Chapter 14
Renewing Ritual Cultures: Paternal Authority, Filial Piety, and the Ethos of Self-Submission in Christianity and Confucianism

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14.1 Introduction

Cultural renewal seeks to recapture a loss. Such projects are undertaken when social life disintegrates: People no longer sustain the communal fabric on which their flourishing depends, and this change affects not only those at the margins of society, but even the seemingly well-adjusted and normatively dominant mainstream.

The call for cultural renewal must be distinguished from the call for stricter laws, more consistent law enforcement, more extensive redistributive policies and more effective social engineering. The call for cultural renewal recognizes that measures which seek to influence human deportment from without, either by imposing threats or by administering remedial (material or social service) support, are insufficient. This call acknowledges that civilisation, as the ability to develop and adjust to technological novelties and political re-orientation and reform, and to integrate that development and adjustment into one's private sphere,[1] is a fragile achievement. Under conditions of modernity,[2] where people

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[1] The concept of civilization engaged here merges the Hegelian notion of a "civil society" (as a general bureaucratic and legal framework sustaining various and diverse particular cultural communities) with the difference which Tönnies has established (in 1887) between the German notions of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" (2005). This concept moreover places both components in a liberal, i.e. pluralist and democratic setting (i.e. a setting that exposes members to political change and variety of normative options).

[2] The concept of modernity engaged here takes its inspiration from both the turn to immanence (Himmelfarb, 2004) and from Vattimo's 1985 endorsement of post-modernity, i.e. his diagnosis of how Nietzsche destroyed the Enlightenment's commitment to reason, replacing it by merely subjective valuing and by the will to power (Vattimo, 2005). That is, from the position of post-modernity, modernity surfaces as faith in a linear progress that is oriented toward rational goals and principles. Or, modernity becomes tantamount to the "Enlightenment project" itself as described by Rawls (1993, xviii).

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confront a baffling variety of options to choose from, such ability requires an already secured normative identity. Only such anchoring allows one to navigate the continuous and omnipresent change "at home," and the challenge of having to integrate influences from "abroad". In order to develop such an identity, people (at least ultimately, and when all short term incentives have worn away) need a sense of a meaning that encompasses their personal life along with that of their surroundings. The concept of a culture offers such a meaning.

Cultural renewal today is usually pursued on the level of societies which are also constituted as polities.[3] Such renewal is expected to solve a problem that affects all modern democracies in view of their post-modern, i.e. no longer ethically contained, affirmation of freedom. That problem affects societies both from within and from without. From the inside, the affirmation of world view and life style pluralism has eroded what is now recognized as an indispensable fabric of dependable rules and convictions; from the outside, the proclaimed commitment to tolerance is challenged by cultures which refuse to tolerate back.

Surely, any solution to this problem of pluralism, as a problem which (along with its underlying modernity-post-modernity) gets exported (and challenged) globally calls for a universal or global solution. The question is only, how cultural renewal can be promoted universally. Today, such renewal is usually pursued in terms of a "culture" that, as it were, in its very essence is taken to compel universal assent. This culture is claimed to implement some supposedly general human rationality, along with the moral norms this rationality is believed to authorise for legal enforcement. Since traditional cultures, and especially those expressed through rituals, invoke confessedly particular authorising narratives, they are from the very start disqualified from entering into competition for universal recognition.

The quest for cultural renewal is thus usually perceived as a quest for what safeguards peace on earth, both within and between societies, as these are threatened by their different and often conflictingly particular cultural communities. This quest relies on government funded institutions, the law, and policies. It is precisely by seeking to strengthen allegiance to the democratic state (with its social network-tamed market economy) as the one master community, that this quest accomplishes its purpose of weakening ("potentially disruptive") particular communities. It offers the constituents of such polities a meaning that encompasses their own life along with that of their surroundings, to be sure. But this meaning centres on a (remotely Kantian)

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[3] This pursuit can be seen as the attempt to frame politically constituted (and in the sense introduced above "civilized" societies) in terms of (meta-) communities. This pursuit thus reflects accounts of modern civilization such as the one offered (in 1893) by Durkheim, who conceives of the transition of pre-modern to modern societies in terms of a replacement of "mechanical" by "organic" solidarity, i.e. by some over-arching commitment to social values that frame the ethos of a civil society (Durkheim, 1997).

view of "human dignity" which privileges humans' rational capacity to endorse the moral norms framing those polities. Human personhood is addressed in terms of recognized human rights. Even though these rights (after Kant) have come to extend to persons' physical and social needs, the very political commitment to attend to those needs, wherever the existing intermediate social (communal, and thus potentially cultural) structures fail, places the state in competition with those structures. Even if this does not form part of the official strategy (because a commitment to protecting families and voluntary world view associations is still rhetorically maintained in most modern democratic states), such competition in effect, and with (welcome) destructive impact on the viability of particular communities, weakens such intermediate structures.

Within the horizon of a cultural renewal thus construed, persons are envisaged as bearers of politically recognised rights exclusively. The emphasis lies on securing their freedom in the sense of independence from external constraints (except the constraints of the supposedly rational moral norms informing the democratic state). Persons are addressed as individuals, each with their entitlement to as much autonomy as is compatible with that of all others. Their personhood is thus conceptually separated from those very familial and intermediate institutions and organisations, outside of which they could never become, and without which they cannot be personally sustained as, (among other things) rational and moral persons. The cultural renewal usually pursued today, as construed in this spirit of the European Enlightenment, disregards that space for personal encounter, outside of which a culture's offer of encompassing meaning cannot be adopted as what "personally" matters. In that sense, such a cultural renewal turns out to be in effect counterproductive.

This essay therefore explores the alternative. It examines a cultural renewal that focuses on traditional communities with their particular life worlds, norms, and rituals. This essay acknowledges the legitimacy of the quest for a universal impact of cultural renewal. In a world that is globally connected, merely parochial solutions are not sustainable.[4] But this quest for universality, so this essay argues, does not have to be construed in terms of claims to compelling

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[4] Christianity, in spite of its particular authorizing narratives, grounds its claim to universality in Christ's calling His disciples to teach and baptize "the world" (Mt. 28:19). Evidence for the fact that at least some Confucians endorse claims to universality for their ritual culture is provided by all the Confucian authors in this volume. Thus Fan argues that without rituals, concerning which Confucianism gives the most encompassing account, no virtue can be acquired (p. 151), Wang grounds Confucianism in a cosmic order (cf. note 18), Ping-cheung Lo takes up the generalising concept of a "Confucianism for America" (pp. 138 f), Zhang uses his phenomenological analysis of the time consciousness underlying parental and filial love, which in turn inform the most important (i.e. familial) rituals, as evidence for Confucianism's superior ability to understand humanity, and Daniel A. Bell points to the universalizing claims in Xunzi (p. 196).

rational arguments. It can instead be construed in terms of an invitation. As invitation, it must offer something universally acknowledged as desirable. In the context of our investigation into the possibility of cultural renewal, we can proceed under the assumption that it is precisely that encompassing meaning for people's personal life along with that of their surroundings, which may serve as an initial (and so far not further specified) placeholder for what is thus universally desirable. Our exploration of the possibility of a particularistic cultural renewal will therefore also seek to develop a more substantial understanding of that placeholder.

This essay deals with traditional Christians and traditional Confucians who, precisely by endorsing paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethos of self-submission, attend to those very personalising frameworks which the dominant social democratic mainstream discounts. Such traditional Christianity and Confucianism seek universal recognition not primarily through discursive appeals to mental contents (such as values or norms). Instead, they promote the universal appeal of their particular cultures through a revived awareness of the significance of rituals.

From the very start, it is important to note that Christians and Confucians go about this project in different ways. The difference is not restricted to the content level of what Christian faith and Confucian traditions (Ching, 1993, p. 9) respectively "are about". This difference also derives from the fact that Christianity's ritual culture has survived intact within the Orthodox Church, whereas Confucian rituals, at least to a large extent and especially after the Chinese Fourth of May Movement and its turn to a communist "Enlightenment" (Schwarcz, 1986), have been disrupted. Moreover, Christians and Confucians occupy different positions vis à vis the intellectual currents which, throughout the last two centuries, have de-ritualised large portions of (non-Orthodox) Christianity and (more recently) Confucianism: Christians, unlike Confucians, can recognize these currents as outgrowth of a distorted form of their very own culture. Christians can therefore interpret what opposes their rituals as deriving from various attempts to fill a vacuum left by distorted Christianity itself. They can attribute the de-ritualising trivialisation of their faith to Christians' own failures, and assure themselves of the necessary safeguards. Confucians, in contrast, at least today, are easily led to attribute Confucianism's own loss of ritual integrity to the hostile impact of a foreign influence. Insofar as the integrity of a culture also might require a certain watchfulness in view of its own members, such an interpretation might easily present a temptation.

Yet irrespective of these differences, Christian and Confucian rituals today are exposed to the same threat of modernity and its post-modern upgrade. This threat centrally engages the denunciation of paternal authority, filial piety and the ethos of self-submission as de-humanising in the sense of being incompatible with human freedom. Even among post-traditional members of their own respective cultures, traditional Christians and Confucians compete against the same modern–post-modern quest for cultural renewal. This common exposure

renders a Christian-Confucian interchange mutually beneficial. Christians in Western countries, accustomed to the moralising trivialisation[5] a succession of rational reconstructions of the faith (H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr. 2000, pp. 18–22) inflicted on Western[6] Christianity, can profit from beholding traditional Confucians' endorsement of paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethic of self-submission, as well as from noticing traditional Confucians' disaffection with the liberalising spirit of modernity. Even if such Christians have lost touch with the ritual heritage of their own faith, attention to traditional Confucians' struggle for ritual renewal might help them question those rationalist prejudices which have compromised their own cultural integrity. Conversely, so this essay proposes, Confucians who value their ritual heritage might profit as well. On the one hand, such dialogue confronts them with conceptual resources for better presenting their case for paternal authority, filial piety and the ethics of self-submission to a Western audience. After all, those Confucian intellectuals who are in charge of the cultural competition have themselves internalised at least elements of a Western academic education. The concepts into which they translate their Chinese thought are burdened with Western cultural assumptions, in particular assumptions about the importance of morality and social organisation.[7] A dialogue with Westerners who endorse a traditional ritual culture of their own might therefore offer useful terminological and argumentative material. On the other hand, such dialogue also provides access to a paradigmatic way of framing ritual's underlying theory, in this case, Orthodox Christianity. Its theological resources concerning paternal authority,

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[5] When using "moralising" in a derogatory sense (as implying a trivialisation), I refer to a narrow concept of morality as a good in itself, which should therefore never be subordinated to anything else. On such a view (as exemplified by Immanuel Kant), morality is conceived as exhaustively accessible to human cognition and therefore (in particular) occupies a purely immanent space. While indeed religions often have moral implications, these may (as indeed in Christianity they do) remain conditional on more basic goals. (A thorough discussion of this difference can be found in Engelhardt, 2007).

[6] The term "Western" is not used in a geographical but in a cultural sense. It refers to that Christendom which grew out of the Western part of the Roman Empire, and which is defined by an either affirmative (in the case of Roman Catholicism) or critical (in the case of the various Protestantisms) relationship to the Vatican. These Christianities are to be distinguished from Orthodoxy which grew out of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (even though, today, it enjoys its largest growth in the geographical West, i.e. in the United States).

[7] On a superficial reading, Confucianism thus appears quite compatible with the commitments of an "enlightened" modernity. Only if one looks very carefully at the way in which Confucians apply such concepts (i.e. extend "morality" to piety in view of deceased ancestors, affirm continued family lines, endorse collective experiences, cf. Wang pp. 101 f) does the *proprium* of their very different approach become visible. Similarly, when Fan treats the concept of "Confucian virtue" by opposing it to MacIntyre's account, he carefully points out the different sense of that concept by linking it with Confucian rituals (pp. 146 ff, 151). The same difficulty is very carefully addressed in view of the meaning of "moral principles", which Fan in the end distinguishes from Western "moral principles" by defining them in terms of what orients and limits rituals (p. 156).

filial piety, and the ethos of self-submission, allow this traditional culture to resist both, the de-ritualising spirit of rationalist modernity, and the culturalist trivialisation of Christian rituals through post-modernity.

In thus engaging with the Christian-Confucian dialogue undertaken in this volume, the present essay explores conditions for ritual renewal which, while inspired by the Christian tradition, can also be accessed by Confucians. For this purpose, "common enemies" are identified right at the outset. These encompass not only (and trivially) those who are altogether hostile to any ritual culture (i.e. adherents of a rationalist and liberal modernity as inspired by Immanuel Kant, 1724–1804). These enemies also (and less trivially) encompass those (post-modernists) who culturally celebrate mankind's rich reservoir of rituals, but at the same time aesthetically relativize their meaning. Such "false friends", in joining modernists' dis-affection with paternal authority, filial piety, and the ethos of self-submission, repudiate rituals' orienting, unifying, and transforming power (cf. Chapter 3).

Because of this twofold nature of the (explicitly hostile and implicitly trivialising) resistance which traditional cultures encounter today, the project of cultural renewal through ritual renewal requires more than warding off rituals' outright opponents. It requires, in other words, more than a defensive strategy against those outside. In addition, this renewal requires efforts at recapturing one's own robust tradition, i.e. a strategy of strengthening those inside. Unlike post-modernity's distortion of "tradition" into something contingently enjoyable (like a style, or a fashion), a tradition is "robust" if it has not internalised cultural pluralism (but merely suffers it to exist). Robust traditions in this sense defy the post-modern call to a welcoming kind of tolerance. They stubbornly proclaim each their own affirmation of universal validity[8] in view of rightly orienting human life (around, if I may once again repeat myself: paternal authority, filial piety, and the ethos of self-submission). As Engelhardt's contribution to this volume shows, such stubborn proclamation, along with the ritual renewal devoted to its support, require a reference to the transcendent. This reference must go beyond merely symbolical hints at something (by definition) inaccessibly "out there". A mere horizon that secures humans' "openness to the transcendent" as a "humanising" device, as endorsed by one of the major "renewers" of Confucianism in the majority of her works (see e.g. Ching, 1993, pp. 84, 167) is not enough. In order to sustain what a robust ritual culture posits as its authority to rightly orient, that transcendent source of authority must be recognised as having accessed human immanence on its own

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[8] While the Christian invitation rests on Christ's unconditional command to teach and baptise all nations (Mt. 28:18–20), Confucianism is less unambiguously explicit on this point. Some evidence however supports the view that Confucianism as well was a "robust" cluster of traditions in the past (cf. Han Yü's "On the origin of the 'Way'" or Chu His's work, as quoted by Bauer, 1974, p. 286), and remains so until today, as Julia Ching suggests (1993, p. 1), when she invokes Confucians' claims to "both uniqueness and even superiority".

initiative. It must have disclosed some substantive (and thus unavoidably particular) truth about human flourishing, which, in addition, can only be represented ritually. That transcendence, in other words, must be proclaimed as having revealed the manner in which properly oriented rituals give access to itself as to those rituals' right-making (and ultimately: "saving") power. Such a transcendence must be personal.

The present essay leads the discussion about the transcendent conditions for the possibility of ritual renewal one step further. It examines the argumentative strategies through which the proclaimed right-making authority (of the transcendent person) can secure the persuasive power needed for rendering even a confessedly particular traditional and ritual culture universally inviting today. This essay delineates how paternal authority, filial piety, and the ethos of self submission, as affirmed by traditional ritual cultures, can aspire to a vision of human flourishing that appeals even to contemporary liberals. In other words, this essay defines such flourishing by reference to that very personhood, and to the fullness of its rightly ordered freedom, which the modern and post-modern enemies of ritual cultures celebrate in misguided and distorted ways.

The first part pursues the defensive (other-directed) strategy mentioned above. It maps the conceptual landscape of hostility to ritual culture. This part describes in greater detail (than the above introductory remarks) the intellectual environment against which a properly traditionalist project of cultural renewal (i.e. through recaptured awareness of its ritual implications) must defend itself. It exposes the poverty of an understanding of personhood and personality that reduces freedom to arbitrary choice. The second part pursues the internal conditions for cultural renewal. Here a closer look at Christianity's own distortions highlights the justified concerns which underlie some of the modern and post-modern hostility to ritual and tradition. It thus becomes possible to show how traditional Christianity offers theological safeguards against such distortions, and thus how such a Christianity can be presented as universally inviting even for its contemporary enemies. The conclusion turns back to Confucianism and proposes criteria for safeguarding its integrity, and thus for strengthening its own persuasive power.

14.2 A Geography of Hostility to Ritual Cultures

In the first section, the surface level contrast between modernity's opposition to ritual, and post-modernity's patent tolerance and even celebration of ritual variety is shown to disappear at a deeper level: Both movements agree in rejecting traditional ritual cultures' combining cultural particularity with a call for universal allegiance. Both movements therefore seek to either altogether replace or at least to contextualise such ritual cultures by subordinating their orienting impact to some universally obligatory or accepted morality.

The second section explores the common commitments underlying modernity's and post-modernity's rejection of robust ritual cultures. A comparison of their respective presuppositions discloses why an out-rightly anti-ritual modernity and a ritual-friendly post-modernity, in spite of their mutually incompatible anthropologies, can agree in a common liberal vision of human flourishing. It is that vision which renders both movements either hostile or at least oblivious to the life of the family (along with its commitment to paternal authority and filial piety), which traditional cultures affirm as a central condition (not only for that ethos of self submission which nurtures moral personhood but also) for the preservation of ritual integrity.

14.2.1 The Modern and Post-modern Reliance on Morality

(a) Varieties of Hostility

Looking at social structures from the outside, one might get the impression that life in the technologically developed West even today is indeed permeated by rituals.[9] Some of these rituals retain memories from older traditions; others have been custom tailored to their users' contingent needs.[10] In exploring what renders contemporary societies nevertheless so hostile to ritual cultures in the robust sense, one therefore cannot restrict oneself to rituals' explicit critics. The "enemies" must also be sought among those who affirm ritual as a conservatory or creative cultural resource.

(i) Explicit Hostility

Wide areas of contemporary Western thought on what should orient human (and societal, and political) life still root in the 18th century's Enlightenment. These areas define our contemporary understanding of "modernity". The most patent opposition to ritual and ritual cultures was offered in 1793 by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1960, Book IV, Pt. II, #3 [B 270–278], pp. 163–173). In 1797, he again denounced ritual cultures as belonging to an immature stage in human development, which would be overcome as man advances to rational personhood (2003, Pt. I–II, App. 8 B [B:368 f], 134 f). Such advancement was to secure an ever more accomplished ability to derive orientation about true human flourishing from reason alone. A less obvious opposition is offered by another strand of Enlightenment thinking, with David

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[9] This omnipresence has been described by Iltis and Solomon in this volume. See also Dücker (2007).

[10] That such needs can also accommodate a pointed opposition against modernity can be gleaned from the way in which family rituals are celebrated in literary works such as Adalbert Stifter's 1857 *Nachsommer* (2008).

Hume's (1711–1776) naturalism as most prominent example.[11] In his posthumously published essays (1777), the engagement in "rituals" is treated as a symptom of superstition (1987, X, 73 ff). What would correspond to an "enlightened" approach in the context of Hume's philosophy does not consist in the affirmation of reason as self-sufficient. Instead, that philosophy from its very start (1739) cultivates a (reflectingly) sceptical distance from what is recognized as the at bottom merely emotionally suggestive power of the imagination underlying any (supposedly rational or even just reasonable) claims (1973, Book I, Pt. IV, sect. 5, 238 f, sect. 7, 270, 273 f). Whereas for Kant traditional rituals violate the ideal of man's canonical rationality, for Hume those same rituals violate the ideal of canonical scepticism only when they form part of a self-understanding that fails to acknowledge man's dependence on the ultimately biological givens of human nature.

(ii) Implicit Hostility

The post-modern celebration of traditional cultures focusses on their plurality. It values each culture as (pretty much) equally helpful toward unfolding humanity's potential for human flourishing. In welcoming diversity, post-modernity rejects any one particular ritual culture's claim to exclusive validity. Instead of canonically orienting their members' self-understanding and behaviour (and sometimes urging all humans into that membership), post-modern ritual cultivation is a matter for individual choice.[12] Post-modernity retains rituals as contingently available resources for arbitrary self- or group-cultivation, or else as emotional or educational resources that can be engaged for given moral (and thus also political) goals.

(b) The Moralising Basis of Hostility to Ritual

Both, Enlightenment inspired modernity and its post-modern modification, conceive what is universally valid for human orientation in morally normative

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[11] To associate an Enlightenment thinker like David Hume with today's concept of modernity might at first sight seem incongruous, because he himself considered his naturalism and respect for established societal customs more akin to political conservatism. In comparison to Kant-inspired modernists, Humeans seem not committed to human progress. Nevertheless 18th century naturalism is part of the project of modernity through its hostility to ritual traditions, and through the implications of its having re-construed the conditions for human flourishing in terms of empirically ascertainable pleasurable sensations. This naturalism thus became a basis for certain kinds of utilitarianism, which in turn lent themselves to "modern" projects for promoting progress in view of enhanced human well-being.

[12] In post-modern accounts, the concept of "culture" has a wide application. It encompasses not only relatively stable traditional systems of beliefs and habits, but also whatever ritual-enriched orientations people may adopt at certain times or in certain contexts.

terms.[13] For Kant and his followers, morality is also the source of as much of a highest good as is humanly achievable: the peace secured by a good conscience. For Hume and his followers, the proper virtue results from chiming in with what (an optimistically conceived!) human nature decrees (1973, Book III, Pt. III, sect. VI, 618 ff), – even if the desired peace of mind in addition requires the philosopher's (mitigated, cf.1955, sect. 12, pt. 3. 169) sceptical distance. On the other hand, post-modernists, even though they trust human flourishing to the cultures and rituals people may have adopted for themselves, try to safeguard the earthly peace required for such flourishing through an inter-culture traffic that imposes, once again, moral norms.[14] These norms are mostly derived from two sources. Either they are still thought to spring from the verdicts of a Kantian-style reason.[15] Or such norms focus more on ecological and further "embodied" issues and are harvested from what cultures, traditions, and religions, all over the world, (supposedly) affirm in common. They are recommended as comprising a collective "world ethos".[16] In either case, the supposedly universal moral norms or values, whether engaged for modern (i.e. ritual-hostile) or post-modern (i.e. ritual-tolerating) purposes, are taken to sustain what cultural renewal today is universally about. They thus oppose a cultural renewal which centrally focuses on ritual.

(c) The Source of Orientation

To place what is universally orienting in morality (or some value or virtue) is to assume that orientation in life is describable by, and therefore exhaustively accessible to, discursive reasoning. It is precisely this discursive accessibility

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[13] It is worth noting that there are also non-moralizing ways of trivializing ritual. Moses Mendelsohn (1729–1786) for example reduces their function to the communication of "ideas" about God (1983, 118 f). Since his own view of theology goes beyond such fixed ideas and allows to form "conjectures" and "draw conclusions," he (already in 1783, when his *Jerusalem* first appeared) argues for leaving rituals altogether behind. Since the informative function of rituals is conceived not in terms of morality but (in an immediate sense) concerns "public and private felicity" (op.cit. p. 128), Mendelsohn in the end considers the particular rituals of the Jewish religion superfluous (op.cit. p. 139).

[14] The problem with such frameworks is that they rest on the assumption of a "universal reason of mankind" authorising the framework's norms. The extent to which the existence of such rationally accessible norms is an illusion which vanishes as soon as these norms are applied to particular conflicts has been extensively discussed by Engelhardt (2000, 28 ff) The multiplicity of cultures thus corresponds to a multiplicity of moral rationalities. It is revealing, as Engelhardt observes, that more blood has been shed over the question whether the individual bourgeois or the workers' class is the only true subject of humans' moral progress than over – for example – religious differences.

[15] Here one might especially think of the affirmation of human dignity and therefore of human freedom, along with extensive political and claim rights in excess of what Kant himself would have endorsed, as advocated by prominent thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls.

[16] Affirmation of such a world-ethos can be found even in the Christian – Confucian dialogue, as pursued by Hans Küng (Küng and Ching, 1988, 140 f, 302 ff).

which traditional ritual cultures reject. Only such a rejection, after all, keeps the orienting impact of their rituals from being implicitly repudiated. If moral reason suffices, why not promote that general Enlightenment which in the end will render rituals obsolete? This danger, inherent in reliance on rational discourse is known to both Christians and Confucians. When (Kant-inspired) post-Enlightenment Christians narrowed down the Gospel to its "moral teaching", they rendered Christian rituals obsolete, at least for those capable of intellectually grasping that moral teaching. When Confucians reduce the societal significance of Confucian rituals to their role for securing compliance with independently accessible moral norms, they render the rituals obsolete. Such moralising Christians and Confucians are enemies of their respective ritual cultures. The former might still (in a post-modern mode) welcome Christian rituals for satisfying believers' emotional needs, or their desire for collectively unifying experiences, and for the symbolic affirmation and maintenance of trust in the benevolence of the "supreme being". The latter (in a similar mode) might also welcome Confucian rituals as serving educational and expressive functions with respect to goals that are defined on other grounds.[17] Yet in each case, it is no longer the rituals that secure the orientation, and it is no longer their anchoring in an unchanging tradition (as disclosing their transcendent roots[18]) which secures their legitimacy. Accordingly, one can change the design of rituals, adjust old rituals or develop new ones,[19] and re-phrase their

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[17] In the present volume, Bell's essay (Chapter 11) can be taken as representative of this position. Even though he defends rituals against their Western enemies, he engages them merely as support for his utilitarian concern with inducing the powerful and social elite to assume responsibility for the weak and vulnerable. Ritual is thus deprived of its independent orienting, and reduced to its educational function.

[18] An instructive example for a Confucian regard for various ways in which "transcendence" is relevant for ritual is provided by Wang's references to the cosmos and god (p. 90), ultimate reality (p. 92), transcendent meanings (p. 98), a sacred and mystic world (p. 99) and mystery and sacredness (p. 101), by Zhang's reference to the principles of Heaven and Earth (p. 109), as well as by Lo's insistence on the religious dimension of Confucianism (pp. 127, 129, 133), along with his regard for the spirit of Confucius, prayer, the gods, and the principle of heaven (p. 126).

Without such roots, rituals' orienting function remains limited to those who happen to share the underlying value commitments. Thus in Bell's account, the utilitarian value of ritual is described with a view to a society with fixed social classes. Such a view might be persuasive to Japanese and old fashioned Britains, not however to societies that prize social mobility and change, like the US. This lack of universal appeal is honestly acknowledged when Bell observes that even the terms required for presenting a ritual culture find no adequate Western counterpart (p. 191). Bell recommends rituals' usefulness in terms of their offering a tradeoff between economic and social inequality in the sense that ritual cultures are easier reconciled to those economically redistributive policies which he takes to be universally desirable. Still, his intellectual integrity forces him to recognize that the economic equality he prefers profoundly differs from the social equality endorsed in modern (in the sense of change-friendly) societies (pp. 191 f).

[19] Cf. Bell's government agency for ritual design (pp.188 ff) and in the West the new profession of a "ritual advisor" (Welt der Frau, 2009).

surrounding traditions, wherever believers' emotional needs or changed circumstances and priorities for moral socialisation suggest such intervention.[20]

In order for ritual to be culturally orienting, several conditions must be met.

(i) It must be authoritative. Its authority must answer a twofold why-question: Why (lacking external coercion as well as immediate bribery) one should feel compelled to follow ritual's guidance, and why (lacking any immediate relationship to participants' momentary interests) ritual prescribes one way of behaving rather than another. That is, the authority of ritual must be both objective and informative.

(ii) As "orienting", ritual must occupy a fixed position vis à vis those whom it orients (such as the "nature of things", or a "divine power"). It must do so from a place that is both remote enough not to be affected (or, for Confucians, not overly affected) by changing times and circumstances, and clearly visible for all. It must, as Engelhardt (p. 42) nicely unpacks the etymology of "orienting", be like a morning star, or like the rising sun. In particular, it must be kept clear of arbitrary interference,[21] or interference by those not clearly singled out as "in charge."[22] Arbitrariness would detract from ritual's orienting authority.

(iii) Whatever is accepted as orienting must also determine the place or the purpose of those who are to be ritually oriented. A "nature of things" that can ground a culture-orienting ritual must be such that it imposes on human behaviour and action an obligation to harmonise themselves with what and how those things ultimately are. Similarly a divine power that underlies such orienting must impose on humans a purpose for their life. In each case, whether with a metaphysical (or mythological) order of

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[20] Thus Protestants, after having exorcised much of Christianity's traditional ritual life, are discovering today that they have lost their hold on believers' heart, and are trying to re-ritualise their religious practice (cf. Epd, 2009). Thus Roman Catholics, after having sacrificed much of their still viable ritual life to the demand for change at Vatican II, are discovering that they have disoriented their members' piety, and are trying to recapture what they abandoned (see for example Benedict XVI's renewed emphasis on the traditional Latin mass, 2007). And similarly modern Confucians, or the modern variety of "Neo-Confucians" (Wang, p. 94, Fan, p. 157, Lo, p. 137 [where they disagree with the historical Neo-Confucians], along with their Western sympathizers, such as Bell in this volume), discovering that their own version of Enlightenment has impoverished what Chinese understood as their cultural identity, try to harmonise the Confucian rituals of the past with the moral goals that frame their present (Westernized) understanding of a global order. But here as well, changing moral fashions require ritual re-configuration. It is no longer the ritual that orients the Chinese but the Chinese who re-design their rituals.

[21] Cf. Xunzi, as quoted by Bell, p. 176, in this volume.

[22] And again, the authority of such persons must be based on their envisaging an orientation which maintains stability over and against social change, so that they, in taking their bearings for ritual adjustment, are enabled to assess the relevance of different aspects of the change to which they adjust.

things or with a divine power, the ritual implementing such impositions will offer its participants awesome glimpses of a greater order of the world. In view of such glimpses, ritual engenders piety.[23]

(iv) Finally, no less importantly, in order for ritual to be culturally orienting, what it orients its partakers to must be something that cannot be accessed independently of participation in the ritual. In other words, that goal must be such that it cannot even theoretically be dissociated from such participation.[24] As Rui Ping Fan has made clear, ritual must have an "internal" goal.[25]

Already this short survey reveals that the opposition between friends and enemies of traditional ritual culture cannot be reduced to the difference between "transcendent" and "immanent" sources of orientation envisaged by each. First of all, the contrast between "the transcendent" and "the immanent" suffers from ambiguities. To be sure, modernity in the spirit of both Kant and Hume does affirm the un-accessibility of anything that transcends humans' cognitive capacities. Yet for Kant, "reason" is as much a place-holder for a (non-arbitrary, and in that sense) "transcendent" source of orientation as "human nature" is for Hume. Moreover, just as Kant in 1788 posits the philosophical indispensability of a hypothetically assumed god (2002 Pt. I, Book II, chap. II, sect. V [A 223 f], 157f), so Hume[26] leaves the question of a transcendent being strategically undecided (see especially part XII, 1947, 214 ff). Secondly, at least the post-modern affirmation of man's cultural diversity comes in both resolutely immanent and transcendence-open varieties. Post-modernity can either endorse restricting oneself to the contingently "natural" ways in which cultures are initially generated in different places and times. Alternatively, post-modernity can endorse referring these cultures to a transcendence which, precisely because

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[23] An especially impressive example of such cosmic orientation is provided by Chang Tsai's so-called "Western inscription" (as quoted by Bauer, 1974, p. 293).

[24] As long as Confucian rituals are engaged because it is more efficient to teach people to regulate their behaviour internally, through a sense of shame, than to bridle them through external sanctions (cf. Lun Yü, as quoted by Bauer, op.cit. p. 41), ritual is still instrumentalized for independently conceived moral purposes. Such an understanding is insufficient for a robustly traditional Confucianism in the sense proposed in this essay.

[25] Ruiping Fan's concept of an "internal" goal captures the point of the story about Confucius who, when asked about *ren* (humanity, or loving humans) answered by "doing the rituals". Or, as Wang also put it: "Li is not just sensible, external and prescribed act, but the real bearer and embodiment of the spirit of ren" (p. 90) and "Morality and ren is impossible without ritual". Somewhat like the way in which Confucian filial love is defined by the ritual governing children's' comportment vis à vis their parents, and can be achieved only through perfection in that ritual, is Christian love defined by what can be achieved – as a rule – only in the course of a life that is oriented by the ritual of the Church. It is precisely this link between human accomplishment and ritual, in which Orthodox Christians discover Confucianism as of kindred spirit.

[26] See especially his posthumously published *Dialogues concerning natural religion* (1779).

of its inaccessibility to man, can only be symbolically envisaged, where such envisaging in addition happens in irreducibly diversified ways.

It is precisely the confinement of the assumed transcendent being to its "proper place", i.e. within a separate "space" called "transcendence", which renders such religiously fragranced post-modernity incompatible with any seriously traditional ritual culture. The latter, after all, cannot but derive its orienting authority from a claimed (even though not autonomously realised, and therefore discursively cognizable) human access to the transcendent. Proponents and enemies of ritual cultures are thus distinguished only to some degree by their admission or rejection of transcendence, merely as such.[27] Even those who concede some transcendence but reject the idea of its reaching out into the immanence of man will reject rituals in the robustly and irreplaceably orienting sense. Those, on the other hand, who accept such rituals, will assume a transcendence which in addition discloses itself to, and thus invites ritualised access from, immanent humans.

14.2.2 Human Flourishing in Liberal Thought and Traditional Culture

(a) Individualism

At the bottom of modernists' hostility to, or distance from, ritual one finds either a rationalist or a naturalist anthropology. In either case, human embodiment, while acknowledged as indispensable for life on this earth, presents an embarrassment. Such embodiment imposes limitations which any accomplished human person will seek to overcome.[28] By contrast, at the bottom of post-modernists' hostility to traditional ritual (in the unconditionally normative sense of the term) lies an anthropology which accepts man's embodiment as an essential resource for human flourishing. Yet such flourishing is seen as ultimately contingent on individuals' choice of how to develop themselves and their own identity.

Despite their different anthropologies, this affirmation of choice links post-modernity with what modernity has lately come to be. Eighteenth century modernity, after all, must be distinguished from its contemporary re-interpretation. The modernity established by the various philosophers of the 18th century Enlightenment conceived of human freedom (whether realised through Kantian moral autonomy or through Humean epistemological scepticism) in the context of human virtue. Contemporary re-appraisals of the Enlightenment, in contrast, have limited their concern to the securing of every one's right to do as he pleases. He merely has to allow the same to others and

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[27] That is to say: All those who reject the notion of transcendence altogether will also be opposed to rituals in the strong, orienting sense of the term.

[28] Such overcoming is achieved either, for Kant, by morally subjecting the inclinations rooted in humans' animal nature or, for Hume, by sceptically discounting one's own instinctively unavoidable beliefs.

must in addition subscribe to substantive (if ambiguous) commitments, as for example to equality and life style pluralism. For Kant, legal respect for persons' self-determination envisaged a self that was designed for accomplished rationality. Respect for autonomy thus implied a regard for an identifiable goal of human excellence. Contemporary respect for human self-determination, in contrast, takes the human selves as they come. Freedom has become arbitrary. This is why contemporary modernity in effect has come to endorse that very ideal of self-creative individual choice which also underlies post-modernity's friendly obliviousness to rituals, cultures, and traditions. Modernity and post-modernity today have thus joined forces in affirming moral (and also political) liberalism. Both endorse the individual's contingent commitments as source of all authority and value. Both take mutual respect for individual self-determination[29] to be the essence of that allegedly rational morality which they either (as modernists) oppose to, or (as post-modernists) impose as peace-securing framework on, traditional cultures.

All of this implies that both modernists (today) and post-modernists base their case on individualism. This canonical individualism connects contemporary liberals, underlying Enlightenment rationalism and endorsement of a universally recognisable moral personhood, as well as their post-modern update as culturalism, with yet another (romantic, and subsequently existentialist[30]) current. Here man's normative essence is placed in the deep recesses of his personal idiosyncrasy. A person's external behaviour is judged in terms of its authenticity exclusively, and appreciated only if it "genuinely" expresses what goes in "inside".[31] Emphasis is placed on self-creative spontaneity and the general conditions for non-interchangeable identity and the authentic integrity of each particular human personality. Such "internalists" tolerate no rituals at all, not even for educational purposes: They suspect any imposition of external behaviour from outside as alienating the self from its embodied manifestations.[32]

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[29] Such respect can be offered in terms of abstaining from interference, but also in terms of providing goods and services which are indispensable for successful self determination in a world of scarce resources and limited opportunities. Depending on which option is chosen, the corresponding political framework will engage either a less or a more invasive (i.e. income-redistributing) state. In the present context, these important political ramifications must however be left aside.

[30] As Zhang's critique of Heidegger (p. 108) makes clear, it is the prejudice that time experiences are authentic only if they concern the individual by himself (and especially each individual's prospect of his own death) which is responsible for Existentialists' inability to appreciate the embodied, and thus relational character of humanity, which underlies the significance of rituals.

[31] See e.g. Wang's reference to Rousseau, p. 93, and David Solomon, pp. 169 f.

[32] For another prominent example, consider Sören Kierkegaard's 1855 criticism of "official Christianity" in 1972, 117 ff.

(b) Hostility to Families

Individualism has two implications for liberals' understanding of human flourishing. Liberals render the communities sustaining different cultures contingent on their members' individually and contingently offered consent. They do so either (as modernists) immediately or (as post-modernists) mediately. Far from acknowledging the family as a primary given for humanity (cf. Xianglong Zhang, p. 109), they see family life either (if they are rationalist moral modernists or internalists) merely as a temporary procreation and nurture provision, or (if they are post-modernists) as a merely potentially significant safeguard of the culture one might wish to adopt. In either case, such prioritisation of the individual motivates hostility to families' allegedly irrational (in the case of modernists), suppressive and alienating (in the case of internalists) or at least confining (in the case of post-modernists) impact.

Post-modern individualism, to be sure, is not in principle incompatible with the affirmation of "family values". A post-modern Western individualist may cherish partaking in the French tradition of rhythmicizing his weekly engagements around a schedule of festive family dinners.[33] With similar freedom, post-Enlightenment Christians may join with enlightened Confucians in highlighting the irreplaceability of families when it comes to eliciting an attitude of either religious or filial piety in the young. Yet such liberal "traditionalists" will also lobby for government policies that reduce the burden which child care and care for ageing relatives place on women who wish to pursue their professional career. Both kinds of familism, in other words, conceive of family life as contingently re-definable according to changing fashions of individual self-realisation, not however as a source of orientation. They do not accept the powerful side constraints such a life places on what should count as members' legitimate wishes. Nor do they acknowledge the family as the basis for fixed gender roles authorising unequal such constraints for husbands and wives. Liberal familists in particular oppose paternal authority. It is characteristic for the advocates of the "Chinese Enlightenment" of the Fourth of May Movement that they deplored the "backwardness" of Chinese culture precisely in view of the "ethic of subservience to patriarchal authority", both in the family and in the state (Schwarcz, 1986, p. 2). The target of their criticism was the Confucian ethos of self-submission that "kept sons obedient to fathers" (op.cit. p. 3).

Traditional cultures, in contrast, realise that rituals can unfold their orienting impact only if they are taught through and maintained by the natural bond

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[33] The liberal tolerance for families presupposes, of course, that the definition of "family" has been rendered contingent upon changing societal commitments. Governmental policies seeking to implement the – for example – German constitution's confessed commitment to protecting the family are thus re-framed so as to either focus on the presence of children, or on an odd mixture of sexual bonding and willingness to take some extended care of one another. All of this renders the stability of families a function of each of their mature and thus equal-status participants' contingently maintained good will (cf. Schwab, 2004).

of love (cf. Hsün-tzu's Hsiao-Ching, quoted by Bellah, 1991). Such bonds are created and cultivated in families which in turn derive their own orienting authority from such cultures' transcendent source.[34] In traditional ritual cultures, the life of the family thus embedded is itself normative. Here children are not only recognized as requiring family care, in order to grow into proper persons, and they are not only (in some cases) seen as morally obligated to offer some (more or less encompassing) gratitude for that care. Rather, they are taught to conceive of their very selves as immersed in their familial tradition as representative of their respectively particular native way of being human. Children, in such cultures, are taught to always conceive of themselves as having parents, grandparents, siblings, and further relatives. They are, moreover, encouraged to become parents and grandparents by themselves. Traditional cultures thus rest not only on an incarnate, but also on an essentially communal anthropology: By taking families as normative, they challenge their members to appreciate that some of their most intimate and enduring contacts remain forever withdrawn from their choice.[35]

Moreover, even the normative impact which man's embodiment has in traditional cultures differs from the naturalism endorsed by some Enlightenment thinkers. This normative impact refers to a transcendent, and at the same time self-disclosing source of orientation in life. As this source of orientation discloses itself to essentially incarnate beings, it does so through incarnate, i.e. ritualised ways, which in turn allow those beings to internalise, express and harmonize themselves with that transcendence. As a result, traditional cultures are not only anti-rationalist (as well as anti-moralist) in taking rituals seriously, but also essentially anti-individualist in taking family life seriously. Such cultures are therefore anti-liberal. They endorse obedience, or the ethos of self-submission, as a basic frame of mind which reflects the order of rules governing the proper ritual comportment, as these rules in turn are specified by the order of authority within a gender-differentiated natural community.

Looking back at the diverse intellectual currents which have entered into the contemporary "cultural" mainstream of the West, with its characteristically secularising attempts at conceptualising what gives meaning to human life, both its poverty and its seductive appeal can now be better appreciated. On the one hand, post-modernists share with contemporary modernists and the more idiosyncratic romanticist and existentialist thinkers an understanding of human flourishing and of the source of all authority that reduces freedom to individuals' arbitrary choice. Whatever such choice may focus

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[34] For Christians, the Divine endorsement of the family is powerfully proclaimed in – e.g. – the Decalogue's 5th commandment and in Col. 3:20; for Confucians one might cite the neo-Confucian view of the family as an image of the universe (Bauer, 1974, p. 292, see also Bellah who quotes Hsiao-Ching (1991, 87 f, and also Ching, 1993, 57 f).

[35] According to traditional cultures, even if some people refuse to fulfil their roles as fathers or sons, this refusal does not relieve them from having failed as fathers and sons.

on, as source of meaning for a person's life, remains contingent on that person's own wilfully sustained consent. That source of meaning is thus incapable of sustaining that person precisely in those situations of weakness and disorientation in which he is most in need of normative support. That normative identity which identity was to enable persons to navigate the multiplicity of available options and that constant change which characterise contemporary life in developed countries, and the lack of which identity was recognised as the motive behind the general call for cultural renewal in such countries, is unavailable in the context of the "culture" of individualist liberalism. On the other hand, that very complex mainstream derives its seductive appeal from a commitment to human dignity in terms of two mutually incompatible, but nevertheless each in itself almost irresistible construals of freedom: freedom as moral responsibility and freedom as spontaneous self-directed creativity. It is this twofold (if inconsistent) craving for universally uniform personhood and uniqueness of personality which traditional cultures must take seriously if they are to succeed on the global market of competing cultures. Or it is this twofold craving which traditional cultures must address when immunising their commitment to paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethos of self submission against its liberal rejection. But before we turn to an exemplar of such immunisation, it will be helpful to juxtapose the liberal mainstream with a short characterisation of its traditional counterpart.

14.3 Internal Conditions for Cultural Renewal

After having laid out (and exposed the poverty of) the intellectual environment which puts robustly traditional ritual cultures in the defensive (i.e. against external enemies) today, the second part of this essay discusses possibilities for strengthening such cultures internally. Here the decisive question "how cultural renewal can be undertaken effectively" (p. 21) has been nicely specified by Ana Iltis: should one start with the rituals or with the underlying commitments, or does this question merely raise the paradox of chicken-and-egg priority?

As a way of approaching this paradox, this essay recommends the twofold approach Iltis also seems to propose, but integrates it into an ongoing challenge. Each mature participant of a traditional culture is seen as responsible for that culture's integrity. This requires from each an ever renewed effort at exploring the narrative at the basis of rituals' authority, in order to disclose and ever recall and deepen one's grasp of the fullness of the meaning these rituals embody. Such efforts at internalisation also include willingness to protect the integrity of that narrative against the disruptive influence of reductive interpretations, even from within one's own culture, which merely seek to humour the spirit of changing times. At the same time, this responsibility also requires that, while engaged in their rituals, participants seek to open their hearts to the truth these rituals embody. Such a quest in turn

implies ever renewing their meticulous and untiring faithfulness to what those rituals impose. This second part of the essay, while surely also endorsing the second of these tasks, will focus on providing some guidelines in view of the first.

A first section explores the different ways in which Christianity and Confucianism traditionally have defined both the significance of ritual itself and its embedded-ness in the life of the family. Despite their differences, both cultures emphasise fatherhood, authority, and filial obedience in a way that offends today's modern and post-modern commitment to the freedom of spontaneous self-expression and self-realisation. The second section deepens the Christian account. Here fallen humans' constitutive vulnerability is exposed to the temptation not only of sin in general, but also of subjecting traditional Christianity to a rationalist distortion. It is this distortion, as highlighted with exemplary vigour by Western scholasticism, which renders contemporary liberals' illiberal intolerance (to a Christianity they no longer recognize as distorted) even understandable. Their (modern or post-modern) (either moralistic or selfhood idolising) aggressiveness can thus be appreciated as arising from concern about important elements of human flourishing, which an already de-spiritualised understanding of Divine and earthly paternal authority had left sadly un-attended to.

These elements are commonly addressed today under the heading of respect for human dignity; at bottom, as has already been indicated, they arise from a quite legitimate commitment to human personhood and personality. Given these justified aspects of today's unjustified hostility to robustly ritual cultures, the third section attends to the way in which traditional, properly ritualised (i.e. Orthodox) Christianity fulfils both desiderata for a properly orienting culture: On the one hand, such a Christianity presents the Divine authority backing its universal invitation (Lk. 14:23) in terms of an urgent paternal love that is in an exemplary manner personal (i.e. realised in its fullness among the three persons of the Holy Trinity, and expressed in view of this fullness by the Triune God's personal creation of and offer of redemption for each human being). On the other hand, that same Christianity offers theological resources, which, if only properly attended to, provide a safeguard against its own ("paternalist") distortion. With the subsequent Conclusion turning, once again, to Confucianism, it will become clear that among those resources, those which guard against misconceptions of authority, filial obedience, and the ethos of self submission are particularly salient. The recognised indispensability of proper safeguards, once established for Christianity, presents a challenge also for the Confucian endorsement of paternal authority and the filial piety of obedience: It encourages Confucians to secure comparable safeguards against any de-personalising distortion of their corresponding cultural norms.

14.3.1 The Role of Ritual and Family Within Traditional Christianity, as Compared with Confucianism

(a) Ritual

(i) Similarities Between Christian and Confucian Engagement of Ritual

In both Christian and Confucian contexts, rituals govern specific series of bodily postures, gestures, and motions. They sometimes require special attires and objects, and often also a specially prepared place. They encompass humans as spatially and temporally located. Unlike behavioural conditioning (which also involves the body), rituals do not seek to realise immediate and finite empirical results. They are designed so as to encompass the mind (cf. Wang, pp. 95 f).[36] Yet unlike mere mental stimuli (such as threats or promised rewards), they engage the mind as it conceives of the self. While immediately governing only very specific situations in which closely related humans are taught how to cooperate, rituals in addition seek to inspire attitudes and emotions which will eventually sustain such interaction even outside the regulated occasions.[37] By closely regulating specific situations, the corresponding attitudes and emotions can subsequently radiate into to other situations, and even into other relationships.[38] Recognition of such a "spill-over" effect does not defeat rituals "internal" goal. It rather extends that goal so as to have it encompass a person's integration into a ritual-directed life.[39] Even beyond its particular training effect, rituals' impact on persons' self-awareness thus supplies a meaning for their life and their ritual-mediated self-cultivation, which in turn supports the desired compliance with what the embedding culture normatively imposes.

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[36] In the present context of a comparison between Confucian and Christian rituals, further dimensions of ritual must remain unaddressed. For example, we will not be able to discuss ritual's function of presenting actors with a stage on which their passions and feelings can run their course in a civilized manner, as portrayed in Kolesch (2006).

[37] For Confucianism, with its much greater attention to defined relationships, this is confirmed e.g. by Ching (1993, p. 59) and by Li Zehou (1992, p. 91).

[38] It is characteristic that the robbers (in the classic novel *The outlaws of the marsh,* Nai'an, 1993), (because they represent the truly ordered life as opposed to a political system that has succumbed to evil, are portrayed as pervasively ritual-faithful.

[39] The particular affinity between ritual and love is highlighted by Gallatin: "Without such repeated, predictable interactions, there is no ongoing love *story....* Because what makes love real is its constancy and its predictability... It is a powerful *sameness,* an invariability lying beneath all the changes and alterations of life." This affinity is even higher when the "object" of love is the unchanging God, Who revealed the rituals through which He wants to be loved: "worship whose object is the unchangeable God must in itself be changeless in nature. Trying to touch Sameness through random acts of spontaneity... is like my attempting to hold in an unbroken embrace someone who is standing immovably on solid ground, while I myself am standing on a revolving carousel" (2002, p. 86).

Through ritual, humans learn to extend what they then recognize as their social (Jonathan Chan, pp. 197 ff) and their cosmic inclusion into every aspect of their own conduct of life. Thus bringing themselves in line with that cosmic context, they (at the very least) come to define their own, merely finite and limited existence in terms of that integration. In the process, humans find themselves symbolically transferred onto another stage, on which other, much more significant performances take place.[40]

In thus imposing its own goals on its participants, ritual discloses itself as something that is not so much 'performed as "entered into". Partaking in ritual involves submitting to a superior authority not only insofar as one obeys all the particulars prescribed. The submission also extends to one's aspiring at leaving even that self (who had initially resolved thus to obey) behind. Such submission involves a self-dedication that is *kenotic* ("self-emptying") insofar as it renounces the (un-accomplished) self one presently still carries along, and exchanges it for the self one hopes to develop. The act of partaking in ritual means recognising humans' vocation itself as ritual-mediated.[41]

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[40] Cf. Fei, as quoted by Chan (pp. 197 f). This importance is reflected in Confucius' saying that one should always behave as if one were about to perform an important sacrifice, and that one should deal with others as if they were very important guests. In a kindred way, Irenaeus of Lyon speaks of God calling fallen humans to "things of primary importance by means of those which were secondary; that is, to things that are real by means of those that are typical; and by things temporal to eternal; and by the carnal to the spiritual; and by the earthly to the heavenly" (Chap. XIV # 3, 1995, p. 479).

[41] When Confucius is recorded of having dedicated himself for 60 years to the rituals, before his freedom of will had been re-fashioned in such a way as to naturally harmonise with what ritual prescribes, it becomes clear that he led a life that did not merely make room for ritual, while at other times pursuing other business. Instead, he must have integrated whatever other business was needed into the spirit of the ritual, so as to become an altogether other person. In a kindred spirit Christians, in order to rightly partake of their central ritual (the Holy Eucharist), are called to integrate the entirety of their earthly life, including all their contingent business, relaxation and socialising, into that purity of heart which renders them worthy participants. Even more, they die and are re-born: "This offering strips us of everything: we are lost [Mt. 16:25]. We cease to exist. We die. At the same time, this is the moment when we are born into life; we partake in divine life through offering everything, through becoming an offering of thanksgiving. So the loss of our life is at the same time the emergence of our existence into a world 'new and uncompounded': and when we have reached that world, we are truly human beings" (Vasileios, 1998, p. 59).

(It is with some misgiving that I speak of "partaking in ritual", especially in view of the Eucharist. Strictly speaking, what Christians here partake in is a bread and wine that has been mystically transformed. Engelhardt and Cherry have therefore rightly spoken of the ontologically transforming impact of ritual. It is precisely because that ontological change is at the source of all ritual, that I have refrained from even using the term "performative": Insofar as that term suggests that ritual can do something of its own, a Christian must insist that whatever is accomplished is due to the grace of God. The ritual here constitutes rather a setting for the required human cooperation in that grace-given ontological change.)

Apart from such general structural similarities, Christians, just like traditional Confucians (as portrayed by several essays in this volume), lead a ritual-saturated life. There are services for the first day after a woman has given birth (*Service* 1996, 266 f), for the naming of the child on the eighth day (op.cit. 267 f), for the woman on the 40th day after giving birth (op.cit. 268), baptism (loc.cit. 271 ff),[42] with chrismation (in case of adult persons, a blessing of their state as catechumens precedes) and holy communion during Divine Liturgy [43] (op.cit. 64 ff), along with the occasional thanksgiving services (*Service*, 1996, 512ff, 559 ff). As a full member of the Church, baptized Christians partake in the Holy Liturgy (along with Vespers on Saturday night and Matins, op.cit. 1 ff) every Sunday, and they prepare themselves according to the relevant rules (cf. *Liturgicon*, 1989, 219 ff) so as to be able to worthily partake of communion as often as possible, and add a proper thanksgiving (op.cit. 327 ff). Usually, this preparation includes the further ritual of confession (op.cit. 286 ff) and absolution. The major yearly commemorations in a Christian's life celebrate the day of his baptism and – if these differ – the feast of the saint whose name he bears (cf. the "Order of the blessing of the slava", *Book of Needs*, 2002, 279 ff), along with the yearly commemoration of his deceased Orthodox family members (office of "Panikhida", *Service* 1996, 437 ff, and of the blessing of the "Koliva", *Book of Needs*, 2002, 266 ff). Apart from that, Christians endeavour to partake of the full yearly cycle of church memorial days and feasts,[44] along with the prescribed fasting periods and other preparations,[45] all the while participating in the life of their parish (from the office for the founding of a church, *Service*, 1996, 479 ff, to the yearly patron saints' feasts). To an even greater extent, the whole life of those who have dedicated themselves to monasticism (cf. the hour services, *Service*, 1996, 38 ff) or who serve the church in the world, from Metropolitans and Patriarchs down to the priests (cf. the *Liturgicon*, 1989, 3 ff), deacons, and readers (with their respective consecration services, *Service*, 1996, 307 ff), choir members and the women preparing the meal for after-liturgy fellowship, is permeated by particular church-related rituals. Rituals further accompany even lay Christians throughout the week.[46] These encompass their daily (morning and evening) prayers (*Divine Prayers*, 1993, 23 ff, along with those at meals) and for special

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[42] A profound commentary on Holy Baptism is given in Schmemann (1974).

[43] A good introduction into the rituals of the Divine Liturgy is offered by Schmemann (2003).

[44] A good survey of the feasts of the Church year is found in Schmemann (1994) and Vlachos (2000). See also the detailed accounts in Festal Menaion (1996), in *Divine Prayers*, 1993, 219 ff, also the services for the blessing of the waters (*Service*, 1996, 470 ff).

[45] The most prominent example of a special fasting period is Lent (Schmemann, 1969), see the Lenten *Service*s in the *Liturgicon*, 1989, 374 ff, and in *Greek Orthodox*, 1985. The Pentecostarion is included in *Synaxarion* (1999).

[46] The ritual of invoking the name of God and of thanksgiving is even to permeate every moment of a person's life: "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Co. 3:17).

occasions, like the beginning of a journey (*Service*, 1996, 524 ff), occasional priestly blessings of their home (*Book of Needs*, 2002, 211f, 269 ff) or other objects (such as a cemetery, op.cit. 237 ff, a cross over a grave, op.cit. 248 ff, a grave, op.cit. 251f, or any kind of other objects, op.cit. 269 ff), beginnings of school, work, travel (op.cit. 313), warfare (op.cit. 349 ff), various kinds of misfortune (op.cit. 313 ff) or major changes in life (such as marriage[47], holy unction in case of illness[48], and special undertakings such as pilgrimages). In minute form (to take up Fan's term), rituals permeate Christians' every activity in life (such as the entering of a church, *Divine Prayers*, 1993, 106), most frequently and visibly as crossings on innumerable significant occasions, as taking holy bread and water upon rising in the morning, as kisses and seasonal greetings exchanged when meeting one another, and as alms offered to those who beg, the burning of incense, kissing of icons, and prostrations. Rituals and larger ceremonies accompany Christians' passing away (office for the parting of the soul from the body, *Service*, 1996, 360ff, the office after the parting of the soul, *Book of Needs*, 2002, 137 ff), their burial (op.cit. 368 ff), the office at the first forty days after their repose, the half-year service and the subsequent yearly memorial and intercession services, both on the yearly date of their completion and on the memorial days prescribed by the Church.

The biblical texts lack any specific term for "ritual", precisely because rituals form such an integral part of (Jewish and) Christian life, that no special term is even needed.[49] Not only the Old Testament which devotes the whole book "Leviticus" to ritual details, but also the New Testament is saturated with references to the importance of ritual. These concern:

- the veneration of God,[50]
- Christ's own obedience to the law and its ritual implications,[51]
- Christ's enjoining others to obey the ritual rules of the law,[52]

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[47] The full marriage rite is available e.g. in Meyendorff (1983, 113 ff).

[48] The full Rite of the anointing of the sick is available e.g. in Meyendorff (2009, 113 ff).

[49] The deeper reason, of course, is provided by St. Basil of Caesarea, when he distinguishes between that part of the teaching of the Church which is expressed in words (the "kerygma"), and that other part which permeates the life of the Church (the "dogma"). The latter remains covered in silence so as to keep it from being desecrated (Basil of Caesarea, 1995, *On the Holy Spirit*, chap. 27). This account also allows integrating Moses Mendelsohn's observation (1983, p. 102), that in the Hebrew tradition it was "at first, expressly forbidden to write more about the law than God had caused Moses to record for that nation".

[50] In the NT, see Math. 2:3, 11 where the wise men come to worship Jesus as King of the Jews, 6:9 where Jesus teaches his followers how to pray the "Our Father", 14:33 and 28:17 where the disciples worship Jesus, 17:4 where Peter suggests building "tabernacles", 26:7 where Magdalena applies ointment to Jesus' feet, Mark 11:7 where the people of Jerusalem celebrate Jesus' arrival.

[51] cf. Math. 5:17–20, 3:15, His letting Himself be baptized by John (cf. Math. 3:6), Lk. 2:21–24), His being named, circumcised and presented in the temple according to Jewish rituals, Math. 14:23, and the many occasions of His praying.

[52] Matt. 8:4

- Christ's using ritual forms for accomplishing what He could also accomplish without ritual,[53] and
- Christ's instituting rituals for the Church.[54]

In particular, the Gospel of St. John has Christ Himself summarising the "gaining insight through complying" – principle of any traditional ritual culture: One must do the will of God, i.e. pursue the path of a ritualised life, in order to acquire knowledge about its Divine origin,[55] i.e. about the validity of the normative orientation provided by that path.[56]

This is why, just as traditional Confucians (as portrayed by several essays in this volume[57]), so traditional Christians are taught that merely external "ritualising", without participation of the inner man, does not suffice (Rom. 2:25, 28–29).[58] Thus St. John's baptism of purification is insufficient without the fruits "meet of repentance" (Math. 3:8, 10, 12). The ritual of presenting offerings at God's altar are not accepted unless the one offering such gifts has first made peace with his brother (Mt. 5:23–24), and the sacrifice must be "salted" with a salt that "resides" in the person making the sacrifice (Mk. 9:49–50). The Pharisees are castigated by Christ because they clean the outside of the chalice (and that also means: they correctly perform the rituals) without cleansing the inside (Mt. 23:26, i.e. their heart). The ritual of thanksgiving in the temple for the gift of having been healed is not complete without thanksgiving to the Divine healer (Lk. 17:17). And in general, Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees and Scribes (which motivated their deadly hostility) rests on the fact that they reduced their ritual behaviour to mere externalities, without adjusting their

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[53] Mk. 7:32–35, 8:23–25, Lk. 9:6.

[54] Matt. 16:18–19 and 18:18, where He authorises the Church to bind and to lose members' sins, 17:21, where the Church's healing power is linked with praying and fasting, 26:26–28, where the ritual of the holy communion is instituted (cf. Jn. 6:35, 48, 53–56), Math. 28:19, where the disciples are commanded to teach and baptize, Mk. 6:13, where holy unction is exemplified.

[55] In his commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Archimandrite Vasileus writes: "It is in this praise and thanksgiving that we come to know theology, and the origin of the world is revealed" (1984, p. 57).

[56] "Anyone who resolves *to do* the will of God *will know* whether the teaching is from God [i.e. offers valid, transcendence-based orientation] or whether I am speaking on my own [i.e. as the merely human being those around him assumed him to be]" (John 7:17) (italics mine, CDH).

[57] Cf. Fan (p. 155), also the *Analects*, 3:3, 3:12, 15:17, as quoted by Ching (1993, p. 60), Fung Yu-Lan's observation that Confucius prioritised the "heartfelt distress" over the ritual details in the rites of mourning (1952, 64), and also Eichhorn's distinction between *li* and *jen* (1964, 55 f).

[58] Citations from the Old Testament would be legion, e.g. Jes. 1:11–17, 13:29, Hosea 3:6 (cf. also the Patristic echo, e.g. in St. Cyprian of Carthage, 1995, *Treatises* Book III:1, 530 f., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV:16, 1995, 480 ff, and the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* I:37, 1995, p. 87). I shall restrict myself to the New Testament.

personal and social life to what these rituals teach (Math. 23:1–7, 13–31, Mk. 7:1–8, Lk. 11:37–48, 16:15).[59]

(ii) Differences Between Christian and Confucian Attitudes to Ritual

Christians and Confucians differ concerning the manner in which knowledge about and perfection in virtue depend on ritual: For the latter, both seem to result from human application exclusively; they constitute an exhaustively human achievement. For the former, by contrast, both ultimately result from the gift of Divine grace.[60] To be sure, even for Christians that gift in turn requires some (either antecedent or subsequent) Confucian-type personal application[61] as a necessary correlate.[62] Still, there is a difference in emphasis which accounts for the unique way in which Christian rituals' importance are limited.

Just as traditional Confucians,[63] so Christians know that ritual rules can be relativised when compliance would hinder their ultimate purpose. Thus it is more important to heal a suffering human than to observe the Sabbath (Lk. 13:14–17, 14:1–5). Yet unlike for traditional Confucians, for Christians this holds even as a general principle: to love God and one's neighbour is "greater than" all sacrifice and burnt offerings (Mk. 12:32). In particular, Christians recognize the relativity of rituals in two respects. First, they see themselves as occupying a specific position (as placed "in the last days") within a Divine history of salvation, which profoundly re-interprets previous rituals'

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[59] Thus Xunzi (as quoted in Chapter 11) emphasises the importance of a "good will" that is spontaneously, yet in a clearly ritual-training-inspired manner, directed to self-perfection. And this perfection concerns not only mastering the externalities, but especially also the specific human excellence which ritual is to develop. As Bell argues, Xunzi demands that before one begins a ritual, one ought to place oneself into that very frame of mind which the ritual was initially supposed to generate, then to call it up, and subsequently to express it. We may assume that at the stage of mastery, this relationship between the internal and the external is reversed: instead of the external forms supporting the internal attitude, now the internal attitude enlivens the external forms.

For Christians, this emphasis on the internal focus of external ritual is even more radical. As St. John Cassian claims: "he who does not pray with an earnest mind cannot perform that threefold bow of reverence which is customary among the brethren at the conclusion of the service" (*The first conference of Abbot Isaac,* 9: 34, 1995, p. 400).

[60] Cf. Bruschweiler, Symeon, Archimandrite: "The liturgy is not only human. Before the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration the deacon, addressing the priest, says: 'It is time for the Lord to act' (Ps. 118, 126). The human action during the liturgy is also Divine action, this is why it is called *Divine Liturgy.* It is a divine-human cooperation" (2003, p. 76).

[61] The extent to which Christians are called to sanctify every aspect of their lives can be seen to correspond to Fan's emphasis on the minute rituals (e.g. p. 146).

[62] Thus St. John Cassian emphasizes that the ritual of prayer will work its effect ("if we ask according to his will", op.cit. p. 399, i.e. if what is desired promotes a person's sanctification) in proportion to a person's serious application in faith, perseverance, importunity, almsgiving, and purification of his life (op.cit. p. 398).

[63] Cf. Fan's discussion (pp. 154–157) of limits to the obligatory character of rituals.

orienting impact (1.Peter 1:18–19). While already the rituals imposed on God's chosen people in the Old Testament were oriented towards training in love of God and neighbour, the New Testament recognizes that these same rituals (the "law of Moses") served the additional goal of exposing humans' inability – on the basis of their own efforts – to achieve that love. The Law of Moses thus was meant to confront its subjects with their inability to work out their own justification (Rom. 3:20); it prepared the way for the "law of Jesus" as the law of grace and truth (Jn. 1:17, Rom. 8:2, Gal. 2: 16 f).[64] Or, as Luke has it: "The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed" (LK. 16:16).

This new context for the old rituals is laid open by Christ's presenting Himself as the Divine master of rituals, Who is therefore also entitled to set aside what He established (cf. Math. 15:1, 10–11, 19–20, Mk. 2:23–28, Jn. 4:7–10, Acts 26:4 ff).[65] It even happens that the Divinely imposed order of initiations is subverted, as when the Roman commander Cornelius encounters the Holy Spirit even before having been taught and baptized (Acts 10:1 ff).

Second, Christian rituals' internal goal, while never leaving ritualising as such behind,[66] also envisages periods of a purely spiritual mode of being which, while they persist, transcend the actually performed ritual. Just as for traditional Confucians and their vision of wisdom and humanity, so for Christians such a vision (as communion with God) is not cognitively accessible (and practically attainable) independently of the ritual-saturated life. Only that life offers the (transcendently revealed) way of approaching such a "beyond". But unlike with traditional Confucians, traditional Christians recognize that at certain stages of a person's development (i.e. toward sainthood as the gift of grace), that "beyond" can be experienced as immediately given (as intimate transformation through the Divine energies). For a more or less extended time,

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[64] This thought is well expressed in the way St. Ephrem the Syrian links the proscription in Paradise (not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge) with the temple service instituted by Moses: "God did not permit Adam to enter that innermost Tabernacle; this was withheld, so that first he might prove pleasing in his service of that outer Tabernacle; like a priest with fragrant incense, Adam's keeping of the commandment was to be his censer; then he might enter before the Hidden One into that hidden Tabernacle. The symbol of Paradise was depicted by Moses, who made the two sanctuaries, the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies; into the outer one entrance was permitted, but into the inner, only once a year. So too with Paradise, God closed off the inner part, but He opened up the outer, wherein Adam might gaze" (1990, p. 96).

An especially patent example of the way in which the old law got replaced by the new law is offered in Acts 10:11 ff, where St. Peter receives in a vision instruction about the way in which he must abandon the old Jewish laws of ritual cleanness in order to obey the new law of turning to all the nations (cf. also Acts 15: 1 ff, 21:21 ff on the law of circumcision).

[65] Thus also, as St. Cyril of Alexandria points out (1983, p. 198), the woman with an issue of blood is healed by Christ not only even though she violated the law in touching His garment, but precisely because her faith exceeded her fidelity to the law.

[66] As we learn from Rev. 4:8–11, even the angels in heaven, as embodied in a different, non-corporeal manner, "celebrate" and "worship" in some fashion.

such gifts transform humans' embodied nature in such a way as to exclude all possibility of ritual.[67] Or, to put it differently: like with traditional Confucianism, traditional Christianity conceives of rituals not as "means" but as a "way". But unlike the former, the latter is nourished by the experience that God's special friends are at times entirely taken off the ground on which that "way" is paved.[68]

(b) Family

A similar ambivalence characterises traditional Christianity's view of the family.

(i) Similarities in Christians' and Confucians' Affirmation of Family Life

Traditional Christians, just like the Confucians represented in this volume, take families and the obligations binding their members very seriously.[69] Restricting

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[67] See for example Motovilov's experience of St. Seraphim allowing him to partake in the Divine uncreated light (Moor, 1994, p. 167).

This realm of experience is also addressed in Katos' analysis of the way in which Evagrius Ponticus treated noetic prayer as tantamount to liturgical ritual': "Evagrius argued that noetic prayer is the equivalent of an offering or even a sacrifice unto God. . . . He suggested that noetic prayer is analogous to various aspects of Old Testament ritual offering and sacrifice. For example, Evagrius likened noetic prayer unto incense. . . . Evagrius' metaphor suggests that the smell of this sweet incense arose only from a fire of self-purification, in which one purged the soul of sin and passion. . . Evagrius also incorporated the imagery of an altar into his metaphor of noetic prayer as an offering.." (2008, 58 ff).

[68] One might ask whether the regard for such a "beyond" does not, once again, introduce that very external purpose for ritual, which we took pains to reject when discussing its merely morally instrumental understandings (see above, pp. 11 ff). It is at this point that we need to dissociate our understanding of "internal" and "external" goals from that offered by MacIntyre (2007, p. 181), and approvingly invoked by Solomon (p. 164). Surely we can agree with MacIntyre that a goal of a practice is internal if it does not transform that practice into a mere means. And surely, acknowledging that getting candy is not an internal goal of chess-playing (because chess was not invented for the sake of candy) accords with acknowledging that sanctification is indeed an internal goal of Christian ritual (because that ritual was instituted for the sake of rendering humans receptive to God's sanctifying grace). Yet unlike playing chess for the joy of achieving excellence in it, sanctification as the internal goal of Christian ritual can also be Divinely granted within non-ritual settings (e.g. repentance, suffering, offering works of love). Moreover, while surely the Church prays during liturgy for sanctification of all who "love the beauty of the Church" (and thus of the Church's ritual, Hapgood 121), thus endorsing the value of ritual in and by itself, she does so ultimately because ritual prepares humans for sanctification. While for MacIntyre, external goals can be appropriated (at the exclusion of other owners), this does not hold for Christian ritual's "beyond", namely sanctification.

[69] Moreover, just as with Confucianism, so Christianity understands the obligations in view of one's parents to also imply obligations in view of teachers, elders, masters, rulers, and benefactors (Nikodemos, 2006, p. 94).

ourselves again to New Testament sources,[70] ample evidence supports this similarity:

- As evinced by the two family trees for Jesus given by two of the evangelists, the identity of a person is embedded in his ancestry (cf. Math. 1:1–17, Lk. 3:23–38, Eph. 6:1).[71]
- Among the Mosaic commandments, the one that enjoins Jews to honour their father and mother (Deut. 5:16) is the only one that is strengthened by a reward, and thus particularly highlighted. Accordingly, Christ castigates those who hypocritically invoke ritual rules so as to "justify" avoiding to fulfil one's obligation to parents (cf. Math. 15:4–8, Mk. 7:10–13).[72]
- Already when first confronted with his female "alter ego", Adam in Paradise is represented as prophesising concerning the indissolubility of marriage (Gen. 2:24), which was later confirmed by Jesus (Math. 19:3–9).[73]
- Already in Paradise, a Divine injunction imposes on the first couple the duty to multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). This commandment was also endorsed by St. Paul when he taught that married women are sanctified by giving birth to children (1. Tim. 2:15a).

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[70] The Old Testament provides, of course, a still much more fertile source (Ex. 20:12, Lev. 19:3, 20:9). For the Christian-Confucian dialogue pursued here however, the one example of how Jacob's sons performed the mourning rituals for their deceased father may be sufficient, see Gen. 50:1 ff.

[71] The depth of Christians' obligation to their ancestors is highlighted by the following remark of Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov): "The Lord has justified and sanctified the ascending line of His ancestors according to the flesh. Thus, by obeying Christ's commandments, each of us can restore the image of God which is darkened in us through the tears of repentance, and thereby justify his own personal existence as well as contribute to the justification of the existence of our preceding generations" (2003a, 10 f, translation CDH). Confucians might be pleased to discover a Christian manner of "ancestor worship" which not only honours ancestors, but even improves that spiritual state which they continue to endure (until the final day of judgment), without however their being able any longer to influence on their own.

[72] Jesus himself not only spent the first thirty years of his life as the obedient carpenter son of his carpenter foster father, but even obeyed his mother, when she prompted him to do a miracle even before his "time had come" (Jn. 2:5). Even when approaching a tormenting death while nailed to the cross, he still took care of his mother, entrusting her to his favourite disciple, thus making sure she would not be left without support (Jn. 19:25–27).

[73] When Adam foresees that a man will leave father and mother for the sake of his wife, this does not imply any obliviousness to the obligations of a son to his parents, but instead an affirmation of the stronger link between the sexes.

The character of marriage as a Divine ordinance, and thus the metaphysically revealed binding force of the crowning ritual, are highlighted by a comparison with John Locke's 1690 *Second treatise on government,* where "natural rights" (i.e. a rational moral account) supplement the contract account of marriage (chap. 7, # 82f, 1955, 65f).

(ii) Differences in View of the Limitation of the Role of the Family

Perhaps unlike traditional Confucianism,[74] traditional Christianity limits its affirmation of the family by a wider horizon. This happens on various levels, and leads to different degrees of modification of family obligations.

On a first level, the (biological) concept of family is widened.

- The two family trees of Jesus (offered by Matthew and Luke) disagree with each other. Not only did different legal rules (such as Levirate marriages and laws about female inheritance) suggest different accounts, but both also seek to establish Jesus as the Messiah (the promised redeemer of Israel) according to different symbolic methods.
- In particular, Mathew's account introduces four mothers, including Ruth and Rahab, who, even though they did not even belong to the chosen people, were distinguished by outstanding commitment (in the first case) to her mother in law and (in both) to the people and God of Israel.
- Both St. John the Baptist and Jesus Himself argue that (biologically) belonging to the "seed of Abraham" is irrelevant, unless one also acts according to the commandments of God (Math. 3:9, 8:11–12, John 8:33–40, cf. also John 4:20–24).
- St. Paul restricts the saving impact of bearing children by the proviso that those children will remain in the faith, in love, and in holiness (1. Tim. 2:15b).

On a second level, just as Abraham was tested in view of his willingness to leave the gods of his own fathers (Jos. 24:1–2) and to sacrifice even his only son when ordered to do so by God, so also Christians' faithfulness to God is portrayed as overruling family loyalty and obligation (Gen. 22:12).

- Even though He obeys her, Christ still rebukes His mother when she demands a miracle He is not yet ready to give (John 2:3–4).
- When calling disciples, Christ imposes on them the neglect of their duty to bury their father (Mt. 8:21–22, cf. Lk. 14:20, 24).
- When preparing his disciples for their future ordeals, Christ foretells them that brothers, parents, and children will deliver up one another to death (Math. 10:21, cf. 10:35–37).

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[74] From the literature available to me, I venture to conclude that different Confucians seem to occupy different positions in view of the possibility or necessity of relativizing family loyalty. At the one end of the spectrum, we find in the *Analects* 13:18 (as quoted by Ching, 1997, 78 f) the claim that sons must not give away fathers, nor fathers sons, even if either one of them broke the law. A middle position (which is not necessarily incompatible with the first one) is occupied by Hsün Tzu (as quoted in Bauer, 1974, p. 90), who rules that if filial obedience would endanger the parents or expose them to shame or cause them to behave in an uncultured way, such obedience should not be offered. But clearly the first position is incompatible with its opposite extreme, where filial piety is seen as a way of inspiring a merely generalized humanitarian virtue and benevolence, which sheds all "family partiality". This latter position seems to characterise Confucius himself, at least in Bauer's presentation as the "great discoverer of the virtue of humanity" (46).

- Christ promises everlasting life to those who forsake, and even hate, their families for His sake (Mk. 19:29, Lk. 14:26).[75]

On a third level, "family" is re-defined on the basis of Christians' having been "born again" (John 3:3).

- Christ refuses to offer any special privilege of family-access to His mother and brothers, and defines His relatives as those who do the will of His Father in heaven (Math. 12:48–50).
- Through His saving death and resurrection, i.e. through having assumed human flesh, overcome death and sanctified that flesh by taking its resurrected form to the seat "at the right hand" of His Divine Father, Christ has re-established man's filial relationship to God.[76] This relationship had – as it were – been obfuscated[77] through Adam's fall. Christ therefore not only includes non-Jews among those who will receive healing (Math. 15:26–28) and the promise of salvation (cf. John 4:23, 10:16), but He also endorses a universal brotherhood of all human beings (Mt. 5:16, 23, cf. also Mk. 9:36).[78]

On a still further level, Christ's twofold, human and Divine nature is designed in such a way as to – among other objectives – render Him a model of filial piety in view of His own eternal Divine Father (John 4:34, 5:18, 30, 7:16, 8:42)[79] and to invite humans into a kindred filial piety. All affirmations as well as limitations of both ritual and family values can thus be explained (in a preliminary short-hand manner) by reference to God's Divine Fatherhood: Both rituals and family life are affirmed insofar as God generally endorses them, and both are overruled whenever God's particular paternal providence intervenes. Traditional Christians therefore differ from Confucians in endorsing ritual obedience and filial piety only to the extent that these can be integrated into man's more basic obedience and filial piety as directed to their heavenly Father.

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[75] Cf. Deut. 33:9.

[76] Cf. Cyprian of Carthage, 1995, *Treatise IV,* 9–11, 449 f.

[77] While God Himself continued His paternal care unchanged even after the fall of man (for example by clothing those He had just expelled from Paradise in a garment of hide, Gen. 3:22), humans no longer could muster the confidence necessary to invoke that fatherly care on their own. It is this confidence which Christ restored and extended to all mankind.

[78] This extension of human son-ship to man's relationship to God also encompasses the replacement of humans' spirit of servitude (of obedience to the old law's ritual prescriptions) by a spirit of son-ship (Rom. 8:15), i.e. it links the transformation of family with the transformation of ritual.

[79] Of course, the Trinitarian theological context adds a still further dimension to this filial piety: cf. Christ's declaration of His unity with the Father (as in John 5:19–23).

14.3.2   Adam's Fall and the Temptation of Rational Self-Sufficiency: Power, Judging, and the Destruction of Freedom

The previous section has laid out the background of Christianity's specific way of affirming, but also limiting, the significance of ritual (and its embedding family life). The following section attends to the causes and consequences of Christianity's cultural distortion, and thus of the conditions for the modern liberal rejection of family life and ritual.

(a) Mankind's Fall and Redemption

According to the Patristic tradition,[80] Christians' filial obedience is required by their heavenly Father with a view to their Divine vocation.[81] As created in the image of, and called towards likeness with God,[82] man is designed for life in a communion of love with his Creator. As image of God, man reflects God's own (as it were) royal position (cf. St. John Chrysostom *Homily 9 on Genesis* 11, 1986, p. 123).[83] Among the many dimensions of this royalty, the most important one for the present essay concerns man's mastery over himself, his free will (cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, 1995, IV, p. 391). Man is thus in particular endowed with the freedom of accepting (or rejecting) this Divine offer of love,[84] which

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[80] As will become clear further down, paternal authority permeates Christianity not only in view of God's own having revealed Himself as "Father", but also in view of human access to theological knowledge. This knowledge, one must keep in mind, does not primarily concern theological "matters of fact about" God and man. God is in a strict sense inaccessible to the human understanding. One is entitled to speak about Him only insofar as He revealed Himself to His creatures, condescending in the process to the limited concepts of the human mind. Theological knowledge thus is designed so as to facilitate human access to such Divine Self-revelation. Accordingly, each of the fatherly teachers of the Church integrates his own such experiences into his teaching. It is therefore a risky undertaking (for those who have not themselves experienced God) to even compare the (differently expressed) teachings of different Fathers. On the other hand, recognition of a theological teaching as "Patristic" depends on that teaching's harmonising with what the Church has taught at all times and in all places. There exists, thus, beside the primary formative also a secondary informative dimension to such teaching, which can be invoked in scholarly undertakings, such as the present essay.

[81] This vocation (which recalls Zhang's Confucian principle "always demanding a becoming", p. 110) calls humans onto what may be depicted as a bridge, established by the transforming Divine energies, and across which the Creator seeks to reach out to those who are separated from Him by an ontological abyss.

[82] Cf. St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 9 on Genesis* 7, 1986, 120.

[83] In his role as lord of the created world, man is called to sanctify that world by offering it back to the Creator in thanksgiving. In a remotely similar way Ching (1993, p. 62) describes the emperor's cult to heaven as a cult of thanksgiving, thus suggesting a kindred task of sanctification.

[84] Cf. Maximus the Confessor, 1984, *1st Century on Theology*, p. 116: "By exercising this freedom of choice, each soul either reaffirms its true nobility or through its actions deliberately embraces what is ignoble".

calls him onto the path of acquiring the likeness with God.[85] Accepting that offer is tantamount to correctly appreciating one's nature as created: It implies willingly obeying the Creator's commands.[86]

Man's fall from his initial communion with God was brought about by disobedience.[87] This disobedience consisted in man's independently arrogating to himself what seemed to promise that "likeness" to God which had been meant as a Divine gift, to be offered to the measure of man's already achieved maturity in Divine love. As a result of this disobedience, man's royal freedom of self-mastery became subjected to the slavery of worldly passions. Even though losing his capacity for truly free, spontaneous growth towards the likeness of God, man retained rudiments of his character as image of God: He retained, along with his moral responsibility, the ability to repent, to turn his will back to God. Such turning constitutes a first step towards a renewed obedience,[88] even if the capacity to achieve that obedience to God's commands is contingent on man's subjecting himself to the narrower educational obedience of proper human, and at the same time spiritual, guidance. The place which has been Divinely instituted for such guidance is the Church (Georgios, 2007, p. 34). Here, obedience emulates the obedience which Christ Himself (in His human form) offered His Divine Father.[89]

Fallen Christians' return into Paradise thus integrates them in the ascetical and liturgical way of life which revolves around the rituals of the Church. The guidance offered towards that life takes the form of pastoral, and in that sense

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[85] Cf. St. John Chrysostom: "As the word 'image' indicated a similitude of command, so too 'likeness', with the result that we become like God to the extent of our human power – that is to say, we resemble him in our gentleness and mildness and in regard to virtue" (1986 *Hom. 9*, #7, 120) The idea that the only likeness to God which is humanly accessible must concern God's humility (cf. 2. Cor. 8:9, Phil. 2:5–7) is also supported by St. Gregory of Nyssa's *Homilies on the beatitudes* (2000, I-4, 26 f). For likeness as the assimilation to God through virtue see St. John Damascene, *An exact Exposition*, book 2, chap. 12.

[86] Cf. St. Maximus the Confessor (1984, *2nd Cent.* #7, p. 139): "he who through obedience has kept the commandments . . . has not cut himself off from union in love with Him who gave them".

[87] As some of the Fathers emphasise (viz. Symeon the New Theologian, 2001, p. 113), Adam's failure consisted not only in his disobedience, but also in his unwillingness – when being questioned by God – to repent. This essay, in seeking a dialogue with Confucians and concentrating therefore on ritual as a common ground, can address only one very thin layer of the Christian teaching.

[88] "Indeed, he who has perfect obedience will be counted worthy to receive a great name in heaven, a name of sonship, which will be revered even by the angels – a double crown in the heavenly glory" (Elder Ephraim, 1999, p. 102).

[89] This is also why Columban's rule for monks, following St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian, invokes the model of Christ in demanding unlimited monastic obedience, even unto death (2007, p. 16). Since the point of obedience is to recapture the true humility of son-ship to God, and to overcome pride, therefore even a misguided command will be rewarded by God (op.cit. p. 33).

"spiritual" fatherhood.[90] The Divine command shaping that life requires devoting oneself to the service of God and fellow men (Phil. 2:5–8). Except for monastics, that latter service includes the family. *Service* to God and fellow man thus engages spiritual as well as biological fatherhood. Obedience to God is trained through obedience to the Divinely ratified authority of (either kind of) fathers.

The required "ethos of self-submission" helps fallen man to work himself out of the fetters imposed by his own fallen nature, and in particular by his own idolized self-will.[91] Beyond the initial turning of the will, such a project can be sustained only with the help of the Holy Spirit Himself. It is by reference to this additional necessity, that the limitations placed on rituals' and families' obligatory impact, as described in the previous section, can be explained in greater detail: Both their significance and their limitation refer to ritual as well as familial obedience's function[92] for inviting the Holy Spirit's support. The extent to which a person's obedience in either sense is successful in extending such an invitation can, obviously, again not be evaluated by fallen man himself. Fallen man is always prone to spiritual self-delusion. His assessment in this regard depends, once again, on the Spirit's guidance, as accessed through his spiritual fathers. Even within a Christian's life, it is with the help of such guidance that the particular point at which ritual and familial obedience are either required or overruled can be discerned. As guideposts for such discernment, Christians and their pastoral fathers are referred to the Church's Holy Tradition.

According to St. Basil of Caesarea, that "Tradition" comprises the Church's teaching, both in view of what is expressed in words (*kerygma*) and in view of the *dogma,* as the truth of the faith as experienced in the mysteries, cult and life of the Church (Basil, 1995, ch. 27). But even that *kerygma* derives from what God's chosen saints, whether prophets, evangelists, apostles or other holy teachers, have experienced as an illuminating indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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[90] In taking up a theme of Lk. 10:16, where Christ empowers the seventy disciples sent out to proclaim the kingdom of God by decreeing: "Whoever listens to you, listens to me", Elder Ephraim generalizes: "Every spiritual father is an icon of Christ. So corresponding to how one obeys his spiritual father, he obeys Christ" (Elder Ephraim, 1999, p. 113).

[91] Once again this might at first sound similar to the way in which Ching (1997, p. 75) has Confucius stating that the virtue of "jen" means self-conquest for the sake of recovering propriety. Yet for Christians, unlike for Confucians, the possibility of pursuing such a path of such self-willed denial of one's own willing self, and of bending that self into obedience to fatherly authorities, is impossible without Divine support.

[92] Since the ritual-directed life is possible only as supported by the Holy Spirit, it accomplishes two objectives at the same time: as a means, it invites further such support, and in an anticipatory way it already implements that purpose. Traditional rituals' "instrumental character," thus understood, unlike ritual's moralising instrumentalisation, can therefore be recognized as successfully goal-directed only from the Divine perspective.

Their "noetic"[93] experience, or theology in the original sense of the term,[94] may later be passed on to disciples, or recorded, and subsequently systematised and explained by theological scholars so as to reach a wider audience.[95] Even though those chosen saints thus become the "fathers" of the Church, their own ability to distinguish the promptings of the Holy Spirit from the promptings of other forces working on their hearts depends on their – again obediently – integrating their lives with the already existing Holy Tradition embodied by the Church. Christianity can thus realise its culturally and spiritually orienting mission only as embedded in that Tradition.

(b) Theology's "Fall" for Rationalism and the Distortion of Fatherhood

All the same, on this earth "the Church", as the assembly of God's saints, is still involved in struggle. Her members are wounded by their fallen nature: "... we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2. Cor. 4:7). As fallen, they tend to fail in their required obedience. This even holds for theological scholars. Their personal failure may eventually extend to their view about how theological knowledge is obtained. What such scholars then present as "theology" is compromised by arbitrary additions and emendations, which fallen humans' dis-oriented opinions may suggest. Once theological teachers "liberate themselves" from the guidance of the fathers of the Church, i.e. from Patristic Tradition, and once they arrogantly rely on their purely human cognitive capacities,[96] they sacrifice the orienting efficacy of their teaching.[97] Once the revealed mysteries entrusted to man's

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[93] The term "noetic" refers to a knowledge that is received through the Divine self-revelation. It is empirical, but not sensible. The "nous" represents a faculty of the human soul that, on the one hand, attends to what goes on in the mind, and, on the other hand, can be rendered receptive to Divine revelations, if a person's heart is properly purified. While Thomas of Aquinas still retains the difference between nous and logos in the duality of *intellectus* and *ratio*, the subsequent Latin theologies have blurred the difference between both. Eventually (especially after the quarrel between St. Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Calabria) the existence of a separate cognitive faculty beside reason was altogether discounted in the Christian West.

[94] As Evagrius Ponticus notes (2003, # 60): to be a theologian means to pray truly.

[95] Christian Tradition thus, with respect to both its *dogma* and its *kerygma,* is based on spiritual experience. In that sense, Ching's claim that Confucianism is more experience-based than Christianity (with, as she puts it, its "faith in revelation", 1993, p. 227) should be modified. While surely the Christianity of the Latin West, after an initial period of faithfulness to Tradition (with Gregory the great and Cassian the Roman), developed into an increasingly abstract, notional affair, at least Orthodox Christianity rests on "noetic" (i.e. truly spiritual) experience.

[96] To be sure, this turn to human reason was taken to be justified in view of the claim that this reason, as Divine endowment, provided a "natural light", supposedly unaffected by the fall. Patristic teaching however has always taken seriously Christ's denouncement of man's worldly wisdom (Matt. 11:25), as confirmed by Paul (Rom. 1:22, 1. Cor. 3:18–21).

[97] To cite just a few relevant consequences: Once theology is subjected to human reason, God's revealed omnipotence can no longer be adequately distinguished from His equally revealed omniscience. Accordingly, it is no longer possible to allow for His freely limiting the

obedient faith are instead subjected to the grasp of discursive reasoning, theological scholars reduce what there is "to (mystically) know" to what is accessible to their finite and fallen rationality.[98] Such scholars disregard the "ethos of self-submission", which should have enabled them to restore their receptivity to Divine illumination.[99]

Thus theology changed from a discipline that was nourished through the radical ritual obedience cultivated in monasteries into an academic field of scholarship taught at secular universities. This change came to characterise the dominant Christianity in Europe's Latin West. The distortion resulting from scholastic rationalism amounted to a first version of that (supposed) "Enlightenment" within academic theology, which ultimately triggered the second (alleged) Enlightenment's opposition to Christianity in the 18th century: Once Christian scholars had connected their knowledge with claims to rationality, they had implicitly authorised even non-Christian, anti-Christian and a-religious rationalists to evaluate the rational credentials of those claims. In the name of their freedom to think for themselves, such Christian scholars had compromised the noetic authority of the Church's Tradition. They had thus implicitly endorsed the rational authority of the Church's enemies.

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former while retaining the latter, and thus to account for human freedom. Moreover, God's revealed unconditional authority – as in the example of the command that Abraham sacrifice his son Isaac – can no longer be squared with what a rational approach privileges and singles out as "the moral implications" of the Divine laws. It thus becomes necessary to subordinate God's omnipotence and authority to those very moral norms which are accessible to human reason. Just as God's Divine freedom and will must therefore be re-construed in terms of his supposed rational morality, so must the freedom granted to humans be identified with their theoretical and practical compliance with a theology which in turn has changed from a mystical therapy to a dogma.

[98] This development eventually reduced what was still confessed as the "trans-rational" element of the Christian faith to a mere "openness for transcendence," where the latter term signifies nothing beyond an empty point of reference. It is this reduction, which suggests an easy path to ecumenical cooperation, even with Confucians. Thus Küng (Küng and Ching 1988, 303 f) claims that a Christian can both develop a common world ethos with other religions and at the same time "take seriously" those others' religious concerns, conceptions, and practices, - as long as these do not contradict the Christian faith. He thus in effect separates that faith from concerns, conceptions, and practices. He renders it a purely theoretical undertaking. In thus trying to both keep his cake and eat it (or separate ritual from faith and retain their connection), his project depends on its strategic ambiguity: While piously opposing "double citizenship" in Christianity and Confucianism, Küng liberally endorses an enculturation "in the spirit of Jesus Christ". But since he has reduced what he calls the "Jesus event" to such a degree that Jesus' twofold human-divine nature is discounted, the remaining "spirit of Jesus Christ" in effect can refer to no more than morality. In what concerns the recommended "taking seriously" of religious practices, nothing seems left beyond "respectfully" appreciating their aesthetic quality.

[99] Adam's failure which consisted in wanting to understand "good and evil" independently of God is thus re-enacted: Such "theologians" seek to philosophically usurp that likeness to God which is accessible only as a Divinely transforming gift.

Among the many implications of this distortion, two are particularly significant for Christianity's ritual culture and family life.

- The turn to reason as authority for truth abandoned Truth as impersonated by the incarnate Christ. This re-interpretation destroyed a central safeguard against disregarding human embodiment. Unlike a truly spiritual illumination, rationality prioritises the mind over a body which is no longer recognized as receptive to the mysteries of Divine transformation.[100] A disincarnate rationalist anthropology was encouraged, which in turn separated humans' merely rationalist "dignity" from their biological existence. Birth, suffering, and death, and thus also the substance of family life in its orientation to paternal authority and filial piety, were thus discounted. While true monastic theology is hyper-familial, i.e. recognizes families as both hotbeds for future monks and what sanctifies the Christian life "in the world", university theology became a-familial as well as anti-paternal. It replaced the communities surrounding embodied (and thus ritualised ascetical and liturgical) existence by the intellectual community of (father-less) autonomous, and thus also anonymous, intellectuals.
- The ensuing habit of rationally distinguishing between matters of fact and matters of value disrupted the unity of fact and value which had been noetically recognized in God as the source of both being and goodness. Academic theology thus split into different disciplines, such as metaphysics and moral theology. Once the latter was integrated into philosophy, universal claims to "rational" moral knowledge were advanced. These implied the proclamation of supposedly unconditionally valid norms. The Christian life thus seemed reducible to proper comportment in compliance with what was imposed with rational objectivity, no longer in the context of a Divine relationship of love, but from an un-loving "without". This had two unfortunate consequences.

First, such compliance could be taught, judged, and enforced through a love-less authority, in particular through clerical[101] and familial sanctions.

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[100] A merely superficial reading of the traditional text might be misleading. It is only in connection with man's fallen nature, that the body with its needs and cravings presents that powerful distraction from a spiritual life, which renders a particular discipline necessary. This is why these texts – because of their pastoral orientation - often take the term "body" as emblematic of all such distractions. Thus on closer look it becomes clear that what St. Paul – to take the most important theologian in this regard – understands by "flesh" is the entire compass of a worldly life that affects not only the body's supposed "needs" and a person's emotional desires, but even his intellectual predilections. The pride of the rationalist thus also discloses his "fleshly" orientation. It is not the body as such which is hostile to a life in Christ but the whole this-world-centred focus of man's strivings.

[101] The survey offered here must remain sketchy and superficial. We cannot attend, for example, to the Protestant reaction which led to an abolition of traditional ecclesiology and anthropology. In rightly denying that an institutional "mediator"-church between Christians and God is necessary, Protestantism deprived Christians of their dignity as mystical members of the Church. In rightly opposing clerical arrogance, they sacrificed the spiritual fatherhood

Originally, the Divinely commanded loving service to God and neighbour was to provide a training ground in familial and spiritual obedience, with a view to developing the free gift of a kenotic self-dedication of the human heart. As such, it was, to be invited,[102] received and judged by God alone, as by the "knower of human hearts" (Prov. 15:3, cf. Acts 1:24). Now however, this service appeared as a human performance that could be measured by any rationally competent and educated expert.[103] Paternal authority for offering guidance, both in the church and in families, was thus transformed into an exercise of judging and sanctioning power.

Second, the required compliance subjected each Christian to an externally determined model to which he had to adapt.[104] Originally, the Divine offer of a communion of love was to sustain man's growth towards a likeness with his Creator (Matt. 5:46). In the course of this growth, man was to develop what in

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image of the Divine fatherhood. The resulting confusion for the Christian-Confucian interchange can be studied in Bellah (1991, pp. 91–93).

[102] St. John Chrysostom (*Homily14 on Genesis,* 11, 1986, p. 186) expressly points to the gentle, "instructing" character in which God informs Adam of the one command not to eat of the forbidden tree. He emphasises how this mode of communicating harmonises with the Divine gift of free self-government and royal dignity offered Adam in Paradise. To be sure, after the fall this obedience took on the harsher meaning of repentance, of having to turn around and distance oneself from (i.e. renounce) all one's fallen orientations. But even here, and even before Christ re-opened the door to communion with God, the point of that obedience to the law of Moses was to re-train through a ritualised life the mis-directed heart in the art of loving God.

[103] Perhaps we can compare the phenomenon of legalism in Confucianism with its consequence of rendering the ethos of self-submission more oppressive than liberating (cf. Ching, 1997, p. 267) with this change within Christianity.

[104] More specifically, Christianity's focus on love as an endowment with the Divine energies was replaced by a moral principle of universal human solidarity. This is the reason why Christians in the Latin-tradition West today have no spiritual resources left for defending allegiance to the particularity of family life (as the natural unity endorsed by the Divine will) against its liberal destruction.

It is this moralising spirit, still dominating our present times, which makes it also difficult to discern the real meaning intended by Confucian scholars educated in the West, who describe Confucianism in terms of its moral implications. Often such scholars introduce a distinction between Confucianism's ritual and moral aspects, but the question of their either instrumental or constitutive relationship to one another remains un-addressed. Where Confucian morality is associated with the pursuit of wisdom, it is usually unclear whether that wisdom is exhausted by moral compliance with socially established rules or also encompasses a cosmic vision. A good example for this ambiguity is Julia Ching. When she calls Confucianism the "moralist" answer to existential questions (1993), she seems to endorse an autonomous morality. When she specifies this answer by adding an "existential quest for wisdom or moral perfection" (loc.cit.), that autonomy of morality seems relativised, especially since she immediately afterwards places morality's "horizontal concerns" in a "vertical, transcendent" context. Her invocation of a "soteriological" aspect of sage-hood (1993, p. 226), on the other hand, seems infected by her Christian dialogue-partners' willingness to settle for a vague moralisation-cum-transcendence-touch paradigm. Once Confucians' Western dialogue-partners have ceased to take seriously the idea that God is alive, their theology becomes mumbled and confusing for their non-Western interlocutors.

human terms can only be translated as the Divine "virtues" of gentleness and humility of heart (Mt. 11:29). The Divine meekness does not deny what the Divine creativity granted as the inexhaustible richness of specific uniqueness in human characters; instead it opens that character to the possibility of filling its own irreplaceable position as integrated in the larger Divine-human community. Man's entering into the Divine glory (or this increased receptivity for the transforming Divine energies) was to disclose each human being's created irreplaceability in ever more luminous perfection. Now however, such growth was imposed in terms of conformity to a common schematism. It thus implied a loss of personal profile that defeats the Divinely ordained (Rom. 12:4–8) mutual complementarity among humans. Such conformity renders persons exchangeable for one another. The rich variety of the Divine creation within humanity was thus discounted. Paternal guidance, both in the church and in families, was transformed into an imposition of conformity to a pre-determined model.

(c) Liberalism as the Quest for Un-distortion

Given this development, it now becomes possible to understand the more respectable motives underlying the modern and post-modern hostility to traditional ritual and family, and thus to traditional cultures in the strong sense of the term. In the first part of this essay, this hostility had been linked with the endorsement of liberalism. It now appears that the intellectual basis for the secularising impetus driving both the Enlightenment's and the romantic and existentialist hostility derives at least to some extent from the scholastic distortion of Christian theology. In any case, this distortion informs that hostility in two ways, one positive, as dependence, the other negative, as opposition.

First, as our initial view at liberalism's hostility to ritual cultures has revealed, at least one of its conditions lay in a separation of man's (initially still objective, not yet arbitrary) vocation from man's embodiment, and thus in a one-sided emphasis on rational autonomy. But such rational autonomy (in the sense of independence from the Divine self-revelation) is just what Western scholastic university theology had also pursued.

Second, and almost trivially, Western liberals' hostility to ritual roots in their awareness that something is deeply wrong with distorted Western Christianity. The pity is that this wrongness got attributed to the Christian part and not to its distortion: Once the Divine gift of human freedom had been re-framed in terms of a rational (in the sense of body-hostile) morality, the asceticism required of fallen man for re-accessing that gift was no longer recognised as liberating. It was no longer experienced as helpful in freeing incarnate fallen humans' body, soul and mind from their encompassing slavery to the passions. Instead, this asceticism was seen as merely suppressive of humans' "natural" animal and emotional aspirations. Instead of liberating man from the impact of what is fallen about human nature, such distorted Christianity could rightly be charged

with devaluing, even blotting out, large areas of what originally belongs to human nature. Unwittingly, liberals' very hostility to what they encountered as "Christianity" rests on a yearning for freedom in the incarnate sense of the term, – a yearning which indeed reflects the Divine imprint on incarnate man.

Among the many dimensions in which that yearning manifests itself today, two are especially relevant for liberalism's modern and post-modern hostility to traditional ritual cultures. One dimension discloses a hidden awareness of what even fallen humans retain from their original creation in the Divine image, the second the unconscious attempt to compensate for what fallen humans lost: the opportunity to pursue the Divine likeness.

- Once the Christian life was exhaustively construed in terms of canonical "facts" and "values", "Christian correctness" reduced to (1) willingly accepting as true a doctrine which was claimed to be rationally irresistible anyway, and (2) streamlining one's behaviour in accordance with supposedly equally incontestable norms. The spontaneity of man's still retained ability to repent, i.e. man confrontation with a God Who patiently waits for His creature's answer to His ever renewed offer of love, was thus obliterated. Understandably, liberals responded by affirming precisely that spontaneity, even if they engaged it no longer for repentance but for the celebration of worldly independence and autonomy. They defined human dignity in terms of a personhood that rests on spontaneity, but linked spontaneity with arbitrary choice.
- Once the Christian life was thus reduced, man's native quest for the glory of his divinisation, which retains a vague memory of his Divine vocation[105], remained unsatisfied. Understandably, liberalism encouraged the devising of worldly substitutes. It became receptive to (romantic or later existentialist) quests for uniqueness and distinction, individual idiosyncrasy, for imaginative self-creation, for a culture of taste and style, for personal narratives, authenticity and ever new re-definitions of major life projects. All those attempts were to fill the vacuum experienced by a self-ridden self finding itself thrown into the midst of an oblivious cosmos and fated to perish without leaving more than a feeble trace in others' public or private memories.[106] That is to say, all those extremely diversified concerns which define contemporary modernity and post-modernity can be read as strategies of numbing one's sense to the greatness of mankind's loss. The demand for "respect of human dignity" thus came to encompass not only freedom rights

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[105] See for example St. John of Damascus' analysis of what it meant for Adam and Eve to have their eyes opened to their nakedness.

[106] There are, of course, many more dimensions to fallen humanity's loss of integrity, which must remain beyond the scope of this essay. One of these concerns their finitude. Much of the modern quest for progress and the post-modern quest for "making a difference" or "leaving an impression" has to do with securing surrogate eternities among those who have lost faith in eternal life.

but also the craving for "recognition", or an accepting tolerance of each individual's irreplaceable personality.

It thus becomes possible to appreciate in both, rationalist modernity and post-traditionalist post-modernity (with all its intermingled supplementary intellectual currents), an attempt to recapture – under the flag of "human dignity" – two crucial dimensions of man's distinction as a Divine creature from their captivity to a misguided paternalism: spontaneity (whether as internally directed morality or as self-creative autonomy) and uniqueness. But if this is the case, liberalism's opposition to Christianity's (and all other) traditional culture presents not merely a threat from without. Instead, that opposition can be recognized as arising from an (obfuscated) concern for human personhood (in its fullness) and personality – a concern, the (non-obfuscated) original of which is shared by traditional Christianity. That opposition can then be understood as a (misguided) attempt to restore what Christianity's distortion had destroyed. Traditional Christians can (to some degree) even sympathise with the modern and post-modern quest for human spontaneity and uniqueness. They can restrict their disagreement to the liberal form of that quest, i.e. either its (secularised) rationality or its turn to auto-creative self-realisation.

Thus, traditional Christians, perhaps unlike traditional Confucians, can (grudgingly) concede that liberalism's opposition (to itself) vaguely echoes man's Divine vocation. Traditional Christians, perhaps unlike traditional Confucians, can therefore pursue their project of cultural renewal by seeking to (profoundly!) reorient that echo in order to restore the harmony of (legitimate) liberal and Christian concerns.

14.3.3 Orthodox Christian Resources for Re-orienting, and Thus Sustaining the Competition of, Liberalism

Once liberalism has been recognized as sharing (if in misguided ways) its appreciation of human personhood and personality with traditional Christianity, it becomes clear why that powerful contemporary movement presents such a serious competition for traditional Christianity. If there is indeed something spiritually right about taking human personhood and personality seriously, then non-liberal cultures, and especially the traditional cultures which are concerned with the renewal of their rituals, must be prepared to face that competition and to extend their universalising invitation in terms that respond to such legitimate concerns.

(a) Divine and Human Fatherhood

On superficial survey, Orthodox Christianity and Confucianism, in both affirming the importance of a paternal authority and an ethos of self-submission, seem to oppose the spontaneity and self-creative dynamism entailed in true human freedom. They thus find themselves in the defensive

against the modern liberal endorsement of these values. Orthodox Christianity however, while agreeing with Confucianism about the importance of tradition and ritual, also offers safeguards against that distortion of paternal authority and obedience, which distortion allows tradition and ritual to stifle human spontaneity and self-creative dynamism.

The liberal pursuit of freedom and affirmation of personhood is anti-"paternalist". Traditional Christianity, unlike its distorted version, links paternal authority with the foundation and eternal safeguard of all human personhood and freedom. From a Christian perspective, liberalism's grasp of paternal authority is limited to the "fallen" aspect of the "earthen vessels" (2. Cor. 4:7) engaged for its exercise. Thus Christians understand why liberals tend to see such authority as nothing but a cover-up for the selfish pursuit of power. But Christians also insist that the liberal reduction of fatherhood to its merely biological and (limited) social functions destroys an indispensible communal resource for furthering character formation and goal-directed human development. It destroys the base on which even a merely moral or cultural personhood can be built up. Beyond that, so Christians argue, such reduction renounces a crucial chance for setting fallen humans on a path on which they may pursue personhood in terms of its Divine vocation. In either case, one fails to cultivate relationships of personal intimacy and confidence, as these develop through filial love and spiritual friendship, for enabling beginners to trust themselves to the wisdom of more experienced guides. Traditional Christianity, instead of permitting the (admitted) risks involved in the abuse of paternal authority to defeat goals such as character formation and man's Divine vocation, offers remedies for avoiding (or at least diminishing) these risks. These remedies consist in framing paternal authority in a way that avoids depriving its exercise of its Divine fruits (of truly spontaneous self determination and co-creative dynamism). These remedies thus secure the original of that personhood and personality for which liberalism offers its humanly fabricated (impassioned, i.e. un-redeemed) substitutes. They can be described in view of how human fatherhood is ontologically positioned, how it theologically orients, and how it is exercised.

(i) Paternal Authority's Ontological Position

In order to effectively and properly design their guidance, fathers in families and in the Church must remember Christ's warning: "Call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). Christ did not mean to deny the institution of fatherhood as such. But he demanded fathers to exercise their authority as borrowed and to correctly appreciate their dependence on Divine authorisation. This has three consequences.

- First, fathers must recognise the common human brotherhood in Christ that places fathers and sons ultimately on the same spiritual footing.
- Second, human fatherhood, whether biological or spiritual, provides a training ground for the acquisition of the virtue of a filial piety, which aims at a restored son-ship to God. Human fathers are thus mere mediators, working

in the name of the Divine father. They seek to ultimately even direct their children's deepest personal attachment away from themselves, directing it to the Divine Father.

- Third, the way in which God's Divine Fatherhood has been revealed to men sets a model for the way in which human paternal authority should be exercised. In emulating the Divine original, fathers are to offer their guidance in terms of the Godly kenosis of self-giving.[107]

Adequate human fatherhood, both in the Church and in families, thus realises itself in terms of Fathers' own son-ship to God. Just as Adam in Paradise was to rule over creation in terms of his own being placed under the rule of God (and hence under obedience)[108], so paternal authority on earth is exercised under the paternal authority of God (and hence also under obedience). Just as Adam in Paradise was to sanctify the world over which he was to rule as lord by offering it back in thanksgiving to God, so human fathers must conceive of their children as a Divine trust that should be sanctified and offered back, as though "re-stored to the owner". And just as Adam in Paradise exercised his authority as "in the image of" God's authority and "called to His likeness", so human fathers should be the first to acquire the Divine virtues of meekness and humility (Mt. 11:28–29).

(ii) Paternal Authority in Teaching

The implications of a fatherhood thus contextualised are particularly important for warding off liberals' anti-paternalist suspicions.

- To begin with, among those who aspire to be theological teachers, and thus to realise one form of fatherhood in the Church, their own obedience to the Divine Father implies their willingness to listen. They must listen to the voice of the Patristic Tradition and, as far as possible, to the voice of the Holy Spirit Himself. Such a listening attitude requires that those who aspire to guide others must render themselves receptive to that latter voice through the ascetical and liturgically ritualized life of the Church.

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[107] To be sure, the fact that God is revealed as "Father" (when Christ teaches His disciples to address Him so) also constitutes an accommodation to humans' earthly experience. In that sense we must understand the Fatherhood of God in a merely analogical sense. This becomes especially clear when one remembers that God's relationship to His human creatures is based on His desire to unify them with Himself, - an act of love that resembles more the human experience between husband and wife (as poetically portrayed as erotic love between God and the human soul in the Song of Songs). It is just that the way in which humans are encouraged to access God's condescension in terms of "fatherhood" also presents a model in keeping with which humans are to design their own diverse fatherhoods.

[108] Cf. St. John Chrysostom, 1986 *Hom. 14,* #9–10, 1986, 185, 1990, *Hom. 30,* #15, 177). The idea of Adam's authority "as under obedience" is generalised so as to apply to all human authority in Col. 4:1.

- The obedience required in view of that receptivity is incompatible with claims to rational autonomy. A theology that thus remains true to its noetic source is in particular immune to the temptation of devising a philosophical "concept" of God. Such a theology will avoid objectifying Him into a subject of cognitive grasp. It takes seriously, as Archimandrite Sophrony points out, that "The revelation "I AM THAT I AM" shows the hypostatic dimension in the Divinity to be of fundamental significance. The principle of the *Persona* in God is not an abstract conception but essential reality possessing its own nature and energy of life" (1988, p. 193). Such a theology is designed to open space for the saints' person-to-person experience of the Divinely condescending love.[109] While scandalous to the rationalist, this experience is recognized in noetic theology as a goal that integrates all human striving into a selfless love, a self-effacing desire for union with God.[110]

(iii) The Exercise of Paternal Authority

In the context of such a theology, paternal authority is not exercised in terms of doctrinal or moral dominance.

- Theologically, such authority pursues the spiritual progress of those who are trusted to its guidance by following the Divine model. It frames theology around its pastoral centre.[111] God Himself has rendered humans' progress contingent upon their spontaneous offer of good will and their continued cooperation in the process. This cooperative model also extends to ritual, and this shapes "ritual obedience" as a free response to a Divine offer.[112] This also marks the spirit in which Christians do not "perform" but "participate in" their ritual: even if there are no humans present, rituals are designed so as to remind their participants of the Divine presence. God Himself, in His way of inviting such good will and cooperation, thus safeguards the freedom with which He endowed His human creatures. Accordingly, instead of

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[109] God's omniscience can here be reconciled with an omnipotence, the exercise of which God Himself freely limits when offering His human creatures a share in freedom. Similarly, God's authority is envisaged in its revealed, trans-moral integrity: The point of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac can – with St. Paul – be situated in the context of a quest for an unconditional faith, which (unlike with the first-created man in Paradise) overcomes the temptation to seek the "good" in terms of human independence.

[110] "Every soul that cleaves to God is softened like wax and, receiving the impress and stamp of divine realities, it becomes 'in spirit the dwelling-place of God' (Eph. 2:22)", St. Maximus the Confessor, *1st Century on Theology*, #12, p. 116.

[111] Characteristically, one of the *prosomia* for the Vesper service for three great Hierarchs of the Christian Church (Sts. Basil of Caesarea, Sts. Gregory of Nazianz, *the Theologian,* and Sts. John Chrysostom, Jan. 31st) speaks of "them as shepherding the people of Christ through their divine teaching" (*Megas Hieros Synekdimos*, n.d., 848).

[112] Perhaps one could read into Wang's remark that the ritual "system itself may be reinforced by every performance of ritual" (p. 96) some awareness of a similarly dialogical design between the cosmic order and humans' reaffirming, along with their ritual integration into that order, their commitment to that order itself.

Christianity suppressing human spontaneity, its liturgical life is permeated by the encouragement of, and demand for, such spontaneity. Moreover, God Himself continues to call His creatures into a likeness with Himself that displays His boundless creativity. Instead of Christianity suppressing humans' uniqueness and irreplaceability, it secures those objects of humans' deep desire. In both respects, God Himself is thus the guardian of that human dignity, which in secular terms is addressed as "personhood" and "personality". As Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex summarises it: "The Name of God is I AM THAT I AM. For man, the image of the All-Highest, this word I is one of the most precious of all, since it expresses the principle of the *persona* in us. Outside this principle there would be no meaning, nothing. Let each of us hold on to his personal worth, which alone contains the wealth and beauty of our being."(1988, p. 204). Or in other words: It is the personal way[113] in which God, who reveals Himself as a Trinity of persons, addresses His human creatures, and offers them the glory of partaking in His own eternal life, which safeguards those creatures' personal existence and personality, even for all eternity.

- Practically, human fathers can follow that Divine model only if they restrict any use of compulsion to what is indispensable for children, and if they impose the general rules imposed by the canons of the Church with extreme discretion.[114] Called, along with all other humans, to imitate the Divine meekness and humility, they will impose obedience in such a way as to transform its offering into an exercise in self-mastery. Even in the midst of their warfare against their fallen nature, sons are thus guided back to Adam's royal station. A fatherhood that is oriented to such goals will be safe from even the mere temptation to compromise biological or spiritual sons' personal spontaneity (as what sons must engage in responding to their Divine calling), or to discount their quest for personal uniqueness (as what sons may hope to find epitomized through God's turning to them personally). Either failing, after all, would defeat the paternal mission. Fathers who exercise their authority in this sense recognise that their task of guiding others requires the help of the Holy Spirit. Because of their responsibility, not only for themselves but also for others, they will have even greater need to apply to themselves the therapy of self- submission to the guidance of others.[115]

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[113] Cf. Jn. 14:23 "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them...", a promise that is confirmed by the experience of the saints (see for example Evagrius, 2003, # 54 "One who loves God is ever communing with him as with a father", or # 65 "If you long for prayer, do nothing that is opposed to prayer, so that God may draw near and journey with you")

[114] For example, exclusion from the Holy Mysteries is applied to those (heretics) who mislead others.

[115] The Biblical texts are permeated with admonitions about the necessity for all those in authority to do nothing without seeking council (Sir. 32:19, Deut 32:7 are just two examples). This principle is also confirmed by the Tradition (see e.g. Columban 2007, Rule 3, 36). A model of humility in this regard is offered by Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) in his letter

(b) The Culture-Transcending Impact of Cultural Renewal

A culture that conceives of fatherhood in the way just described immunizes its endorsement of tradition, ritual, and family against those distortions which motivate liberalism's criticism. Such a culture can also sustain the liberal competition in view of the latter's justified (if distorted) ideals of human spontaneity and co-creative uniqueness. What it has to offer in fact far out-shines liberalism's self-made spontaneity and uniqueness: Such a culture's nurturing resources provide proper guidance, enabling members to seek access to God as the source of all human freedom and personhood.[116] Here humans' desired spontaneity and uniqueness are gifts bestowed in the context of a person-to-person relationship between God and His human creatures.[117]

Christians proclaim that humans reach the fullness of their freedom and irreplaceability only in communion with Him Who personally called them into personhood (i.e. the personhood of lordship under the acknowledged Divine Lord) and personality (i.e. the eternal uniqueness that derives from being beheld and loved by God). Christians undergird their universalising invitation by reference to a God Who presents Himself as love between the three persons of the Holy Trinity: Since the Divine love itself maintains the distinct personhood of each hypostasis within their common deity,[118] no human who (in entering into that love) integrates the meaning of his personal life into the cosmic meaning defined by traditional Christian culture, that is, into the mind (or consciousness) of the Church (Lossky, 2001, p. 194), needs to worry about thereby losing his distinct personhood and personality.[119]

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to David Balfour, a Roman Catholic spiritual son who converted to Orthodoxy. After accepting the risk of confronting his spiritual son with some of the more difficult truths about the life in Christ, Father Sophrony adds: "But I trust in the bravery of your soul and this is why I tell you, and later … , I shall tell you still a little more, so that afterwards I might receive your advice in turn, because my soul rejoices in submitting itself to you" (2003b, 15, transl. CDH).

[116] To put the matter in Archimandrite Sophrony's words: "Proceeding from the marvelous revelation I AM THAT I AM, we experience and live man, created 'in the image, after the likeness', first and foremost as *persona*. It is precisely to this principle in us that eternity relates" (1988, p. 194). A good theological compilation of the theology of personhood is found in Vlachos (1998).

[117] The way in which this relationship can be captured in a theology of the Divine image is well traced in Lossky (2001, p. 139).

[118] A helpful introduction into Trinitarian theology is offered by Lossky (1989, 45 ff).

[119] As Archimandrite Sophrony insists, the view toward the annihilation of the self is even a dangerous temptation: "we find those who aspire to divest themselves of their earthly mode of existence – they are fascinated by the profound quiet of some mysterious, all-transcending Non-being – and other s who, accepting Christ's word, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force' [Matt. 11:12] engage on the painful battle to overcome our mortality… It is characteristic of the former to think of the First-Absolute as trans-personal. For them personeity at its best is the initial stage of the degradation, the self-restriction of the Absolute. For the others it is precisely the *Persona* that lies at the root of all that exists [cf. John 1:3]" (1988, p. 191).

The contrast between liberalism's individualist conception of personhood and its superior Christian account is well summarised by Archimandrite Sophrony: in liberalism,

"Individualism is cultivated in all its impassioned aspects. ... This is the principle on which our social structure is based. But individuals *en masse* live in a state of decline and ineludible tragedy. The cult of decline leads to alienation from God – man is reduced when the Divine image is obscured in him. Contrariwise, an assembly of *personae* is 'the salt of the earth, the light of the world' (cf. Matt. 5:13–14). This is realised in Christ's Church and with particular force in the liturgical act – precisely where the true image of the Holy Trinity is made manifest. The whole content of the Divine Liturgy calls upon the priest to bring to God the ministry proper to the *persona* in the spirit of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane" (Sakharov, 1988, p. 205).

Yet this very basis for Christianity's universal persuasive appeal, while presenting a decisive trump card in the struggle for cultural dominance, also distances traditional Christians from the sphere of the cultural. Their calling to "teach and baptise all nations", while surely requiring ever sustained efforts at rendering their surrounding culture receptive for their universalising invitation, imposes on each "cultural warrior" a personal struggle toward self-transformation that focuses on rendering himself receptive to the Divine transforming energies. To be sure, humans should promote cultural renewal by writing persuasive essays about the importance of ritual and tradition. Christians should explain to their fellow members as well as to those outside how to appropriately endorse paternal authority, filial piety and the ethos of self-submission in the context of a theological awareness of a God Who challenges man on a decidedly personal level. Yet it is precisely this awareness of their confrontation with an awe-inspiring three-personal Divine love which imposes on them a certain reserve, not only in view of rituals and families, but also of "Christian culture" as such.

In fact, traditional Christians do not even speak of "Christian culture" in just the way in which (for example) Confucians speak of "Confucian culture". On the one side, Christian "culture" (unlike – perhaps – Confucian Culture[120]) is not a result of Christians' own cultivating activity but of their cooperation with the personal Divine sanctifying initiative. On the other side, Christians (unlike Confucians, insofar as the latter see their culture as a lasting embodiment of man's humanist vocation) integrate everything contingently "cultural" into their quest for sanctification.[121] Christian "culture", perhaps unlike Confucian Culture, is designed for being left behind, once man has reached his Divine

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[120] To be sure, as Ching admirably argues (1997), the roots of Confucianism's openness to transcendence lie in the shamanistic practices framing the early Chinese governors' priestly role. But one must bear in mind that a crucial difference between shamanism and theist religion lies in the fact that the shaman can "call up" spiritual agents, whereas the religious person can only "call on" the Spirit. That is to say, the initiative in the one case lies with humans, in the other case with God.

[121] It goes, in other words, against traditional Christians' grain to even speak of a project of cultural renewal, when, deep in his heart, he is aware of two requirements: that he needs to reform himself first, and that this is a life-absorbing occupation. St. Seraphim of Sarov

vocation. With humans' vocation for sanctification finally established to fill the introduction's "placeholder" in view of what offers an encompassing meaning for people's personal life along with that of their surroundings, we have arrived at a somewhat paradoxical result: That very craving for meaning and a normative identity which initially seemed to call for nothing beyond a robustly orienting culture has now been shown to leave the merely cultural manner of its satisfaction behind.

14.4 Conclusion

This essay's exploration of Christian and Confucian projects of cultural renewal also addresses the question how a non-trivially ritualised Confucian culture can withstand competition from modernity's and post-modernity's diversely liberal ethos. It turns out that such a project is indeed realistic. Confucianism can establish its universally inviting persuasive power, if, within its own tradition, proper attention is devoted to what can accommodate liberals' justified concern for human personhood and personality.

   This essay's argument involved portraying the way in which Orthodox Christianity's vision of human flourishing, precisely because it integrates that same concern, outshines (and goes beyond culturally outshining) liberalism's competing vision: Human personhood and personality, and thus also a rich and coherent understanding of human freedom, can indeed be accommodated within a traditionally Christian endorsement of paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethos of self submission. In portraying this exemplar culture, the previous sections sought to specify what should more generally be involved in the project of internally renewing a ritual culture. In order for such renewal to establish, in a properly inviting way, its rightly orienting character, a horizon of transcendence which (in a self-revelatory way) defines rituals' cosmic meaning was taken to be indispensable. But in order to also succeed on the "market" of competing world views, and especially against the liberal enemies of ritual cultures, the renewal project had to insure that ritual and filial obedience, paternal authority and the ethos of self-submission are therapies, to be applied on a pointedly personal (and personality-enhancing) level. Orthodox Christianity could satisfy this condition by emphasising the intensely three-personal, i.e. person-sustaining love through which God reveals Himself.[122]

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summarised this teaching when promising that, if a Christian renews himself, i.e. acquires the spirit of peace, then thousands around him will partake of his renewal and will be saved.

[122] The sketch of the Christian truth offered here had to remain incomplete. There is no room for further details of how and why a personal loving God has revealed Himself as the three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, - or as a Holy Trinity. For the inter-cultural dialogue undertaken in this volume, it must suffice to specify the challenge which the Christian perspective adopted here poses for similar Confucian projects of ritual renewal.

Confucianism's traditional ritual culture is not only exposed to the challenge of Western liberalism. Even its own history offers evidence that the nature and ground of paternal authority, filial piety and the ethos of submission have been subjected to rather diverse and critical interpretations. Confucius himself seems to have concentrated on saving the rituals of his ancestors from their being compromised by irrational and superstitious religious influences (as his objection to human sacrifice shows). He seems to have made a point of leaving any reference to the transcendent sufficiently vague so as to keep it safely at bay. Mencius, in contrast, seems to have reacted to the political instrumentalization of Confucianism. His turn to a more moralising interpretation seems to demand that, with all the attention devoted to external forms, the internal dimension of human virtue not be lost from sight. But as the second section of this essay's first part has shown, an outright moralisation of a ritual culture would destroy the ritual character of that culture. Moreover, the Fourth of July Movement, while surely influenced by its representatives' exposure to Western philosophy, science, and technology, can at least to some extent be seen to continue an inner-Confucian struggle to preserve the right balance between the rights and the obligations of (political and familial) bearers of paternal authority, or between the "principles of difference and of harmony" (cf. Siemons, 2007). So it seems to this onlooker from afar, that traditional Confucianism, just like traditional Christianity, requires a vision of fatherhood (along with paternal authority) which must be protected against superstition, rational moralisation and political and social misuse.

Confronted by the challenge from and competition of Western liberalism today, those who wish to renew traditional Confucian culture and ritual have, so it seems to this participant in our dialogue, two options.[123]

They can either endorse Confucianism's age old strategic ambiguity concerning the transcendent implications of their culture. During roughly two millennia, after all, this ambiguity has made it possible to integrate different cultural groups into Chinese society by providing space for the different sorts of religious commitments those groups wished to pursue. Whatever emotional or spiritual needs official Confucianism left under-served could thus be satisfied on the religious import market. In that sense, Confucianism historically has evinced a tolerant latitude that is reminiscent of today's Western culture of

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[123] A third option might be supposed to lie in Küng's turn to a rational examination of the various faith traditions, and among them Confucianism, so as to purge them from superstitions as well as from their ideological utilisation for particular interest groups. In invoking *Analects* 15:27 (Küng and Ching, 1988, 130 f), Küng claims that this method agrees with the basic attitude endorsed by Confucianism itself. But it is hard to determine, how the claimed authority of reason to effect such discernment is compatible with King's own rejection of rationalism (for which he invokes the agreement of both Jesus and Confucius) and the moralisation of religion on the one side, and his desire to retain space for transcendence (op.cit. p. 133) on the other side. Again one finds Küng wanting to have his cake (i.e. human access to a universal world ethos) and eat it (retain some relevance for transcendence).

post-modernity.[124] But it is hard to conceive, once Confucianism would make its peace with that post-modernity itself, how, under conditions of global exposure to the dominant liberalism of today, Confucians could still remain ritual- and family-oriented in a traditional, serious sense of the term.[125] It is in particular unclear, how such a Confucianism could escape the subjective arbitrarisation of its ritual culture which, under conditions of modernity's global exchange, post-modernity's obsession with universal tolerance seeks to impose world-wide.[126]

The other option takes its inspiration from the paradigm offered by Orthodox Christianity. This would imply that one might re-assess the Confucian tradition in search of indications for the personal character and the personal commitments endorsed by familial, social, and political bearers of paternal authority. One would engage in the very project of recognising the person as central, for which Chan invokes Fei (Chan, pp. 198 f). There are several dimensions to such a project, and they all hinge upon the circumstance that what may suffice for a purely immanent approach to human personhood (for whatever that may be worth) does not suffice for an account that aspires to unconditional and universal orienting authority, and thus an account into which a traditional culture in the robust sense seeks to invite all mankind.

1. From the very start it should be acknowledged that a secured reciprocity within Confucianism's hierarchically ordered relationships (Ching, 1993, p. 58), while potentially helpful, is yet, taken by itself, insufficient for this purpose: As the pathology of "mutual co-dependence" makes clear, a mere fit between contingently perceived rights and duties, or a mere mutuality of complementary duties, does not guarantee concern for the spontaneity and uniqueness of the inferior partner.
2. Similarly, the Confucian tradition of linking the exercise of authority to a struggle for self-perfection as exemplified in Chu His's *Li-chi* (as quoted by Bauer, 1974, p. 29), while securing at least a certain self-mastery among those

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[124] It is precisely such a solution which Ching, in one of her various modes of approaching Confucianism's relevance today, seems to recommend (1993, 229 f), when she demands that the concept of religion (which she takes to apply to Confucianism) should be adjusted so as to accommodate a liberal and secular humanism that downsizes transcendence by deriving it from the self-transcendence involved in human perfection.

[125] It is significant that among the "pre-modern ideological-institutional ballast" which Confucianism in Küng's view must discard in order to render its humanism modernity-proof, he includes patriarchialism (Küng and Ching, 1988, p. 249).

[126] In this connection a critical review of the impact which (if we follow Bauer, 1974, 284 f) Buddhist cosmopolitism had on the cultural integrity and stability of the Chinese empire might be illustrative.

who are masters over others, would require an additional input concerning the direction of one's perfection in order to secure the desired goal.[127]

3. Likewise, the Confucian tradition of supplementing political power by independent spiritual counsel (as for example the duke of Chou, who was advisor to King Wu, cf. Bauer, 1974, p. 49), will secure freedom-promoting governance only if that counsel in turn is rightly directed.

4. The Confucian opposition to the lack of "humaneness" or "human warmth" and "personal touch" in Western liberal societies (Ching, 1997, p. 270) is not conducive to a Confucian cultural renewal as long as that opposition motivates nothing beyond the demand for the political safeguards offered by human rights recognition (which she seems to recommend, 268). Such human rights are not helpful when it comes to protecting the familial and ritual support for the personality of those offering and receiving that "personal touch".

5. Nor is a vaguely "spiritual dimension" or "cosmic order" helpful for ritual renewal, since each of these tend to be somewhat taciturn when it comes to instructing their beholders about how to rightly direct (or re-direct) rituals.

6. Instead, Confucians might let themselves be reminded by Engelhardt (p. 45) of how their "transcendent source of orientation" can be conceived in personal terms.[128] Such a personal dimension of transcendence is, after all, not alien to the Confucian tradition. Not only the ancestors addressed in worship, but also the divine being itself, as the addressee of the ancestors' requested intercessions, must be able to receive those intercessions. As Bauer points out (1974, 84 ff), the de-personalisation of the divine being was

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[127] Fan himself emphasizes that there is self mastery and excellence among robbers. But once one goes beyond obvious examples of ethically ill-directed rituals, any purely ethical account concerning which "moral principles" might excuse a breach of ritual correctness in precisely which situations, once such an account is presented to an ethically plural audience, lacks resources for settling differences in interpretation. This is also why Fan's restriction to the domain of Confucian virtue, even if recognized as leaving out Confucianism's transcendent dimension (pp. 144, 152n9), weakens the universal appeal of that virtue: Only when placed within a cosmic perspective can Confucians not only specify their "Confucian identity" (as pointedly addressed in p. 145), but also establish Confucianism's ability to invite universal assent. And this is why Lo is right when he emphasizes the inseparability of Confucian ethics from religion (pp. 127, 129, 133), as shared with traditional Christianity.

[128] For this purpose, it is not enough to conceive humans' attitude to that transcendence as "proto-personally" as Ching does in her later book (1997), where she traces the Chinese "cultural heritage" to a common inspiration according to which humans are "open to", "attuned to", and "desirous of becoming one with" a still anonymous "the divine and the spiritual" (op.cit. p. 271). Precisely such unification would repudiate that very concern for personhood and personal uniqueness which Confucianism is challenged to offer in our time. Nor is it enough to invoke a "metaphysic of the self", as Ching does in the book she co-authored with Manfred Küng (Küng and Ching, 1988). In order to render someone a person and thus a self, another person must address him as person. In Christianity, accordingly, humans' openness and attunedness to, just as their desire for, the transcendent are recognised as responding to a Divine outreach, directed personally at each human being.

effected only by late Chou times.[129] For tradition-conscious Chinese this is a late, and thus easily discountable development.

If Confucians would decide to pursue this second, and more ritual- and family-friendly option, they might be able to demonstrate how precisely their family-embedded rituals protect that very concern for the human personality and personhood, creative uniqueness and spontaneous freedom, on which the liberal competitors in the midst of their cities and media claim to have a monopoly. Such a more encompassing Confucian personalism might therefore offer the needed security against liberalism's individualist and ritual-hostile impact. For the last two millennia, Confucians have endorsed the pursuit of humans' personal perfection through their integration into a cosmic whole. They have thus focussed their culture precisely on what it takes to develop the human person. They only need to conceive that cosmic whole in a way which allows its impact on integrated personhood to go beyond developing persons' performance in social roles (as suggested by Wang pp. 100 ff).[130] Perhaps Wang's added conception of respect for the human person as derivative of respect for (a properly "personal") god (pp. 91 f), once translated from his proposed succession of historical periods into a two tier account, could point in the right direction.

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[129] Even Ching admits "periods" and "circles" which endorsed a personalist view of transcendence (1993, 2 f). In her last book she is even more explicit: "Scholars have tended to agree that Heaven remained a supreme personal deity for Confucians" (1997, p. 80). She even claims that Confucius himself was a believer in a personal deity (1992, p. 55).

[130] They would also need to go beyond Zhang's phenomenological account (MS 17) of how certain structures of experienced time give rise to humanity in a normative sense, intimately connected with family and inter-generational piety. Instead, they would need to accommodate the way in which it is precisely the life of the family which gives rise to, as well as preserves, protects, and celebrates, the un-exchangability of family members' specific personalities.

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