 14th National Congress, which affirmed the great economic achievements of the last fourteen years and thus gave strong support to Chinese neo-utilitarianism. The frequent arguments over whether the four “special economic zones” of Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen are examples of capitalism and other similar questions were resolved; the answer given by the Party is that “facts have demonstrated” that the four zones “are socialist, not capitalist in nature.”

**Chinese Neo-Utilitarianism**

Amid a far-reaching convergence of Western and Chinese cultures, utilitarianism has become the hottest new philosophical and ethical topic in China. It reached its utmost extent at the Symposium on Utilitarianism held in Shanghai in 1988 and a further symposium held in 1989 in Wuhan. I call the various ideas associated with this new academic theme Chinese neo-utilitarianism. Chinese neo-utilitarianism is a current of ethical thought and a theory of value that gradually formed in the last quarter of the twentieth century in China, especially during the period of the Reform, the Opening to the Outside World, and the Drive for Modernization in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. It is an attempt made by Chinese moralists of the present day to find a way out of the dilemma of Chinese ethics and to rebuild a system to fit the changed society. It differs from Sinified Marxist Utilitarianism, the Chinese utilitarian tradition, and Western utilitarianism. The main themes reflected in the debates and discussions are:

1) **Theorizing about Utility**

The Western term utility (Gongli) is generally explained as Liyi (interest, profit, benefit, etc.). But the understandings of it are different. One philosopher (Mao Conghu) considers utility as a compound of Li (profit), Sheng (life), Ming (fame), and Quan (power). The proposed values for individuals are virtue, beauty and utility. He considers utility a much more basic value for a person than virtue and beauty; virtue and beauty are higher values. Utilitarianism is concerned with the moral value of utility; like ethics and aesthetics utility-study must be a branch of value theory. Another philosopher (Feng Qi) thinks that utility is one sort of value unlike the spiritual values such as truth, virtue, and beauty.

2) **The Essence of Utilitarianism**

There are three main lines of opinion in China about utilitarianism: (1) “utilitarianism” is egoistic in essence, being a bourgeois idealistic ethic; (2) “utilitarianism” is not egoistic in essence, but it does include egoistic elements; and (3) utilitarianism tries to find the basis for morality outside the field of morality. Involved here is the relationship between moral behavior and utility; or the right and the good, in the Western mode of expression. Some hold that the principle of “the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people” is the spirit of utilitarianism. Some think that utility as such cannot be regarded as anything moral, the key point being what kind of utility ought to be pursued and how to pursue it.

3) **Comments Made about Western Utilitarianism**

Chinese scholars study and criticize utilitarianism following mainly the ideas Marx and Engels discussed in “The German Ideology” and “The Holy Family.” In his book Modern Western Utilitarianism, Wang Rongsheng studies Bentham and Mill and concludes that their contribution to utilitarianism was to give a much more precise vindication of hedonism than previous pioneers in this field; that Bentham understood general interest as the sum of individual interests, without realizing that these two interests are opposite to each other in capitalist society according to Marx and Engels. Wang argues that between “others” and “me” there should be a specific connection, that is, a certain kind of productive relation for this to hold good.

4) **Debates on the Chinese Utilitarian Tradition**

Central to the history of Chinese thought there has been a...
celebrated tradition of “yili zhibian” (debate over righteousness and profit or interest), which lasted for more than two thousand years. The Chinese utilitarian tradition mainly focused on the debates over Yi and Li, and it can be distinguished into four periods. (1) The period of the origin and development of the debate. Mo Zi is said to be the first who put forward the principle of utility. (2) The period of the integration of the Chinese utilitarian tradition and Western utilitarianism. (3) The period of one-sidedly distorting the Chinese utilitarian tradition and Marxist utilitarianism, especially during the so-called Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976. (4) Since 1978, there has been a period of revival and development of Marxist utilitarian thought and advocacy of the identity of Yi and Li. This is the period of Chinese Neo-Utilitarianism.

5) Comparisons between Western Utilitarianism and Chinese Utilitarianism

Some scholars maintained that Western utilitarianism is mostly act-utilitarian in nature and defends the individual’s interests on the basis of the concept of a universal human nature. Its methodology is said to be empirical and theoretical. In contrast, Chinese utilitarianism is essentially rule-utilitarian and has strongly defended the interests of the state. Its methodology was restricted to practical experience, and it was not able fully to develop itself theoretically.

6) The Debate Over How to Relate to Utilitarianism in Present-day China

Some moralists have constructed a system of Humanist-Utilitarian Ethics, which aims to make up for the shortcomings of the theory of utilitarianism from a perspective of “universal principle.” As a practical or operational normative standard, some moralists propose Rule-Utilitarianism and the Principle of Social Justice from a perspective of distributive justice. Of course, this attempt also seeks to perfect its theory so as to fit the conditions of present-day China. Not much has been mentioned about the moral agent’s virtue.

Teleological Approach: To Reshape One Self

Almost twenty years have passed since 1988. China as a whole is changing every moment and people are facing new ethical problems with anxiety and exhaustion. The 1997 transition of the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China is one of the most important events. Codes of ethics in Hong Kong and their adoption and impact in the run up to the 1997 transition of sovereignty to China have been re-concerned with comparative ethical research. A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) suggested that Hong Kong negotiators cultivated guanxi (relation or connection) at a cost equivalent to an average of 3.5 percent of their business operating costs in China (Oriental Daily News, 1993). Scholars of Hong Kong Polytechnic University have pointed out that “guanxi” in Chinese business has been repeatedly studied by numerous scholars, but its ethical aspect has not been fully explored. Professional ethics of Chinese work units have also drawn ethicists’ attention. Members of Internet Industry of China (Zhongguo Hulianwang) signed a pledge for self-regulation and professional ethics for the China internet industry at a conference on July 19, 2002. Medical Ethics, Nursing Ethics, and Accounting Ethics are popular at universities and colleges; consumer perceptions about marketing ethics have been paying more attention to protect the consumers’ and companies’ interests; computer-use ethics, science and technology ethics also involve conflicting values and competing rules and principles. Moral problems related to applied ethics have made ethicists rethink the relation between one’s interest and the public interest or the well being of present day Chinese society. The solution is to reshape oneself and become a virtuous person who fits into the community and society. It is to make moral agents understand what is one’s true self, what is one’s true interest, and why one’s true interest or well being is identical with the public interest and welfare. The government is not neutral toward the “good life” but should actively encourage people to inculcate virtues, which in turn are the best guarantee of a flourishing political order. Moral virtues must be lived so as to be learned. By living well and flourishing one acquires the right habits or virtues. “Free development” demands one fulfill one’s obligations and responsibilities to others in society. Here we see that Aristotelian, Marxist, and Confucian ethical elements meet together. Deontological principles are necessary.

Setting Pluralist Ethics

From the foregoing discussion we can hold that both deontic and aretaic models are necessary for an adequate, complete system of ethics. Neither the virtues nor principles are absolutely primary; they are complementary to each other. Pluralist ethics might be one promising future for Chinese ethics.

Endnotes

9. See no. 7.

Studies of Logic in China

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Though there were some interesting logical studies such as those in the School of Names and the School of Mo in ancient China, and the studies of Buddhist logic after the Tang Dynasty, there is no counterpart to Aristotle’s syllogism, which was first brought to China by the Jesuit missionaries. The first Chinese introduction of Aristotelian logic is Investigations of the Principles of Names (Ming-li Tan), which was a Portuguese logic textbook.
co-translated into Chinese by the Portuguese Jesuit Francisco Furtado (1587-1653) and Li Zhizao (1565-1630), who introduced most of the logical terms into Chinese.1 The book had little impact on contemporary Chinese intellectuals and on Chinese culture in general. Yan Fu’s (1853-1921) translation of Mill’s System of Logic in 1905, with his detailed commentaries, had a much larger impact on Chinese culture. This was primarily due to a change of attitude in Chinese intellectuals toward Western knowledge, which was induced by continuous losing battles against the Western powers. Many Chinese intellectuals were forced to acknowledge the superiority of Western scientific knowledge (though the same group of people often defended the superiority of the Chinese ideal of moral and political standards), and logic was perceived as an essential part of this powerful scientific knowledge. Logic has since been actively studied by Chinese scholars and has played an important role in Chinese society very similar to that in a Western society.

Mathematical logic was introduced into China in the 1920s. During his tour of China in 1920-1921, Bertrand Russell lectured on a variety of topics, including his new mathematical logic. His oral translator of the lecture on mathematical logic, Zhao Yuanreng, was the first Chinese who did a Ph.D. dissertation on logic (with Harry Shaffer in 1919 at Harvard). Russell’s Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy was first translated into Chinese by Zhang Bangmin and Fu Zhongsun (1898-1962, a mathematician) in 1922. Jin Yuelin (1885-1984), a political science Ph.D. from Columbia in 1920 who later went to Europe to study mathematical logic, wrote and published an influential textbook, Logic, that covered mathematical logic as one of its chapters. Also, the popular textbook, Formal Logic (1963, 1979 revised version), of which Jin was the chief editor, gave a systematic and clear introduction to traditional logic, and served an important role to introduce logic to the public for many years. Wang Xianjun and Hu Shihua both went to Germany to study logic in the 1930s (Wang initially studied with Gödel). Together they have created a congenial environment for logical studies and China has produced quite a few talented logicians. Probably the most famous logician from China is Hao Wang (1921-1995), who was a student of Jin Yuelin and Wang Xianjun and went to Harvard in 1946 to study under the supervision of Quine, finishing his Ph.D. in 1948. Hao Wang remained close to his teachers and friends in China and visited Jin Yuelin in 1972 at the peak of the Cultural Revolution (his first visit to China after he left it for Harvard). Hao Wang gave six lectures (later published as Popular Lectures on Mathematical Logic) to introduce contemporary studies in mathematical logic in October 1977, at the Chinese Academy of Science, which was translated into Chinese and published in 1981.2

Currently, there are active studies of logic in China. Besides its studies as a part of mathematics in mathematics departments, there are quite a few philosophers around the country who have done good work in logic studies. Beijing University, Zhongshan University (Sun Yat-sen University), and the Chinese Academy of Social Science have separate logic programs; Wuhan University, East China Normal University, Nanjing University, and many others also have significant strength in studies of symbolic logic and philosophical logic. Chinese logicians have not only been able to keep up with current studies in logic but also have made contributions to the field by publishing in leading journals such as the Journal of Symbolic Logic.

In the last couple of decades, logical studies were kept at a distance from philosophy. This has nothing to do with traditional Chinese culture. Actually, the first generation of logicians had serious interest in philosophy. Jin Yuelin was more remembered as an accomplished philosopher than he was as a logician; Hao Wang had a wide scope of interest in both Western and Chinese philosophy, though his early work focused on the mathematical part. Rather, the separation of logic from philosophy was a protective strategy adopted by logicians against the gradual politization of philosophy under Marxism after the communists took power in 1949. Many logicians (led by Jin Yuelin) maintained that logical studies were neutral to political ideology and the study of logic was a prerequisite to any meaningful debate. In some sense this kept the study of formal and symbolic logic possible under those years, without its being annexed by Hegelian dialectics. However, this separation has had some serious aftereffects since it is clear that philosophical logic cannot be quite separated from philosophical ideas. When separated, logic lost its inspiration from philosophy. On the other hand, philosophy lost its rigor due to the lack of emphasis on clear reasoning. As a result, in the past, many Chinese logicians had been very good at their mathematical skills (such as proving theorems and constructing formal systems) but had not paid enough attention to philosophical ideas or had lacked the necessary philosophical background to be able to do so. Logical studies, as a whole, remained quite separate from other parts of philosophy.

Things have been getting better since the Political Reform started in the early 1980s. Philosophers across China had more space to pursue their studies and reestablished contact with the outside world. Since then, there are regular academic exchanges between China and the world, which broadens the view of Chinese scholars. It is also important to mention that a number of Chinese students who finished their Ph.D.s in other countries (especially the United States) started to go back to teach in Chinese universities. As far as I know, recently, Chinese logicians have paid serious attention to the relation between philosophy and logic and have engaged in serious studies of philosophical ideas. For example, the Institute of Logic and Cognition in Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) University has an active research group in logic and philosophy. Clearly there is still a long way to go, especially given the weakness in the studies of analytic philosophy in China, but things are getting better and the best is yet to come.

There has also been a renewed interest in studies of traditional Chinese logic. First, it is an interesting project to understand exactly what Chinese had as a counterpart to the Western logic in its long history. Serious efforts have been made to uncover the logical theories in the School of Names and the School of Mo, and there are some very interesting and significant contributions to it, such as Shen Xueqin’s The Logic of the Book of Mo (1982), Wang Dianji’s The History of Chinese Logic (1979), and many others. Most scholars borrowed heavily from Western logic and often tried to understand Chinese logic from the perspective of Western logic, e.g., Aristotelian logic and symbolic logic.

Recently there is also a movement to understand Chinese logic on its own, especially from its particular philosophical and linguistic context. Given the role that logic plays in any language and philosophy, it is crucial to understand the logical system before one can fully understand its philosophy. This effort is more recognizable in the works of philosophers and linguists than in those of logicians, and many interesting discoveries have been made. Some sample topics are the recent studies of Chinese nouns partly inspired by Chad Hansen's works and studies of counterfactuals by psychologists.

The above introduction to studies of logic in China is very brief and certainly incomplete, but I hope I have conveyed a general idea about it. Logic, initially a Western discipline, has been gradually absorbed by Chinese culture. I think that today logic has become an essential part of Chinese thought, just like...
the word luoji itself, which was originally a phonetic rendering of “logic,” but has now become a part of everyday language and few will remember its alien origin.

Endnotes
