East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory

Michael A. Peters
Tina Besley
Huajun Zhang *Editors*

Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation

Chinese and Western Perspectives

Springer

East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory

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Editors

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ISSN 2661-8753 ISSN 2661-8761 (electronic)
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory
ISBN 978-981-13-8026-6 ISBN 978-981-13-8027-3 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

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Pedagogies and Philosophies of Self-cultivation

Michael A. Peters, Huajun Zhang, and Tina Besley

1 Philosophies of Self-cultivation

Educational philosophies of self-cultivation as the cultural foundation and philosophical ethos for education have a strong and historically effective tradition stretching back to antiquity in the classical 'cradle' civilizations of China and East Asia, India and Pakistan, Greece and Anatolia, focussed on the cultural traditions in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in the East and Hellenistic philosophy in the West.[1] Traditions of religious practices of self-cultivation also can be found also in Ancient Egypt, and the other Ancient Near Eastern cultures including Ancient Iran and especially Persia. The philosophical ideal of self-cultivation has been the practical ground for a diverse range of notions and practices of human development, spirituality and transcendence that most often embrace an essentially moral dimension based on the active cultivation of virtue or its equivalent as the basis for the good life and how one ought to live.

In broad terms, self-cultivation is the development of oneself, both mind and body, throughout life, conceived as an endless transformation of the self, often based on stages from novice to master, and on rituals and socio-psychological processes that are claimed to enhance our moral capacities. This process often involves music,

[1] This introduction draws on aspects of 'Educational philosophies of self-cultivation: Chinese Humanism', Peters (2020)

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_1

poetry, art, sayings and recorded conversations, historical annals and various spiritual and ascetic exercises that are meant to lead to a kind of spirituality and moral perfectibility. In these schemas, moral development takes place through a staged and ritual processes through self-knowledge, care of the self and others, self-realization of one's unique potential, aimed at self-fulfilment and directed at the acquisition and attainment of an ideal state of being, often seen as transcendent or indicating as something beyond a normal state of being. This spiritual tendency towards wholeness, organicity and cosmological harmony, largely undertaken though practices and exercises designed to enhance and extend self-reflexivity and self-reflection, was seen to culminate in a form of self-overcoming to signify a transcendent state beyond the self (no-self), especially in Eastern cultures like Buddhism. A major distinction between Confucianism and Buddhism is the meaning of self. In Confucianism, a transcendental state is not beyond self (no-self) but extension of the self.

Another spiritual tendency towards self-cultivation took place based in both East and West on self-control, self-discipline, self-denial expressed through ascetic (Gk. *askēsis*) practices of the self, directed at various forms of abstinence from sensual pleasures, including dieting, silence, solitude and study. In these examples, it is easy to see how various monastic school traditions taught these virtues, often accompanied through a disciple-master relationship with 'severe' rules. These ascetic practices as a pathway to purification of the self to reach a state of holiness and/or closeness to God have a strong role in both Abrahamic and Indian religions, often associated with monks and nuns in the establishment of the early monastic way of life in the third to fifth centuries and much earlier with yogis and *bhikṣuṇī* (monastics) in Buddhism. The renunciation of the world has been a significant tradition in Hinduism by *Sannyasi* and Jainism that included self-mortification or the subjugation of appetites or desires by self-denial. In Jainism, monks and nuns take ascetic vows with very strict prohibitions on diet, eating only vegetables and other forms of the abandonment of the body. Islam, Sufism, Judaism and Japanese religions also have minor ascetic traditions. In this collection, really only part of a much larger study, we focus mainly Chinese and Western perspectives. Clearly, much remains to be done. This volume explores Chinese (with a chapter on the Japanese perspective) and Western views, with an accent on Foucault, of virtue and character derived from self-cultivation practices that are today important not only as historical models and but also as living embodiment of ethical traditions of thought of Western and Confucian perspectives. Foucault's work represents a departure from the predominant Aristotlean view.

2 Chinese Self-cultivation

Self-cultivation (xiū yǎng '修养') in Chinese is an abbreviation of xiū-xīn yǎng-xìng ('修心养性'), which literally translates 'to cultivate the heart and nurture the character (idiom); to improve oneself by meditation' and the term applies to cultural traditions in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism to describe, correspondingly, the

relational self, the authentic self and the nonself. The moral ideal of self-cultivation in Confucianism, a tradition that stretches back four thousand years, is depicted as a humanism represented in Chinese philosophy as the unity of man and heaven (Chan, 1963: 3). As Lau and Ames (1998) indicate Confucius (551–479 BC).

> is arguably the most influential philosopher in human history – "is" because, taking Chinese philosophy on its own terms, he is still very much alive. Recognized as China's first teacher both chronologically and in importance, his ideas have been the rich soil in which the Chinese cultural tradition has grown and flourished. In fact, whatever we might mean by 'Chineseness' today, some two and a half millennia after his death, is inseparable from the example of personal character that Confucius provided for posterity. https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/biographical/confucius-551-479-bc/v-1

Phillip Ivanhoe's (1993) *Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation* follows the concept of self-cultivation through three classical Confucius formations—Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi—and three Neo-Confucians, Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200), Wang Yangming (王陽明, 1472–1529), and Dai Zhen (戴震, 1724–1777) who believed that a transformation of self 'fulfilled a larger design, inherent in the universe itself, which the cultivated person could come to discern, and that a peaceful and flourishing society could only arise by realizing this grand design' (p. 7). Ivanhoe's book was derived from The Rockwell Lecture Series, a series of three talks delivered by the author at Rice University in 1992. Ivanhoe describes in idyllic terms the emergence of the Confucian emphasis on the moral education of the individual at the beginning (eleventh century BC) suggesting it achieved primacy without any conflicting alternatives. Ivanhoe contends that Confucius promoted an acquisition model of moral self-cultivation that nurtures only the tendencies that are already incipient in human nature and substitutes an acquired and largely external nature for the one received at birth. Mencius proposes a developmental model based on the fundamental quality of human nature, while Xunzi proffered the classic re-formation model of self-cultivation based the essential contribution of learning to the overall process. Beyond the classical age of Confucianism, the program in moral self-cultivation of Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was presented as 'recovery' because he contended that bad thoughts and bad deeds are by no means natural and, therefore, they are not products of the 'original' or good nature of human beings first proposed by Mencius. Zhu Xi's program more than any other results in a canon of texts that provide students with clear steps and procedures in following the Way. Ivanhoe's analysis of analysis of the program of Wang Yangming (1472–1529) focuses on the question of whether moral self-cultivation should be pursued through inner reflection or through a program of learning. The program of moral self-cultivation of Dai Zhen was uniquely intellectual promoting the realization model.

In 'The Ethics of Self: Another Version of Confucian Ethics', Chen (2014) writes:

> Confucian ethics is about how to realize a self in line with inner sagehood and outer kinghood (内圣外王); it is about how to realize a self as fully self-conscious being-for-itself of definite character, substance, and personality. Confucian ethics does not start with the assumption that there is a given self that should be made virtuous, rule-abiding, or dutiful, but starts from the assumption that a self needs to be created, developed, and realized in the ethical life while the potentiality of building a self is given.

Self-cultivation in Chinese philosophy provides a lens for viewing the contributions of ancient Chinese philosophy with its strong focus on practical ethics in the world here and now and produces differences with Western orientations. Wei-Ming (1998) explains:

> This concern for the concreteness of the life-world gives the impression that the social dimension of the human condition features so prominently in the Chinese world of thought that the idea of the group takes precedence over conceptions of the individual self. The anthropological studies that contrast the Chinese sense of shame with the Western sense of guilt further enhance the impression that external social approval, rather than internal psychological sanction, defines the moral fabric of Chinese society...Chinese philosophy as social philosophy seems exclusively immersed in issues of correct behaviour, familial harmony, political order and world peace. Even strands of thought that emphasize the aesthetic experience of the self are all intimately bound up with the highly ritualized world of human-relatedness.

There are grounds for thinking that there is room for philosophical discussion of these different traditions in relation to virtue ethics and in particular, differently to the ethics of self-cultivation that will provides a set of useful intercultural comparisons and differences while respecting the incommensurability of the traditions (Shun & Wong, 2004). Wang (2011) provides a virtue ethics orientation rather than the usual social-political interpretation, which shifts attention from the external to the internal in terms of how 'moral cultivation' should be understood in the *Xunzi*. Also, it presents not only a discussion of *xing* (性, human nature) and the relation between *li* (禮, ritual) and *yi* (義, moral) but a thorough investigation of Xunzi's moral philosophy.

3 The Contemporary Revival of Virtue Ethics

In Western philosophy, there has been strong interest in the ethical ideal of self-cultivation after a revival of virtue ethics that gave central importance to the development of moral character after the publication of Anscombe's (1958: 1) seminal article 'Modern Moral Philosophy', where she argues that we should put moral philosophy to one side before we develop a suitable philosophy of psychology, and that we ought to jettison concepts of moral obligation and moral duty from earlier conceptions of ethics, and ignore what has been written on moral philosophy since Sedgewick (that is, the two major traditions, Kantianism and utilitarianism). As Homiak (2016) expresses Anscombe's argument:

> To do ethics properly, … one must start with what it is for a human being to flourish or live well. That meant returning to some questions that mattered deeply to the ancient Greek moralists. These questions focussed on the nature of "virtue" (or what we might think of as admirable moral character), of how one becomes virtuous (is it taught? does it arise naturally? are we responsible for its development?), and of what relationships and institutions may be necessary to make becoming virtuous possible.

Actually, what it meant for Anscombe was a return to Aristotle's ethics and his notion of virtue as furnishing the substance for a moral psychology in providing an account of the type of characteristic virtue is and how it relates to human action. She

charges that secular approaches to moral theory do not have foundation because they use concepts such as 'morally ought', 'morally obligated', 'morally right', that are based on Christianity's law conception of ethics that derived its ethical notion from the Torah, and thus require a divine source of moral authority and the concepts of this law conception became deeply embedded in our language. Instead of 'morally wrong', we should use concepts like 'untruthful', 'unchaste', and 'unjust' that leads naturally to virtue ethics. Whether or not one reads Anscombe as recommending that we jettison the legalistic conception the paper impacted negatively on utilitarianism and Kantian ethics and positively on virtue ethics.

As Hursthouse and Pettigrove (2016) confidently assert that virtue ethics that emphasizes moral character is one of the three major approaches in normative ethics in contrast to deontology and consequentialism. And they go on to write: 'In the West, virtue ethics' founding fathers are Plato and Aristotle, and in the East it can be traced back to Mencius and Confucius'. It suffered an eclipse during the nineteenth century when forms of deontology and utilitarianism developed but then experienced a revival in the 1950s because neither attended to the practical issues always as part of the virtue ethics tradition:

> virtues and vices, motives and moral character, moral education, moral wisdom or discernment, friendship and family relationships, a deep concept of happiness, the role of the emotions in our moral life and the fundamentally important questions of what sorts of persons we should be and how we should live….

And they remark:

> Although modern virtue ethics does not have to take a "neo-Aristotelian" or eudaimonist form…, almost any modern version still shows that its roots are in ancient Greek philosophy by the employment of three concepts derived from it. These are *arête* (excellence or virtue), *phronesis* (practical or moral wisdom) and *eudaimonia* (usually translated as happiness or flourishing)

The 'aretaic' (arête = virtue) turn in moral philosophy that followed Anscombe's (1958) paper included contributions by Stocker (1976), Foot (1978), MacIntyre (1981), Ricoeur (1996), Hursthouse (1997), Crisp and Slote (1997), Becker (1998), Swanton (2003) and Russell (2013). Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen have also employed virtue theory. The fact is that it is the ethical tradition with the longest history in the West with Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and the Epicureans and the ancient Confucian virtue ethics, represented by Mencius and Wang Yangming, in the East, who focus on harmonious social interaction.

The analysis of all three classical traditions—Aristotelian, Confucian and Buddhist—reveals a remarkably similar conception and emphasis on *moral self-cultivation* as a practical answer of how humans become virtuous, even if each tradition provides its own distinct figure of the virtuous person.

4 Foucault and the Hellenistic Cultivation of Virtue

Hellenistic philosophy (Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism) sought to attain a state of calmness and peace of mind by 'rooting out pathological emotions', 'eliminating irrational fears of the afterlife and unnatural desires in the present life' and 'removing the anxiety produced by the futile search for certain knowledge' (Kraye, 2007). Eudaimonia (happiness or human flourishing) is a central concept in Aristotle and Hellenistic philosophy based on the self-cultivation of virtue (*arete*) of character and the attainment of happiness. *Askēsis* is a form of training aimed at a transformation of the self by the self, involving various practices of self-discipline of body and mind through fasting, contemplation, athletic training, dialectics and communing with the divine that encouraged philosophy as a way of life and self-mastery aimed at ethical self-constitution. Our modern understanding of Western forms of *askēsis* has been transformed by Pierre Hadot's and Michel Foucault's work that demonstrated *askēsis* as 'a spiritual exercise that results in a transformation of perception through the cultivation of a certain mode of being' (Robbert, 2019).

We should also remember that the philosophical attention has been directed at various forms of self-consciousness, self-recognition and self-alienation in both the Hegelian and Marxist traditions that have resulted in associated analyses of economic and class self-alienation under capitalism as standing in the way of achieving our essential human nature or thwarting and distorting our essential human nature. The historical meaning of the German ideal of self-cultivation (*Bildung*), beginning in the Middle Ages and institutionalized in the German school system in the nineteenth century, bears an historical trace to Hegel and pedagogy as 'the disciplined effort directed at the formation of interiority and the spiritual self-development of the individual' (Alves, 2019).

Virtue ethics as it has developed in the West, going back to the Ancient Greeks, places emphasis on virtue or moral character centrally concerned with the key concepts of virtue (*aretê*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and the 'good life' (*eudaimonia*). Virtue ethics experienced the so-called aretaic turn with a contemporary emphasis on Aristotle. Following new work on Nietzsche, philosophers in the modern European tradition have been influenced by other notions of self-cultivation that were brought to light during the Hellenistic period. Subsequently, there was a turn to modern philosophers influenced by Hellenistic conceptions of self-cultivation, including Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and, more recently, both Hadot and Foucault. Recently, there has been a recognition of non-Aristotelian accounts of self-cultivation and of the differences between moral and ethical self-cultivation, especially in the work of Michel Foucault who in his late work places a great deal of emphasis on ethical and aesthetic self-constitution. While Foucault might be seen in this light, it is clear that he does not understand ethics as moral philosophy, metaethics or normative ethics, preferring to define ethics as a relation of the self to itself that demands work on the individual as a basis for self-forming activity that constitutes its own moral being. His interviews 'On the Genealogy of Ethics' and 'The Ethics for the Concern of Self as a Practice of Freedom' provides a

set of useful insights into his approach and his lecture course 'The Hermeneutics of the Subject' and others analyse ancient ethics of caring for the self and the ancient ethical practice of *parrhesia* (free speech) central not only to ancient ethics but also his own philosophical practice.

As Mitcheson (2018) aptly expresses the matter:

> For Foucault, the Stoics offered an example of cultivating a relationship of the self to the self in terms of self-mastery and therefore offered a resource for constructing a non-subjugated self. I argue that non-subjugation is not sufficient to determine a practice of self-cultivation, though it must inform these practices if a non-subjugated self is to emerge from them. I demonstrate the importance for Foucault of critical self-awareness in a process of loosening the ties we have to ourselves, which can find inspiration in Stoic self-examination, but also the need for trying out new forms of subjectivity.

5 The Claims of Moral Education

As Slote (2018) recently argues in a Preface to a new and important volume *Ethics and Self-Cultivation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Matthew Dennis and Sander Werkhoven: 'Self-cultivation can not only include trying to find a way towards a morally better or happier life for oneself, but can also be a matter of seeking to develop certain non-moral excellences in oneself' and he goes on to say 'Even if most of us ethicists are mainly interested in moral issues, we have to acknowledge that there are important ethical issues beyond the moral as well'. He is talking about the 'differences between moral development and the development of non-moral excellences and of the capacity for a happy life' (p. vii). While moral educators are keen on virtue ethics and insist on recommending moral self-cultivation claiming that virtue is like a skill that can be taught, Slote is more sanguine and less sure. Elsewhere, Slote (2016: 126) argues that philosophers like Aristotle and Kant who represent a tradition that holds 'that moral self-cultivation or self-shaping is possible and morally imperative' 'are psychologically unrealistic in what they say about the possibilities of moral self-cultivation'. And he goes on to argue 'We cannot shape ourselves in the substantial and overall ways that Confucianism, Aristotle, and Kant say we can, and our best psychological data on moral education and development indicate strongly that these phenomena depend crucially on the intervention of others and, more generally, on external factors individuals don't control'.

At a seminar in Hong Kong in October 2014, titled 'The Philosophical Reset Button: A Manifesto', Slote argued for a manifesto addressed to Chinese scholars.

> This talk is very different from other philosophy talks: it really is a manifesto addressed to Chinese philosophers and to intellectuals and academics in China more generally. On the whole Western thought has been exceedingly intellectualistic and rationalistic, and the talk outlines some of the ways in which these deep one-sided tendencies need to be corrected or rebalanced. But it is also claimed that the Chinese are in the best position to correct and rebalance philosophy as a discipline. Chinese thought has never gone to the extremes of Western rationalism, and there is every reason to think that as China gains in power and

> prestige throughout the world, Chinese philosophers and thinkers will be in a position to correct or reset Western philosophy through drawing on their own deepest historical traditions, traditions which have recognized the value of emotion and sane ordinary living much more than has been typical in the West. You Chinese should realize that you have much to offer the West and not be too modest with your self-image or reticent with your philosophical ambitions. (https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&UEID=33261)

Given this challenge to moral education by Michael Slote and others, it behoves us to investigate this problem, the traditions to which he refers and to make an honest and searching assessment of his arguments. Given also his comments about Chinese philosophy, it is an ideal time to follow through with his suggestion. This book provides an approach to the ethics of self-cultivation in Chinese (and Japanese) and Western perspectives that encourages the beginning of East–West perspectives with an emphasis of the significance of this approach for the philosophy of education that has since its rebirth in the analytic tradition has languished in the ground that Peters (1996) first tilled in the 1960s with his *Ethics and Education* that attempted to provide an ethical foundation for education in a democratic society, examining traditional theories of justification, equality, worthwhile activities, interests, freedom, respect for persons, fraternity and the concept of man. Peters' work is still the stable of courses in philosophy of education, as though nothing has changed since 1966, and it appears that it is taught along with conceptual analysis without the flicker of doubt or reflection. Certainly, there is little by way of recognition of the possibility of Eastern and particularly Chinese moral traditions. This collection in philosophy of education is designed to begin to address this imbalance and to demonstrate not only the engagement of East–West perspectives but also its possibilities, so far only embraced by a handful of Western scholars, some of whom we have included in this book.

I invited Michael Slote to add to his provocative views on integrating Western and Chinese philosophy that he provides in the opening chapter. Ronnie Littlejohn and Qingjun Li provide a very informative chapter as the basis for 'Self-Cultivation as Moral Education in Chinese Philosophy' commenting on the difficulties of trying to harmonize all voices. They offer what they call a 'constructivist project'. In Chapter "Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-cultivation in Chinese Philosophy", Ruyu Hung considers the Confucian revival by examining the *Dújing* Movement and the *Rules for Youngsters.* Tadashi Nishihira examines self-cultivation in Japanese traditions and Charlene Tan, the paradox of moral education in relation to Confucian self-cultivation, in Chapters "Self-cultivation in Japanese Traditions: Shugyo, Keiko, Yojo, and Shuyo in Dialogue" and "Confucian Self-cultivation and the Paradox of Moral Education". In Chapter "A Life Worth Pursuing: Confucian Ritual Propriety (禮) in Self-cultivation", Jin Li considers Confucian ritual propriety (禮) in self-cultivation while Zhuran You in Chapter "Wang Yang-Ming's Theory of Aesthetic Experience: Beauty in the Extension of Innate Knowledge and Its Implications for Moral Education", provides the reader with an introduction to Wang Yang-Ming's Theory of Aesthetic Experience and its implications for moral education. Huajun Zhang and her senior colleague Chuanbao Tan, both from Beijing Normal University, examine the cultivation of 'inclusive individuality', and 'three characteristics

and advantages of confucian moral education', in Chapters "Cultivating an Inclusive Individuality: Critical Reflections on the Idea of Quality Education in Contemporary China" and "Three Characteristics and Advantages of Confucian Moral Education Thoughts", respectively.

With Chapter "The Evolution of *Bildung* in Germany", Michaela Vogt and Till Neuhaus consider the evolution of the *Bildung* tradition in Germany. In Chapter "Experience, Growth, Habit, and Community: The Keys to Understanding Self-cultivation in theWorks of John Dewey", Wang Chengbing and Dong Ming survey the keys to 'Understanding Self–cultivation in the Works of John Dewey', and Leonard Waks writes of 'Democratic Self-Cultivation' in Chapter "Democratic Self-cultivation". In Chapter "Hadot, Foucault and Nietzsche on the "Happiness" of the Present: On Education for Life", Babette Babich provides an introduction to Hadot, Foucault and Nietzsche on 'education for life' and Jeff Stickney (Chapter "Ways of Performing, Regarding, and Cultivating Practices of Silence in the Classroom") 'ways of performing' in the classroom in relation to silence. Tina Besley in her chapter examines the relations between 'Foucault, truth telling and technologies of the self in schools' and in Chapter "Subjectivity, Truth and the Historical Ontology of Ourselves: The Hermeneutics of the Self-Foucault's Lectures at the College de France, 1981–82", Michael Peters examines Foucault's 'The Hermeneutics of the Self' his Lectures at the College de France, 1981–82.

In the Postscript, Peters writes on 'Pedagogies of Self-Cultivation and the Philosophy of Gardens' as a means of unpacking the central metaphor of self-cultivation, a deep spiritual and educational metaphor that trades on the notion of gardens and gardening.

'Go to Epicurus' Garden'

Go to his Garden some time and read the motto carved there: "Dear Guest, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure." The caretaker of that abode, a friendly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with barley-meal, and serve you water also in abundance, with these words: "Have you not been well entertained? This garden does not whet your appetite; but quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst with a natural cure – a cure that requires no fee. It is with this type of pleasure that I have grown old."

Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* (21.10), cited http://wiki.epicurism.info/Epicurus%27_Garden/#:~:text=From%20Epicurus%20Wiki&text=At%20age%2035%20(306%20or,Garden%20continuously%20until%20his%20death.

I am aware that Epicurus around 306 BC bought a house and garden established a garden school among the groves not far from the academy that quickly became known as 'Epicurus' Garden'. It was symbolic of his hedonistic and materialistic philosophy known as Epicureanism. His philosophy was thus both therapeutic and humanistic designed to alleviate suffering and cultivate the positive arts of living. It reflected the two great intellectual currents of the day: 'the atomist school founded by Leucippus and Democritus… which concerned itself with the need for scientific and empirical certainly about the nature of things' and 'the Cyrenaic school of hedonism, which is the first Greek philosophy that posited that pleasure was the aim of life'.

The first stream led to Epicurean physics, the second, to Epicurean ethics.[2] Epicurean philosophy names pleasure as the highest good, as a form of *ataraxia*—a state of serene calmness characterized by freedom from everyday cares, fears and anxieties. Mental pleasure rather than physical pleasure was the most highly valued because it lasts longest and comes about from the absence of pain. Ataraxia as an ethical concept has somehow been lost to the modern world but its pedagogical importance has remained as the absence of mental disturbance or trauma. I think there are some parallels to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a kind of therapy that aims at clarity as a moral vision and the banishment of conceptual confusion. The Epicurean element of self-cultivation has led Ansell-Pearson (2018) to explore, against the grain, Kant and Nietzsche as ethicists of self-cultivation. In this conception, pedagogy emerges as a force from freeing of the mind from fears and anxieties, a kind of 'philosophical therapeutics' as Ansell-Pearson (2018) comments citing Hadot, a therapeutics that heals us so that we might return 'to the joy of existing'. I can think of no higher educational value.

MP

Tairua, NZ, 10 March, 2021

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Integrating Chinese with Western Philosophy

Michael Slote

This volume contains essays that discuss and/or involve dialogue between East and West, and the editors clearly have sought to encourage this sort of dialogue through the essays collected here. But such encouragement seems ultimately directed to a larger goal: some kind of integration between Western and Eastern philosophy, a process or development that reaches beyond long-separate traditions toward a genuine "world philosophy." My own recent work has definitely been striving or working in that direction. My *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang: A Contemporary Approach* (the Commercial Press, Beijing, 2018, offering side-by-side Chinese language and English language texts) seeks to accomplish this, and my more recent *A Larger Yin/Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* (now being translated into Chinese by Li Jialian) attempts (as its subtitle indicates) to extend my analysis from ethical and epistemological phenomena involving the mind to a larger picture that takes in both the mind and nature outside the mind. As the main titles of both books also indicate, the chief tool of foundation-level integration is (an updated and philosophically purified version of) the ancient Chinese notions of yin, yang, and yin/yang. The emphasis is on Chinese philosophy and on what it can teach the West about the perennial problems it has focused on in epistemology, ethics, philosophy of mind, and other areas of philosophy that Western thought has been engaging with over the centuries. India and other philosophical traditions of the East have been mainly, but not exclusively, left to one side, but my conviction has been that progress in contemporary terms depends more on traditional ideas from China than on these other traditions. (However, see footnote 4).

I am here going to summarize the ideas and general approach I have taken in the two just-mentioned volumes and in many articles that have appeared separately both in English and in Chinese translation. And the first thing I need to do is to explain the

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_2

concepts of yin and yang as I propose to deploy them for present-day philosophical purposes.

There are two main ancient Chinese traditions concerning yin and yang. Perhaps most familiarly, they are seen as contraries or opposites, as when yin is conceived as dark, wet, and cold and yang as bright, dry, and warm, respectively. Such a contrast was originally used for purposes of natural explanation, for example, of why the sun warms one side of a hill but leaves the other side cold. But such proto-scientific explanations have largely been discarded in favor of modern-day largely Western scientific explanations, and present-day Chinese philosophers widely reject or ignore the categories of yin and yang because they seem dated and lacking in contemporary relevance. Worse still, these categories are involved in feng shui and macrobiotic dietetics, and these latter traditional practices now seem outdated or even superstitious to many or most philosophers both East and West.

However, there is another tradition of thinking about yin and yang that sees them not as mutually opposed but, rather, as complementary. This way of viewing them goes all the way back to the *I Ching* and is visible, for example, in the idea that Heaven (Tian) is yang and Earth (Di) is yin. In Chinese thought, Heaven and Earth are not seen as contraries, but rather as in some sense needing and complementing one another: without the order of Heaven, Earth and what happens on the Earth is left blind or rudderless, and without Earth, Heaven is empty of all purpose and action. (Shades of Kant on percepts and concepts.) The idea of yin and yang as mutually friendly and necessary complements is also visible in the traditional visual depiction of yin and yang as curvy half-circles within a larger circle, with the yin half-circle containing an element of yang and the yang half-circle containing an element of yin—all very peaceably. It is this complementarity tradition of yin and yang that I make central use of in my attempt to bring together Chinese and Western thought at a foundational level.

I shall be more specific in a moment, but let me first point out that my attempt to integrate Western and Chinese thought is not without precedent. Toward the end of the last century, Mou Zongsan sought to bring together Western thinking with Chinese and even Indian philosophy. But this integration of East and West mainly involved borrowing from Kant and, to a lesser extent, Hegel, and was pursued despite the fact that Western philosophy now largely rejects Kant's distinction between noumena (things in themselves) and phenomena (things as they appear to us). My own attempt at integration differs from Mou's because it brings in current Western philosophical thinking, and I believe that the use of Chinese categories in aid of *present-day* Western philosophy is without precedent.

Many contemporary Chinese philosophers look mainly to Western philosophy for inspiration and guidance, but it is my contention that this sells the Chinese tradition short. The West has, in fact and as I shall argue, a lot to learn from traditional Chinese thought, but in the first instance, and before the West can be persuaded of this, the Chinese themselves have to recover a sense of the importance of their own traditional thinking. So my books and articles and the present essay are primarily directed toward those Chinese who think we have nothing important to learn philosophically from age-old Chinese ideas. Once or if China can be convinced of its own philosophical

importance, it will be easier (especially given the ever-increasing influence of China in the world) to persuade the West to finally look at and take seriously what China has philosophically on offer.

Let me now say more about how I propose to understand yin and yang. That understanding has deep roots in Chinese thought and culture, but it also involves a kind of philosophical updating or purification of ancient ideas. Yin has been variously equated with passivity, receptivity, and pliancy/pliability (rou), and I think receptivity (for which there is no exact term in Chinese) is probably our best candidate for philosophical updating. If yang contains the idea of activity of some sort, then passivity is the polar opposite of yang, whereas receptivity seems to involve at least a minimally active element (when one is receptive, one is motivated to *take things in*), and conceiving yin as receptivity would allow us to theorize yin and yang as mutually involved and perhaps even friendly. Further, the idea of pliancy is relatively narrow, whereas, as I shall hope to show you, receptivity can apply not only to psychological phenomena but outside the mind or xin as well. Conceiving yin as receptivity thus allows it to function very widely and, as I shall argue, as a necessary complement of yang factors. Yang, then, can be understood as directed active purpose inside the mind or xin and as directed impulsion outside mind/xin, and we shall see that this allows yin and yang to function as mutually necessitating mutually friendly elements in the cosmos—rather than as mutually opposed contraries. Let me illustrate this way of thinking about the world with an example.

Compassion is today widely viewed as involving empathy with the distress or suffering of others together with motivation to relieve that distress or suffering. Most psychologists view these elements as only contingently related: empathy leads to altruistic motivation, but this is a merely contingent causal fact. I think this is a mistake. Empathy with suffering and altruistic motivation are on conceptual grounds necessarily connected. Consider a father who is infected with his daughter's enthusiasm for stamp collecting. This is an empathic process that can occur without the empathic father being consciously aware that it is happening, but the empathy clearly involves him in more than sheer enthusiasm; it involves his acquiring enthusiasm *for stamp collecting.* Empathy standardly involves sharing both a feeling/attitude and its intentional object, and the same holds true for the empathy that is integral to compassion. Imagine someone who is distressed by the intense throbbing pain in their arm. Distress at something by its very definition involves a desire to eliminate or lessen what one is distressed about, so the person in question desires or is motivated to alleviate the pain in their arm. But then someone who empathizes with that person will not only feel distress, but feel distress at what distresses that other person. So the empathizer feels distress at the pain *in the other person's arm*, and we have already seen and said that distress at something involves a desire to eliminate or lessen it. So by its very concept, empathy with another person's distress necessitates a desire to eliminate or lessen the object of that distress: in this case, the intense pain the other person feels in their arm. And it follows that in such a case, empathy involves motivation to help the other person, the object of one's empathic compassion.

In compassion, then, empathy necessitates altruistic motivation, but it is obvious, too, that there cannot be such a thing as altruistic compassionate motivation without

empathy with the person one is motivated to help. To help someone because it is one's duty to do so or because the world will be a better place if one does is not to help them out of *compassion.* Compassion needs to be based in empathy; so in the phenomenon of compassion, empathy entails altruistic helping motivation and vice versa.

Does this remind you of anything? Well, it eventually reminded me of yin and yang. Empathy is a form of receptivity to the reality of another person (or animal) and can easily be seen as yin, and altruistic motivation is clearly a matter of directed purpose or impulsion and so can be viewed as yang. Moreover, and more importantly, these two sides of compassion necessitate one another in just the way yin and yang viewed as compatible and friendly complementaries are supposed to. The same points and arguments apply to other moral sentiments like benevolence and gratitude, and this means that the feelingful motives that the moral sentimentalist tradition mainly focuses on also instantiate yin and yang as I am understanding and updating them here. In effect, yin and yang allow us to firmly and accurately characterize the (conceptual) structure of the motives that lie at the heart (sic) of moral sentimentalism.

This means that if one can defend moral sentimentalism in present-day philosophical circumstances, one can deepen what that tradition tells us by bringing in yin and yang. Not only because doing so allows us to conceptually bare the structure of the various moral sentiments, but also because, as I will explain below, yin and yang are also useful for conceptually baring the structure of epistemically justified belief and of the functioning mind as a whole. But I am not going to try to justify moral sentimentalism here as against other influential contemporary ethical traditions like Kantian rationalism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, and consequentialism. I have attempted to do that at considerable length in my 2010 Oxford University Press book *Moral Sentimentalism* and also more sketchily in chapter 2 of *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*. I ask the reader to simply join me here in presupposing moral sentimentalism as a normative ethics. The question I am asking and attempting to answer positively is whether yin and yang can philosophically clarify and offer foundations for such sentimentalism, and our example of compassion together with its extrapolation to others of the moral sentiments gives us some basis for thinking yin and yang or, as we can now say, yin/yang does philosophically do what I am arguing it can do. (If yin/yang can undergird moral sentimentalism, it can also be used to defend a sentimentalist form of political/legal philosophy, but I will not take up that issue any further here.) Let me now proceed to epistemology.

I am going to be fairly brief about epistemology because this essay has bigger fish to fry, and my space is limited. Chinese thought has largely stayed clear of the theory of knowledge, but I think the categories of yin and yang can actually help Western philosophy or emerging world philosophy to a better understanding of traditional issues in that area. Western epistemology has been divided among foundationalists, coherentists, and virtue epistemologists. Foundationalists hold that the epistemic justification of our beliefs requires there to be basic beliefs that stand in no need of (further) justification. Coherentists believe that beliefs can be justified via mutual coherence and consilience and in the absence of a special category of

foundational beliefs. Virtue epistemologists think that beliefs are rational or justified if their acquisition exemplifies some epistemic virtue. But none of these schools or approaches ever mentions the possibility of inborn or natural epistemic virtues that run parallel to the natural moral virtues that Hume and other sentimentalists theorize about.

Hume thought that moral virtues like benevolence and gratitude did not have to be taught, and he called such virtues natural. But there are epistemic virtues that likewise do not have to be taught, and these give yin and yang an excellent justificatory foothold. For example, epistemologists of all stripes do not think of inquisitiveness or curiosity as an inborn epistemic virtue—no, not even the virtue epistemologists—but children do not have to be taught to be inquisitive or curious, and their curiosity plays a major role in their acquisition of knowledge and justified beliefs about the world. So, I think inquisitiveness is a natural epistemic virtue in the same way that, according to Hume, benevolence is a natural moral virtue.

Another natural epistemic virtue is epistemic decisiveness. This trait has (to the best of my knowledge) never been mentioned or focused on in the literature of epistemology, so let me briefly explain what I am referring to here. Hume held that our inductive beliefs or generalizations were based on the constant conjunction of experienced traits: other things being equal, if we see a's followed by b's, we infer that the next a will probably be b or even that all a's probably are. But people and even children do not think this way. As we say, there is no education in the second kick of a mule. We do not need a constant conjunction of a given mule and kicks in our direction to make an empirical inference about that mule. Similarly, a child burned by a stove does not need constant conjunction in order to come to some sort of belief about the dangerousness of stoves. If after once being burned, the child spoke, in Humean fashion, of needing more instances of being burned before being able to decide anything about stoves or a given stove, we would regard that child as abnormally or pathologically *indecisive* regarding the acquisition of beliefs.

The same point can be made about science. When Einstein devised the theory of general relativity, he did not hesitate to accept it on the grounds that other theories incompatible with general relativity might eventually be brought forward to intellectually compete with his own theory. Philosophers are always accusing scientists of leaping irrationally (though creatively) to conclusions, but this is gratuitously disrespectful to scientists and in my opinion also involves an inflated opinion of the role of philosophers on the part of those who make such criticisms. Rather, it is a virtue of scientists like Einstein and Galileo (when he supposedly leaped to the conclusion that there are craters on the moon) that they are willing to accept a view of things in a decisive way. They can grant that a better theory might eventually come along, but this typically does not make them hesitate to accept a theory they have devised when it does sufficient justice to their empirical observations and mathematical reasonings. They are epistemically decisive, and that is a good trait for scientists to have, and the fact that children in their more intellectually limited way are also epistemically decisive indicates that such decisiveness is a natural epistemic virtue.

There are other important natural epistemic virtues I could discuss further and have discussed elsewhere (e.g., in *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*). But now, it is time to

see how yin/yang can play a foundational role in our understanding of such virtues. Inquisitiveness or curiosity involves a certain yin receptiveness to the world, a desire to take in facts about the world or some corner of the world. But such receptiveness or receptivity is necessarily connected with a factor of yang. One is not receptive to the world if one does not pay attention to and focus on things in the world. Paying attention and focusing usually occur without our being self-consciously aware of what we are doing, but they always exemplify a desire to know particular facts. One hears a funny noise to one's left, one is curious about what is happening there, and so one focuses one's attention to the left. This sort of thing shows an epistemic decisiveness that exemplifies yang as directed (even if non-self-conscious) purpose, and the yin and yang sides of curiosity cannot be separated. A receptive curious person has to focus and pay attention, and focusing or paying attention in the name of curiosity shows receptivity.

I could go on, but at this point, I would like to generalize the discussion. Ethics and epistemology make us think about certain functions of the mind that can be productively understood in terms of yin and yang. But yin/yang can also help us to a better understanding of functioning human psychology generally, and I would like to explain how this is possible.

Kant saw the mind in typical Western fashion as capable of "pure reason" unalloyed with emotion; but in the Far East, our psychology is not thought of in this way. It is assumed that reason(ing) and emotion cannot fundamentally be separated. The terms "xin" in Chinese, "maum" in Korean, and "kokoro" in Japanese all reflect this assumption, and that is why, it has seemed so natural to translate all these terms into English as "heart-mind," not "mind." The latter word connotes at the very least the possibility of purely rational and non-emotional psychological functioning, and that is what Eastern thought does not subscribe to. I want to show you as briefly as is decently possible why I think pure reason is not possible and why, therefore, "heart-mind" characterizes our psychology better than "mind" does. This will give yin and yang a foundational entry point.

I have been saying that the West—most notably Kant but also Plato and Aristotle—has seen the mind in an overly pure way, but someone might object that the West allows emotion into the mind just as the East does. However, there is a difference. For the West, minds can contain emotions but *need not.* This means that our minds are not heart-minds, for the idea of a heart-mind clearly connotes or suggests that mind and emotion cannot be separated in the way the West supposes. With the exception of certain German Romantics (most notably, Johann Herder and Max Scheler), Western philosophers suppose that the mind or a mind can function on a purely intellectual basis, with inferences, proofs, intuitions, criticisms, and reasoning—whether valid or invalid—all potentially occurring in the absence of any emotion. This is precisely what talk of xin, kokoro, and maum does not suppose or presuppose. So, I want to show you why I think Western ideas are mistaken on these points about our human (or any) functioning psychology.

From the standpoint of Western analytic philosophy, there are two basic contents or building blocks of the mind: desire and belief. Certain other contents of the mind (e.g., dreams, idle imaginings, drug-induced hallucinations, obsessive thoughts, and

mood states like depression and mania) are naturally thought of as irrelevant to the mind as a functioning entity. However, those psychological states or operations that we regard as functional all involve desires or beliefs or both. Thus, plans or intentions cannot exist in the absence of desires, but they also necessarily rest on beliefs, and I think we can also say that intellectual operations like reasoning, intuition, and criticism all presuppose the existence of beliefs. So if I can show you that desire and belief both require emotion, the idea that the mind can in principle function without emotion and on a strictly rational or intellectual basis will be shown to be mistaken, and this will then vindicate maum, etc., as more realistic ways of seeing or referring to the human psyche. Let me talk about belief first because that is the hardest nut to crack. How can belief involve emotion? Isn't it purely cognitive?

Well, there are linguistic facts that seem to have been completely ignored by those who speak Western languages. When you believe a given hypothesis, you favor it over rival hypotheses or views, and the same holds for any proposition one believes to be true. We should take this language of favoring seriously, and taken literally, that language implies an emotion, just as when we say of someone that they favor one nephew or political party over another. The emotion can be characterized as cognitive or epistemic in a way that the latter favorings may not (seem to) be, but it is emotion nonetheless and in an arguably literal way, the way in which certitude and confidence about the truth of some proposition obviously are. What is the difference? As higher beings, we are capable of emotions vis-à-vis abstract entities—as per Plato's reverence for the Form of the Good and the disdain or contempt, many philosophers have toward approaches that fundamentally differ from their own. There is no reason to think we are not speaking literally in these various instances.

However, we need to be clear about a distinction. In stating that someone epistemically favors a certain proposition or hypothesis (for inclusion in their overall theoretical picture of the world), we are not claiming that they are happy about its being true. For example, John may not be in favor of his wife's being unfaithful to him; but nevertheless, at a certain point, he may epistemically favor the hypothesis that she has been and on that basis file for a legal separation from her. There is a difference between epistemic favoring and favoring for personal practical purposes, and we shall shortly see that yin/yang can help us understand this distinction better. But that there is a distinction along these lines is pretty obvious, and it supports the idea that belief involves emotion for the reasons I have been giving and for further reasons I shall now mention.

When we say that we believe something, we do not automatically commit ourselves to being confident about what we believe. My Random House Dictionary describes (epistemic) confidence as a state of *strong belief*, but if, as I have indicated, confidence in some proposition or truth involves emotion, then it is natural to think that belief as such requires only a lesser degree of confidence in some proposition, truth, or hypothesis. And in putting belief and confidence on a single scale in this way (and certitude would constitute something beyond confidence on the same scale), don't we implicitly presuppose that belief literally involves (epistemic) emotion if confidence, assumedly, does? Nor should one say at this point that all

justified cognitive or epistemic emotions rest on something free of emotion, so that if basic beliefs involve emotion, there can be no such thing as rational or justified belief. When I see a table, I am confident that there is a table in front of me, and that confidence does not rest on some rational state (what would it be?) that is free of all emotion. Rather, confidence can be a justified epistemic emotion that has no basis in any rational state that is free of all emotion, and if this works for confidence, we have no reason not to hold that it can also work for beliefs. Rational belief can involve emotion all the way down, and so, it is simply a philosophical mistake to hold that all epistemic justification has to rest on something entirely free of emotion.

Hume made this mistake, but it is a widespread mistake among present-day analytic philosophers. Moreover, Hume rigidly distinguished between moral virtues and processes and rational/cognitive ones and had no room for any form of sentimentalism about the latter; but our argument here indicates that both the moral and the cognitive are best viewed in sentimentalist terms. I am therefore advocating a *philosophical sentimentalism* that takes us beyond Hume's purely moral (or aesthetic) sentimentalism. But let me now point out a further and helpful implication of what I have just been saying.

What also indicates that belief is more than or different from an inert (as Hume puts it) purely cognitive/intellectual state in relation to various propositions is a fact about means-end thinking and action. If I am hungry and want food, but discover that there is no food in the house, then (assuming one cannot order in) that will lead me, other things being equal, to leave the house in search of food or a food store. But if the belief that there is no food in the house is inert and purely intellectual, why should not it just lie in the mind, once acquired, without leading to any action of, for example, leaving the house? Yet *this does not happen.* There is something about the belief that there is no food in the house that *causes it to engage* with the desire for food, and that something has to be a factor that is not strictly intellectual or inert. We can explain the fact of action in our food case if we suppose that the belief that there is no food in the house is not just a theoretical inert entity but has an emotional side to it. If that belief involves favoring the proposition that there is no food there both for theoretical and for practical purposes, that would help explain why the belief does not just lie in our minds inert when the desire for food arises in us, but is applied to that desire in the form of instrumental reasoning and action. So I hope you will join me in concluding that belief generally requires some kind of emotion.

With desire, the argument is a bit easier. We distinguish between desires and mere wishes and velleities on the grounds that only frustrated or unfulfilled *desires* are tied to a tendency to feel disappointed, sad, or angry, and these latter are emotions. So both belief and desire are tied to emotion, and now it is time to bring in yin and yang.

As we are conceiving them, yin and yang are necessarily complementary, and the belief that there is no food in one's house exhibits such a complementarity. It involves yin receptivity to one's environment but also a yang tendency to make use of the believed proposition for particular (instrumentally practical) purposes, and neither side nor aspect of belief can be separated from the other. A similar case can be made with desire. If I am thirsty, that state involves yin receptivity to a present

state of my throat/body and, of course, also involves a yang desire to drink (water). Once again, these states cannot be separated, and if time permitted, I could show you that every desire can be conceptualized in this way.

Therefore, the supposed human mind is really a heart-mind, and the heart-mind at the most basic level of belief and desire can be seen as structured in a yin/yang way. But more can be said. In effect, I have been arguing that belief and desire both rest on or are even constituted by emotion(s), and one might wonder at this point whether our analysis leads to a denial of any difference between beliefs and desires. This would indeed be problematic, but in fact no such thing follows if we focus on the concept of belief and the concept of desire. On my view, every belief involves desire and vice versa, but this still allows the *concept* of belief to be quite different from that of desire. When we talk of the belief that there is no food in the house, the yin receptive side of belief is being foregrounded in our minds or, better now, xin, and when we talk or think about thirst as involving a desire for water, the yang side of that desire is being foregrounded in our xin. The concepts are different even if the realities they apply to exemplify both belief and desire, yin and yang. If we understand all this, we can also, more overarchingly, say that belief is the yin of functioning xin/psychology and desire is its yang. The mind or xin overall turns out to be a yin/yang thing.

The problem we had earlier with the husband who believes his wife has been unfaithful can now be readily put to rest. The husband, in believing, is yin receptive to what the world or his eyes are telling him; he yin favors the proposition that his wife has been unfaithful. But he is far from yang favoring that idea because he does not desire for her to be or have been unfaithful. There are two basic kinds of psychological favoring, and our yin/yang analysis allows us to explain the case of the husband in an intuitive way. By the same token if the husband wants his wife to be unfaithful so that he has a good excuse to divorce her and marry some other woman he is involved with, he may yang favor the idea of her being unfaithful even if, because he has no evidence that she has been unfaithful, he does not (yet) yin favor it. It is time now to move beyond xin to the world outside xin and to the cosmos as containing both xin and external nature. (I am presupposing our commonsense belief in the falsity of metaphysical idealism.)

When I wrote *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang* (PYY), I was convinced that it was better to confine the application of updated yin and yang to the mind or xin. Those notions are applied to the natural world in Chinese medicine, feng shui, and macrobiotic dietetics, and these cultural practices are rightly viewed with suspicion (or worse) by forward-thinking Chinese academics and, of course, by most Westerners. However, I subsequently became convinced that my updated and philosophically useful yin and yang do not have to move us in the direction of such practices or in the direction of the kinds of proto-scientific natural explanations that ancient Chinese thought favored. Rather, yin/yang turns out to be applicable to the natural world in a way or ways that not only are consistent with modern scientific thinking, but also offer a useful and (I believe) illuminating conceptual/metaphysical framework for understanding such thinking. But we need to proceed slowly and by stages. I want

first to speak about modern science in relation to traditional or ancient Chinese and Western thinking.

In *Principia Mathematica* Isaac, Newton proposed three laws of motion. According to the first law (often called the law of inertia), an object at rest will remain at rest unless acted on by an unbalanced force, and an object in motion continues in motion with the same speed and in the same direction unless acted on by an unbalanced force. Thus, rectilinear motion continues as such "unless it is forced to change that state by forces impressed thereon." Newton offers empirical grounds for accepting the first law: air resistance and gravity are what make a body deviate from straight line motion. But subsequent others, most notably Kant, have claimed that it is a metaphysically necessary a priori truth. Kant grounded that assumption in his transcendental idealism, but others (and I am not the first to say this) have thought that the law is a priori independently of bringing in any distinction between things in themselves and phenomena/appearances. It seems plausible to suppose that if an object deviates from rest or rectilinear motion, there has to be some cause of its doing so. Nor does relativity physics undercut the a priori status of the first law. Relativity supports and enunciates its own version of the law by speaking of rest or motion *in an inertial frame of reference.*

Newton's second law of motion (f = ma) arguably presupposes the first, and I shall not discuss it further. The third law tells us that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The first law describes objects/bodies as at least initially independent of other objects/bodies; the third describes objects in relation to one another, and I think a case can be made for regarding it as a priori in the manner of the first law. Now the reader might object that there is no a priori reason why (e.g.) pressure on an object should always have to be met with counter-pressure by the object (even assuming that the initial pressure doesn't make the object disintegrate). Why should not the object or body just passively "accept" the pressure put on it? But think what this would mean. It would mean that the body was empty of all substance, that it was more a phantom than a real body. To be a body rather than a phantom is precisely to stand in the way of outside pressure, not to totally and completely yield to it. To be a physical body means *resisting* outside pressure, and by definition, such resistance is a form of counter-pressure. So, I think the third law has the same metaphysically necessary a priori status as the first.[1] But how does any of this relate to yin and yang?

[1] If Newton's laws are a priori metaphysically necessary truths and those truths *lie behind* all ordinary processes of physical (and perhaps psychological) causation, then the idea that Hume was so skeptical about in the first *Enquiry*, the idea of necessary connection between cause and effect, turns out to have a great deal of truth to it. Properly interpreted, therefore, Newton's laws may be able to provide us with a solution to the age-old problem of conceptualizing and identifying causal necessity, and we do not need Kant's distinction between noumena and phenomena in order to make these points. Newton's laws (appropriately relativized to inertial frames of reference) can be seen as entailing an *element* of (metaphysical) necessity *within* causal connections independently of any commitment to Kant's transcendental idealism. Those like Leibniz and A. C. Ewing who have held that causation is a matter of metaphysical (as more than physical) necessity have been closer to the truth than recent philosophy of science has ever recognized.

I earlier mentioned that yang outside the mind is a matter of directed impulsion, and what better example of such yang impulsion could one find than the rectilinear motion of bodies as described by Newton's first law? But the first law also attributes yin dispositions or tendencies to bodies. If a given body is at rest, it has the disposition to receive or take on motion from some outside force, and if it is in rectilinear motion, any later state of such motion will typically have received or acquired its motion from some immediately prior state of its rectilinear motion. This is what we have described as yin, and if the first law of motion is a priori, the connection between yin and yang with respect to states of bodily motion will be a priori and metaphysically necessary.

The point also applies to Newton's third law. If a rubber ball is squeezed by someone's hand, it yin receives a certain force from that hand, but it also yang exerts a specific or directed pressure on the hand to release the ball. More generally, if a rubber ball is pushed in by an outside force, it will tend (roughly) to spring back to its original shape. The being pushed in is the yin receiving of an outside force and the springing back to or taking back of its original shape represents yang impulsion in a particular direction or particular solid-geometrical form. Moreover, in the light of what have been argued above, these yin and yang aspects of the given situation are metaphysically inseparable.

Action on a body and reaction by the body seem to be pervasive of the physical world the way motion and (relative) rest are, so it would seem that physical reality is pervaded by yin and yang and yin/yang and that this conclusion arises out of, rather than being in any way contrary to, modern science. But it is worth noting the partial anticipation of this result on the part of the neo-Confucian philosopher Zhou Dunyi. In his *taijitu shuo*, Zhou sees the ultimate qi (vital energy) and taiji (supreme ultimate metaphysical factor in the universe) as becoming differentiated into yang motion or activity and (then) into yin rest or stillness. This treats motion and rest as basic to the universe in a way that anticipates Newton and that Aristotle, for example, never came close to recognizing. However, Zhou Dunyi failed to see what Newton and before him Galileo (in opposition to Aristotle) saw, namely that rest and motion involve the same causal/metaphysical factors. As a result, Zhou separated yin rest from yang motion; whereas in the light of Galileo and Newton, we can now see that rest exemplifies both yin and yang and that motion does too. This gives us a deeper or more accurate picture of how yin and yang pervade the physical universe because it takes on board what Newton says by way of unifying rest and motion under the same law of inertia.

However, yin and yang not only exist at the level of pure physics, but are also applicable to chemical and biological phenomena. For example, action and reaction occur in chemical terms throughout the natural world, and the necessary complementarity of yang directed action/impulsion and yin receiving or taking in is implicit or inchoate in some of the ways chemists describe chemical processes. During the process of rusting, oxygen is said to oxidize a piece of iron, and the iron is not described as "ironizing" the oxygen; so in such cases, one element is seen as receiving the influence of another and not vice versa. We can say, then, that as chemistry conceives the matter, oxygen is yang active in a specific way on iron during the process of oxidation and rusting and iron yin receptive to that active influence. I do not know of

any chemist or philosopher interested in chemistry who has called attention to this active/receptive way in which chemical processes are often described or made much of its philosophical implications; but clearly and in the light of what I have already sought to show, yin and yang apply to chemical processes (not only rusting, but also reduction and lots of other chemical processes) and not just to purely physical facts.

Now it is time to consider biology. When a flower grows, it takes in sunlight and water and grows in a solid-geometrically specific and largely predetermined direction or set of directions. Clearly, we have another example of yin and yang, this time applying within the sphere of biology, and, if time and space permitted, the biological examples could be multiplied.

When Chinese medicine or macrobiotic dietetics tells us that the heart, liver, and lungs are yin and the stomach, intestines, and bladder are yang, it seems to go against modern biological and medical understandings of how the body works, and even if these cultural traditions do not exactly contradict modern scientific findings, they exist in a very different cognitive or intellectual universe from modern science and medicine. By contrast, what we have been saying about the realization of yin and yang in the natural world outside xin arises out of what modern science says about this world and does not seem to run counter to its findings. More positively, we can say that yin and yang as complementary offer us a conceptual framework for understanding the implications of modern science, a metaphysical framework if you will. And the reader can perhaps also see that yin and yang would structure any possible orderly natural universe, not just our own, so what I am saying about yin/yang is about as metaphysical as one can get. It treats yin and yang as being as basic to any possible world as the categories of thing and property or of thing and events occurring to it are often thought to be.

However, we are familiar with the latter forms of a priori metaphysical structuring (though process philosophers and trope theorists will challenge their necessary role in the or any world), and the idea that yin/yang pervades the natural and overall universe will be "news" to Western thinkers even if it will seem almost obvious to Chinese philosophers and ordinary Chinese folk. But when the Chinese take for granted the pervasiveness of yin and yang, their belief in that pervasiveness typically rests on outmoded cultural or proto-scientific assumptions or, for the intelligentsia, represents a kind of undifferentiated cultural nostalgia. I have put literal and scientifically plausible bones on such nostalgia and dated thinking. An a priori necessary yin/yang metaphysics of the cosmos is philosophically defensible, in ways not anticipated in Chinese culture or tradition, if we conceptualize yin/yang in the philosophically pure or purified way that we have made use of here[2]. (Let me add that yin/yang analysis

[2] I earlier mentioned such things as dreams and psychological depression as not being part of the functioning mind or xin, but that needs to be qualified. In the small, a momentary stab of pity or compassion does not seem to contain yin and yang, but this fails to see such feeling in context. In the larger context of empathy and responsiveness, such feeling finds a place. So if, as I argued, empathy and responsiveness to suffering exemplify yin/yang, the momentary feeling contextually exemplifies them too. It is the same with depression. If someone is depressed because of the death of a loved one (mourning is familiarly viewed as a kind of depression), that depressive mourning yin reflects the reality of what has happened to one, and the refusal, for a period of time, to engage

can also yield results in aesthetics and (believe it or not!) in the philosophy of logic, the philosophy of mathematics, and the philosophy of language [both semantics and speech-act theory]. But there is no space for me to go into all of that here.)[3]

I mentioned earlier that Zhou Dunyi derived yin and yang from qi and taiji, but I have yet to say anything about these latter categories. Are they as superannuated as Zhou's view of yin rest as being entirely opposed to yang motion? I think not, and I shall now show you why I think that qi as underlain by taiji constitutes a plausible and science-friendly metaphysical foundation for the yin and yang that I have on a priori conceptual grounds attributed to the universe. The most important thing to begin with here is the recognition that we have indeed found yin and yang unambiguously and necessarily realized both in functioning xin and in the natural order outside of xin.

The traditional concept of qi is often equated with the idea of vital energy or force, and thus understood it is applied more readily or frequently to nature than to xin. But we can plausibly locate qi within xin if we consider what yin functionality in xin and yang functionality in xin have in common. Many Chinese thinkers have seen yin and yang as forms or aspects of qi, and this idea can be specifically applied to xin as easily as it has been thought to apply it to nature outside xin. Both psychological yin and psychological yang are forms of emotionality: yin emotionality in the form of epistemic receptivity and yang emotionality in the form of practically directed purpose. And just as qi has been thought to appear only in yin or yang instantiations (one finds this presupposition as far back as the *I Ching*), we can say emotionality within functional xin can appear only in yin/belief or yang/desire or purpose form. (I do not have space here to speak about dysfunctional xin.) So I propose that we regard emotionality as qi within xin.

But then, we have to ask whether in all consistency we can also apply qi to the natural world. We can move toward a positive answer in the light of the fact that yin and yang apply equally to nature and to xin. For if they are always aspects of qi, then we have reason to conceive qi as existing equally and non-ambiguously in both nature and xin. But we can say more. We have also already seen, following Newton, that both rest and rectilinear motion are forms of motion in some deeper sense (that Zhou and Aristotle were unaware of). That is why Newton's first law *of motion* applies equally to rest and rectilinear motion. Now we must find something common between the qi of emotionality and motion in the physical or natural world. Do emotionality and motion have something in common?

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in normal and happy activities constitutes a yang response to that reality. Similarly, if any one of a number of theories of dreaming is correct, dream contents yin reflect what is happening in one's life and yang serve a useful psychological function as well. So if one widens the relevant contexts, it can be seen that yin and yang are present where they might initially seem not to be.

[3] I make use of yin/yang in these other disciplines in *A Larger Yin/Yang Philosophy.* The extension of yin/yang analysis to mathematics, logic, and language moves us toward a thoroughgoing overall philosophical naturalism that we might call Chinese naturalism. To anticipate, consider Frege's propositional semantics, according to which a proposition results from a singular term/concept's fitting into the open place in a predicate concept. Does this remind you of anything?

One might at first think that the fact that the two words just used have "motion" within them would indicate a common element, but I can hear the skeptic say that this is just some kind of pun, not something to be taken seriously for present-day philosophical purposes. But I think we should push back against such a criticism. There are languages where the words for emotion and motion do not have such a common linguistic element, Chinese among them; but there is at least one language where the same *whole word* applies to both emotions and motions in nature. Latin uses the term "motus" for ordinary physical motion/movement and also for emotions, and there is no pun involved here. In Latin, an emotion is called a motus animi, movement of the soul, and is there really no insight in such a usage? You could say that the application of "motus" to inner emotions is just a metaphor, but an insightful, plausible metaphor has to be based on some real similarity, and we can perhaps, therefore, use the term "motus" for what is similar, really similar, between emotion in xin and motions in nature.

We can also use the term "qi" for that similarity. Contemporary forward-looking and scientifically minded Chinese thinkers (and Western ones as well) do not see things in terms of qi. But if what I have just been saying is correct, then they can and should. Rather than being an outmoded or superstitious idea from China's past, qi can be vindicated in terms that are consistent with and arise from the findings of modern science. We end up with qi as the most general concept that applies to the natural order of things both inside and outside xin or mind.

It applies independently of any assumptions about the material elements of things (Greece's four elements, China's five elements, or the more than a hundred elements we now accept). It also applies independently of particular causal assumptions. As Kant tells us, the inverse square law of gravitational attraction is a posteriori—the gravitational constant might have been different (in a different possible universe). Similarly, what I have said about yin and yang as instantiated in Newton's third law does not tell us the particulars of how action and reaction are equated. A certain pressure of the fingers on a ball evokes a strong reaction from the ball, but just how long it takes for a pressed in ball to resume its original shape is left undecided by our yin/yang analysis. That means that yin and yang, far from preempting the processes of causal/scientific investigation, constitute a metaphysical/conceptual structure that applies independently of discovered causal regularities or assumptions about the elements in things. Zhou Dunyi thought he could deduce the five Chinese elements (fire, metal, soil, water, wood) from yin and yang conceived in general, but my application of yin and yang is more modest and does not assume we can make such a necessary deduction. On the other hand, it is also less modest and bolder because of the related implication/assumption that yin/yang and qi apply to any metaphysically possible universe. That is something Zhou never thought to explicitly claim.

Now there was a certain tendency in the writings of Zhou and other Chinese philosophers to think of both qi and taiji as existing only in yin or yang forms. That leads me to speculate further that qi may *be* taiji, may be the supreme ultimate principle or factor in the universe. I think qi is as metaphysically ultimate as one can get in any conceivable universe, so why not say that qi really is the supreme ultimate or taiji of things generally? To be sure, Chinese thinkers like Zhou Dunyi thought

of taiji as something beyond the physical universe, something that, mysteriously, brings about the order of yin and yang in the visible or psychological world. But we have to be careful. Arguably, there is no such factor beyond the universe. But that does not force us to abandon the idea of taiji as hopelessly antiquated and outmoded. Instead, we can say that taiji is best understood in contemporarily relevant terms, is best updated, as qi understood in the way I have been understanding it. We can pare down (the assumptions behind traditional) taiji in order to save it, in a metaphysically reductionist fashion, for our ongoing view of the world and what is basic to the world. And remember that we have preserved here the ancient idea that taiji only appears in yin or yang forms. In that case, taiji exists not beyond and separate from the universe we know but as structurally present in our universe and any possible universe.

However, as Wang Jianbin has reminded me, qi is also traditionally conceived as a kind of stuff, and one can wonder whether I allow room for this in my conception of qi and my equating of qi with taiji. Can qi be both motus and a pervasive stuff? Qi is traditionally conceived as both vital energy and a kind of pervading stuff; but in modern-day terms, this is not all that problematic. Qi was always considered to be a stuff that was far more ethereal and even abstract than the five traditional Chinese elements were regarded as being. But if qi is a kind of stuff that exists at a level of purity or abstractness that goes beyond any of the five or hundred elements, then equating it with energy makes a lot of contemporary scientific sense. Contemporary physics regards matter and energy as equivalent and uses phrases like "matter-energy," and I am just proposing that we give ourselves the same philosophical freedom at the metaphysical level. Motus as energy can then be equated with the metaphysically most etiolated form of stuff, and qi will then be a kind of metaphysical and conceptually necessary stuff/energy aspect of the universe. At that point, we may even want to say that traditional Chinese ideas about qi in some way *anticipate* the matter-energy equivalence of modern physics.

I have sought here to vindicate the ideas of qi and taiji for modern-day purposes. There is more, much more, to these notions than today's Chinese philosophers, not to mention Western philosophers, have realized. But now we should proceed to a more synoptic point of view. We need to contrast Western and Chinese thinking about the overall nature of the cosmos in order to better see what our arguments above allow us to conclude about the overall nature of the cosmos. We shall see that they support traditional Chinese thinking about the harmony and unity of the universe as against various forms of Western metaphysical/religious dualism.

Christianity and Judaism see God as altogether separate from the (created) natural world, but one also finds such dualistic thinking in Plato's idea that the forms exist entirely independently of the physical/natural world. And Kant's dualism of noumena and phenomena expresses something very similar. There is also a strong tendency toward mind-body dualism in the West—as, for example, in Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes, and let me suggest that such dualism reflects the dualism of mind/cognition and emotion that is also prevalent in the West. Emotion is clearly tied, in most people's minds, with the body, so if emotion and cognition/mind/reason are considered to be separate, it is natural to infer that the mind with its cognitive powers and the body

with its emotionality are separate entities. That can also make it easier to see God, with his mental powers, as separate from the bodily/natural universe.

Now some Chinese philosophers have subscribed to mind-body dualism despite the Chinese tendency to unify reason and emotion in the mind or xin. However, Chinese thought conceives the universe as a whole as harmonious and unified in a way that precludes any fundamental metaphysical or religious dualism of the kind that is so frequently seen in the West. The Chinese have seen Heaven (Tian) as cohering with and inseparable from Earth (Di). But of course this view of the cosmos is very dated. It is geocentric in a way that modern thought has resisted and rejected. Tian is also traditionally associated with yang as male and Di with yin as female (mother earth), but our updated yin and yang give no foothold to such a gendered interpretation of ultimate reality. After all (and I could say more about this), a mother needs to be yang directed in purpose if she want to provide for her family, and a man with a career needs to be yin receptive to some tradition of thought or practice and to what others inside (and outside) his chosen profession are thinking or doing. So our updating of yin and yang leads to an ungendered picture of ultimate reality as based, conceptually and metaphysically, in yin/yang and, more deeply, in qi and taiji.

But such a picture yields or constitutes a unity and a universal harmony that is just as pervasive as anything, Chinese thought has attributed to Tian and Di. I have sought to show you that yin/yang pervades both the functioning xin and nature outside xin, and this constitutes a metaphysical harmony and a form of metaphysical unity. More significantly still, qi and taiji are seen as everywhere in the cosmic order and that is a deeper form of unity and harmony—and deeper still because that unity and harmony are viewed as necessary to any possible universe.

It turns out, then (and according to everything I have argued for here), that the Chinese basic vision of the universe has greater depth and validity than anything the West has standardly argued for or believed in. The Chinese accepted such a picture on the basis of some sort of intuitive or implicit understanding of the world in and around them, but I have sought to show that that picture of harmony and unity can be backed by philosophical argument and in a way that is consistent with, complements, and indeed grows out of modern scientific thought. Chinese academics who reject or pay no attention to yin/yang, qi, and taiji should think again. There is more to their tradition than they have recognized, and as China continues to gain in influence in the world, perhaps even Western philosophers can be eventually persuaded to recognize the depth and plausibility of Chinese categories and Chinese ways of seeing the world.

At present, Chinese academics are deeply divided with respect to their own traditional thinking. Leaving aside the official philosophy of Marxism, some departments in Chinese universities concentrate exclusively on traditional Chinese thought, while others look exclusively to the West for present-day philosophical purposes. Those who focus on the traditional typically see all philosophical wisdom in what traditional Chinese thought tells us and reject Western ideas as misleading or irrelevant to our philosophical understanding of things. (In some cases, they reject the whole idea of philosophy.) Those Chinese Westernizers who look to inspiration from the

West reject their own traditions of thought as outmoded and even, in many instances, as superstitious.

But what I have offered here is a middle path between these opposing points of view. I have argued in analytic ways typical of Western but not of Chinese thought, and I have been dealing with philosophical problems that have on the whole concerned West philosophers more than the Chinese. China has traditionally paid very little attention to issues in epistemology and philosophy of mind. Not only have they not considered how ordinary or scientific beliefs can be rationally justified, but they have also not broken down the functioning mind or xin into some kind of interaction between beliefs and desires. For example, the Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhang Zai sees xin as fundamentally based in emotion, and this anticipates what I have been saying about the basically emotional character of our psychology. But he does not explicitly separate belief from desire/purpose and never thinks to analyze these in terms of the conceptual contrast between yin and yang. But we have been doing all of that here, and in doing so, Chinese categories have been put in the service of Western philosophical problems and originally Western thinking. This constitutes the kind of integration of Chinese with Western philosophy that the title of this essay refers to and that the essay itself has sought to bring about.[4]

One final but (I believe) telling point. Spinoza in the *Ethics* gives detailed philosophical arguments for a dual-aspect vision of the total universe as both God and nature. Most of us today are not persuaded of the validity of those arguments, but everyone agrees that they lead Spinoza to a mystical or quasi-mystical view of things: we do not *see* the duality of God (natura naturans) and nature (natura naturata), but the arguments he gives are supposed to lead us to view that duality as *lying deeply behind* everything that exists or could exist.

The arguments I have sketched for you here have similar import. We do not see the yin and yang of motion or emotionality, we do not see qi, which is the ultimate taiji that lies behind the world as we experience it and, more generally, behind everything in the cosmic order. But the arguments I have offered tell us that yin/yang and qi are necessarily there in our universe and any possible universe. All this amounts, I would say, to a mystical or quasi-mystical view of things. But unlike the mysticisms that so many religious and philosophical thinkers have promulgated, this mysticism is philosophically argued for, is defended in analytic-philosophical terms. Modern philosophizing does not, therefore, have to cower before the accusation of mysticism. It can hold its own and face the light of philosophical reflection, and that mysticism or quasi-mysticism, therefore, is very different from other forms we are historically

[4] In books and various Internet videos, Eckhart Tolle takes the Buddhist idea of miserable human existence and brilliantly gives it a positive spin. Rather than urge us to leave the desire-filled world of human suffering for nirvana, he says we can have a good life if we stop obsessing about future and past and focus on the positive present reality of our lives. For example, a man separated by war or business from his wife could obsess about all he is missing, but in doing so could fail to appreciate the wonderful reality of his (having a) precious relationship with her. He would then be being less than yin receptive to his actual reality and would be embroiled in non-yang obsessive thinking rather than acting positively. So Tolle's reworking of Indian Buddhism finds a place within updated yin/yang Chinese thought. I will have more to say about this in another venue.

acquainted with. If, despite the seeming oxymoron, there is such a thing as justifiable homicide, there can also be such a thing as a justifiable mysticism of yin/yang, qi, and taiji.

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Self-Cultivation as Moral Education in Chinese Philosophy

Ronnie Littlejohn and Qingjun Li

Abstract Any purported totalizing account of moral education and self-cultivation in Chinese philosophy would be as massive and labyrinthine as the same project if attempted in Western philosophy. Moreover, if such an effort were accomplished, what one would produce is a history of Chinese thinking, not a constructive theory. Even the much narrower project of trying to establish "a Confucian theory of moral education," or "a Daoist theory," or "a Buddhist theory," inevitably finds it quite difficult to harmonize all the voices within a single tradition into a unified narrative: for example, to make all Confucians speak with one voice. In a rather obvious way, the Chinese tendency to insist that their philosophical identity lies in "the three teachings" (*sanjiao* 三教), rather than in any single stream of thought, is a very direct admission of comfort with a recurring constructivism negotiated by drawing from each new generation, rather than a mono-vocal account once for all. Accordingly, what we offer in this essay is not a comprehensive account of all the permutations of Chinese thought on moral education and self-cultivation, but what could be called "*A* Statement of Moral Education and Self-Cultivation *Built* with Chinese Philosophies." We offer a constructivist project. We set this project out in four sections: Moral Education as Esthetic Development; Self-cultivation as Exhibiting Virtuous Excellence (*de* 德); The Way to Moral Excellence; and The Self-Cultivated Life as Happiness.

Keywords Moral education · Self-cultivation · Chinese moral philosophy · Virtuous excellence · (*de* 德) · Happiness

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_3

1 Introduction

If we take a standard set of fundamental questions about morality and moral education as these have shown themselves of interest in Western philosophy, we would have some such as the following.

- How *should* we live as a question of ultimate values (i.e., what is the ideal sort of person who should be created following moral values)?
- What is the ultimate purpose of our lives (e.g., to pursue happiness or pleasure, obey moral rules, please others or higher beings, or follow our own interests)?
- What is the origin of our morality (e.g., do we invent it and agree to it as if by contract, is it inborn or part of our nature, or is it given by a higher being or intelligence)?
- What really makes something good or right to do (e.g., is it the consequences of an action, going by the duties we have as humans generally and in our roles in life specifically, or following our most passionate sentiments)?
- Is morality universal or relative to each human culture or even to an individual? Are there moral absolutes quite apart from the historical or contextual situation?
- Can morality be taught? If so, what is it that one teaches (e.g., applying rules, making a consequential calculus, cultivating certain sympathies and emotional dispositions, or modelling ourselves on moral exemplars)? If morality cannot be taught, then shall we simply substitute law in critical cases and allow liberty of action in all others?
- What is the relationship between virtue and happiness, if there is one (e.g., only the virtuous may be truly happy or true happiness is constituted by virtuous living)?

Of course, taking these various questions, we find different answers to them abounding in the history of Western moral philosophy. Categorization of philosophers into utilitarians, deontologists, virtue theorists, emotivists, and the like is one way of grouping the responses to these questions in texts and thinkers throughout Western intellectual history.

Why, then, do we think that we would find a different situation in Chinese philosophical tradition? It might be fashionable to hold that some of these questions are incommensurable and are not even asked in Chinese moral philosophy, but actually this is quite a superficial take. The more one reflects on the Chinese traditions, the more these questions will appear in one tradition or another, and also in a relatively recognizable form. Strikingly, a great number of the answers offered by Western philosophers also show up in Chinese philosophy, even if perhaps nuanced in form, or sometimes set forward as targets to be criticized.

What this means is that any purported totalizing account of moral education and self-cultivation in Chinese philosophy would be as massive and labyrinthine as the same project if attempted in Western philosophy. Moreover, at the end of such an effort one might find only a *history* of Chinese thinking on moral education and self-cultivation, not a constructive approach. Even the project of trying to establish "a Confucian theory of moral education," or "a Daoist theory," or "a Buddhist theory,"

inevitably finds it quite difficult to harmonize all the voices within a single tradition into a unified narrative: for example, to make all Confucians speak with one voice (King & Schilling, 2011; Nivison, 1966; Shun & Wong, 2004; Berthrong, 1998).

In a rather obvious way, the Chinese tendency to insist that their philosophical identity lies in "the three teachings" (*sanjiao* 三教) rather than in any single stream of thought is a very direct admission that they are comfortable with recurring synergies negotiated by each new generation, rather than a monovocal account of moral education and self-cultivation once for all. Accordingly, what we offer in this essay is not a comprehensive account of all the permutations of Chinese thought, but what could be called "*A* Statement of Self-Cultivation as Moral Education *Built* with Chinese Philosophies." We offer a constructivist project. We are engaged in a creative response to diverse and rich Chinese philosophical thinking. We set this project out in four sections: Moral Education as Esthetic Development; Self-cultivation as Exhibiting Virtuous Excellence (*de* 德); The Way to Moral Excellence; and The Self-Cultivated Life as Happiness.

2 Moral Education as Esthetic Development

As we understand it, Chinese moral education is not an analytical process**.** What we do not find in the various approaches to moral education in Chinese philosophies is a commitment to train persons how to make a decision using a calculus for working from universalizable rules, through a grid of anticipated consequences, and supplemented in the end perhaps by a table of excusing conditions for the choice made. In Western moral education, just such paths are characteristic (e.g., Burnor & Raley, 2017; Liautaud, 2021; Rae, 2018; Vaughn, 2015). Instead of this kind of rational calculation and weighing of obligations and proposed alternatives, Chinese moral education, with few exceptions, is thought of as more like learning an art. There are many analogies used in Chinese philosophy with which to compare learning to exhibit moral excellence. It was often compared to learning how to carve a piece of jade or paint a picture, rather than to solving a problem in math. Moral competence was likened to learning calligraphy. Exemplary persons of Chinese moral traditions (whether Confucian *junzi* 君子, Daoist *zhenren* 真人, or Buddhist *sengren* 僧人) were portrayed as though they were painting reality with the brush of their lived action (i.e., bodily movement). A frequently used analogy for self-cultivation as moral education was learning to harmonize musically, either in singing or playing of instruments. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), himself a master of moral education at the White Deer Grotto Academy (*Bailudong Shuyuan* 白鹿洞書院), called upon persons to live together with others in a balanced harmony (*zhonghe* 中和). Peimin Ni, a contemporary interpreter of Confucian moral education, compares learning morality's harmonious excellence to making a fine broth.

> Harmony is like broth. One uses water, fire, vinegar, sauce, salt, and plums to cook his fish and meat. It is made to boil by the firewood, and then the cook mixes the ingredients. (Ni, 2010, 148)

Mencius 孟子 (371–289 BCE) takes the interesting position that for the self-cultivated person doing what is right pleases the heart-mind (*xin* 心) in the same way that succulent meat pleases the palate, and doing what is wrong is as much to be avoided as is rancid food (Lau, 2003, 6A7). He likens the morally accomplished individual to a connoisseur of fine food. The significance of this analogy for moral education is that Mencius is moving toward the position that the moral discretion of such a person will exhibit such refined judgment that he can rule the entire realm humanely like the ancient sage kings Yao and Shun: he will love doing what is right and just. Self-centered actions, such as greed, dishonesty, or corruption, fall away because they no longer hold any attraction; in fact, they are like a dish that is putrid in taste and as repugnant as spoiled food.

Since morality is not an analytical "science" in Chinese philosophy, context and lived example are the settings for the educational process of self-cultivation. This observation is one way of summarizing the fundamental importance of the five cardinal relationships found in Chinese culture. Characteristically, it is more like Chinese moral education to tell a story of personal interactions than to offer a set of rules. While we might find some of the examples of the Yuan dynasty text, *Twenty-four Filial Exemplars*《二十四孝》to be bizarre and strange; nevertheless, this text underscores the significant of narration of lived interaction to moral education. We may certainly appreciate as well how this same approach is taken in Liu Xiang's 劉向 *Biographies of Women* (*Lienu zhuan* 烈女傳) and Ban Zhao's 班昭 *Lessons for Women* (*Nujie* 女戒) (Wang, 2003). The same may be said for what is a rather well-known account of Confucius's conversation regarding a son's moral responsibility upon learning that his father has done something wrong (Murphy & Weber, 2010).

> 葉公語孔子曰:「吾黨有直躬者, 其父攘羊, 而子證之。」孔子曰:「吾黨之直者異於是。父為子隱, 子為父隱, 直在其中矣」。
>
> The Governor of She said to Confucius, "In our village there is a man nicknamed 'Straight Body.' When his father stole a sheep, he gave evidence against him." Confucius answered, "In our village those who are straight are quite different. Fathers conceal the misconduct of sons, and sons conceal the misconduct of their fathers. Straightness is to be found in such behavior!"

It is in lived contexts that one cultivates the taste, an ear for harmony, and the art of life's brush that constitutes self-cultivation and displays how to live with the virtuosity of moral excellence (*de*).

The analogy to musicality is representative of the various ways in which moral education is like esthetic development in Chinese traditions. Noticing the use of this analogy makes clear that there is a decided preference for harmony (*he* 和) rather than "the good" as an ultimate value in Chinese moral philosophy (Li, 2014). On this analogy, the self-cultivating person is learning how to move within a community just as a musician develops the sense of what it means to play in an ensemble. In fact, an ensemble is constituted by the various musicians playing in harmony (*he*) and balance/equilibrium (*zhong* 中), and it does not exist apart from this activity of mutuality. The same may be said of a moral community and the cultural proprieties (*li* 禮) that make it possible. Stepping into relationships with others produces the arousal

of feelings and desires, which Zhu called "the seven emotions" (*qi qing*): joy, anger, melancholy, worry, grief, fear, and fright. When these emotions are stirred up, one's internal equilibrium is upset and harmony in one's relationships is also destroyed. Therefore, self-cultivation for Zhu Xi ultimately meant learning to discipline oneself so as to make internal equilibrium (*zhong*) manifest itself in our outer actions as harmony (Metzger, 1977: 94). Self-cultivation brings the still and active phases of life into an interpenetrating harmony (Adler, 2008, 65). So, internal stillness, while necessary, is never an end in itself.

Self-cultivation as moral education as we are building it from Chinese sources is most basically a collaboration between persons. It is not done from the outside as a kind of neutral (or impartial) application of rules and duties; nor can one learn morality by reflecting only on one's inner sentiments and feelings. Cultivating a moral self in Chinese traditions is done with others. Roger Ames captures self-cultivation as developing an esthetic style, rather than being a rational, calculative morality in this way.

> Lifestyle takes on crucial import when we consider the corrosive consequences to the community of those persons who live without style. Carelessness becomes of major concern when we have to worry about those persons who couldn't care less. And graciousness has gravity when we reflect on the relevance that charm and deportment have for an overall sense of fittingness and propriety. Morality is associated more with poise and deportment in our transactions with people than it is with any formal correctness. (Ames, 2011, 172)

If we are right about the kinship between self-cultivation and moral development in Chinese thought, and if learning morality is like gaining an artistic virtuosity, then we might extend this analogical comparison to the way in which moral language is used. Moral virtues in Western philosophy are often nominalized. Even in esthetics, Western philosophers have observed not only that something may be "beautiful," but they have asked what is "beauty in itself." They look for the common essence or esthetic property that makes an entire group of paintings or sculptures beautiful and assume that they must, then, all possess some common essence or trait which is in substance "beauty itself." Likewise, in thinking of moral language, Western philosophers have frequently looked at various actions which are all called "courageous," or "benevolent" and presumed that there is some moral property or reality they all share: courage or benevolence. The result is that morality is closely associated with a kind of metaphysic which includes among the substances of reality some moral objects which are named by the moral concepts or nouns used in the language of morality. As some of these are moral virtues, a number of Western thinkers talk as though the virtues "belong" to persons, or are "traits" of an act. The most radical form of this kind of merger between metaphysics and morality in the West is arguably "moral realism" (Sweetman, 2013; Rist, 2012; McNaughton, 1991).

What we are suggesting by emphasizing that morality is a kind of estheticism in Chinese thought is a fundamentally different approach, one that disengages the use of moral language from metaphysics but also does not collapse it into a form of subjectivism or mere statement of preference. Language about virtues in our constructed version of Chinese thought on moral education and self-cultivation is not to be understood as referring to metaphysical objects or properties of things. Virtue language is

not about a *what* that one possesses (e.g., a trait or property), but about *how* one is performing an activity in a context. Consider, then, that we should read Confucius's often-delivered exhortation to his disciples to be best expressed as that they should seek to be humane (*ren* 仁), where *ren* here appears to be more like a verb than a noun. Confucius is referring to a way of acting-in-the-world. He does not mean that they should have *ren* or possess *ren.* In *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), Book 4, six analects specifically describe this kind of individual. They never stop *ren*-ing, not even for one day (4.5). Likewise, Book 15 of the *Analects* preserves a collection of aphorisms from Confucius on the exemplary person (15.19, 15.20, 15.21, 15.22, and 15.23). None of these descriptions trade on metaphysical objects, even immaterial ones, such as we find in some accounts of the virtues in Western philosophy. Exemplary persons are distressed by their own deficiencies, not by the failure of others to praise them (15.19). They cannot stand the thought of not distinguishing themselves in moral excellence (*de*-ing) (15.20). They make demands on themselves, whereas petty persons make demands on others (15.21). They are self-possessed, calm, and not contentious (15.22). They promote others on merit, not on mere words (15.23). The shift that we are pointing to here is a direct result of thinking of self-cultivation as an esthetic activity of realizing moral authenticity. This cultivation process does not eventuate or culminate in moral education; it *is* moral education.

> 誠者自成也, 而道自道也…是故君子誠之為貴…誠者非自成己而已也, 所以成物也。成己, 仁也; 成物, 知也.
>
> Authenticity (誠) is the way of self-realization (自成), and it is the way which one must pursue….thus it is that for exemplary persons authenticity is precious…the authentic person does not merely achieve self-completion, but completes other persons and things. Completing oneself is *ren* (仁); completing others is wisdom (*zhi* 知). (*Zhongyong* 25)

This emphasis on authenticity suggests that the attraction of one's moral excellence (*de*) is, like that of a work of art, a specific expression of an individual embedded in a world of others. What is being stressed is not so much the application of rules and principles but the engagement with others in realizing the self in ways that enhance the harmony of the community as a whole.

3 Self-cultivation as Exhibiting Virtuous Excellence (*De* 德)

As we understand Chinese thought, self-cultivation is developing the art of exhibiting virtuous excellence (*de* 德) in one's life. Of course, across all the three teachings, Chinese thinkers recognize the value of non-moral values to life as well; but while self-cultivation is more than coming to possess *de*, it always includes such development (Cf., Wolf, 1982). Substantially, this means living so as to gain the confidence of others not merely in the reliability of one's moral decisions but also in the recognition that one projects the sort of excellence (*de*) that makes him/her a moral authority, arbitrator, and exemplar. One way this shows up in Chinese philosophy is when moral rules are used, as we find in Buddhist and later Daoist precepts (*jie* 戒),

Confucian *li* 禮 and the morality books and ledgers (i.e., *Tract of the Most Exalted on Action and Response*, *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇). As Confucius would have it, exemplary persons (*junzi*) develop excellence by observing the cultural proprieties of human interaction (*li*, *Analects* 6.27); however, while precepts are used in self-cultivation to discipline, guide, and foster moral competence (*Analects* 6.27, 9.11, 15.18), one's moral excellence (*de*) is on display when one no longer requires dependence on rules or proprieties, but is spontaneous.

Xunzi 荀子 (c. 325–235 BCE) holds that persons require substantial external control to exhibit *ren*. In his description of self-cultivation, Xunzi makes use of craft analogies, such as woodworking, jade carving, and home construction to highlight the effort needed to develop moral excellence. He thinks of human nature as crooked wood that requires the steaming and straightening of a frame in order to be good. Self-cultivation by following cultural proprieties (*li*) is that steaming and straightening process (Hutton, 2014, 248). The result is the sort of virtuous excellence (*de*) exhibited by the exemplary person (*junzi*).

In contrast, while Mencius prefers agricultural metaphors for self-cultivation over craft analogies; yet, he agrees with Xunzi that nourishing and tending the moral life is required for the transformation into a person who projects *de*.

> The heart of compassion is the seed of benevolence; the heart of shame, of dutifulness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of observance of the rites; the heart of moral discretion, of wisdom. Humans have these four seeds (*duan* 端) just as they have four limbs. For a person possessing these four seeds to deny his own potentialities is for him to cripple himself; …. If a man is able to develop all of these four seeds, it will be like a fire starting up or a spring coming through. When these are fully developed, he can tend the whole realm within the Four Seas, but if he fails to cultivate them, he will not be able even to serve his parents. (Lau, 2003, 2A6)

In order to understand completely the relationship between self-cultivation and moral education, we cannot focus only on the use of *li* or moral precepts, as interpreted by Confucius, Mencius, or Xunzi, but we should keep in mind the ultimate goal of gaining the virtuosity of living harmoniously. Precepts and proprieties function in the moral philosophies of these and other Chinese thinkers as what we might call ladders meant to enable an ascent to the goal of being a person of moral excellence. Once one has climbed to the top (i.e., reached the goal), one no longer needs the ladder. In this way, morality understood as a set of precepts is a system engaged in its own self-dissolution. The goal of the use of precepts in self-cultivation is to cease needing them or relying upon them at all.

When commenting on his role as a judge, Confucius said, "聽訟, 吾猶人也, 必也使無訟乎! In hearing cases, I am as good as anyone. What we must strive to do is to rid the courts of cases altogether!" (*Analects* 12:13). To put this ideal into other words, the point is that a community that must resort to law and punishment exhibits its own failure, just as a person who must bind his actions by morality or law reveals his own incomplete self-cultivation. As the commentator Fan Ziyu (1041–1098) says, dealing with moral or legal litigations is like trying to fix the branches after they are already broken or stop a river that is already flowing (Slingerland, 2003, 132).

The *Daodejing* 道德經 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 have a much more direct way of making this point. In the *Daodejing,* creating moral precepts as humans have done, along with other value distinctions (beauty, ugly, success, failure, etc.), is part of the disease that reveals our separation from *Dao* (*Daodejing* 18). The *Zhuangzi* makes a similar point (Watson, 1968, 45–6; 68–9; 72; and 74). So, in the Lao-Zhuang intellectual stream, it is not so much the lack of inclusive concern/universal love (*jian ai* 兼爱) that is the source of all the world's moral evils as it is in Mohism (Johnston, 2010, 15.2), but rather the fighting and struggling over human created value distinctions that causes strife and injury (*Daodejing* 18, 38). In Daoism, the solution is not to begin this process at all, or if already engaged in it, one must empty oneself of it by forgetting such distinctions and returning to unity with the *Dao* (*Zhuangzi* 6). Being "empty" is a way of talking about getting rid of the distinctions that tie us in knots and erupt in the desires that are the source of our all human suffering, violence, and immorality (i.e., what conventional moral rules are meant to control). If we empty ourselves of such distinctions in the very beginning, the whole degenerate process dissolves, and we are free to be one with the *Dao* and live out of a sense of its presence and power. Self-cultivation actually consists of putting oneself in the position to forget these distinctions and move in *wu-wei* 無為 with the *Dao*. So, moral education is certainly not understood as the mastery of applying precepts and rules with skill, no matter how consummate one might be at doing so.

In Chinese Buddhism, a similar point is made. The moral life is understood in a way similar to its understanding of epistemology. There are multiple levels of moral life, as there are levels of truth (Littlejohn, 2016, 97–100). On one level, Buddhist morality looks in many ways like a conventional rule-based moral system. At this level are the lay followers of the Buddhist way. Various Buddhist schools share the basic Five Precepts used for the guidance of life when a seeker is at this level. These precepts prohibit (require abstinence from) harming sentient beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. The specific Buddhist philosophical justification of these precepts is that following these rules guides one away from the attachments and desires that cause suffering. Since the ultimate goal of Buddhism is the elimination of suffering, then following moral precepts contributes to lessening the amount of suffering one causes and which one experiences at the hands of others. Many people spend their entire lives at this level of moral self-cultivation. Others, while still conceiving of their lives as bounded and disciplined by moral rules, increase the number of moral rules by which they live in an effort to reach a higher level of cultivation.

The so-called Ten Precepts are taken as appropriate for monks and nuns, as following them typically fits the monastic life. Here is a common list of the Ten Precepts.

1. Refrain from killing sentient creatures.
2. Refrain from stealing.
3. Refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. Refrain from incorrect speech (lying but also manipulating and using hurtful words).

5. Refrain from consuming intoxicants.
6. Refrain from taking food at inappropriate times (after noon).
7. Refrain from singing, dancing, playing music, or attending entertainment programs (performances).
8. Refrain from wearing perfume, cosmetics, and decorative accessories.
9. Refrain from use of luxurious instruments (sitting on high chairs, sleeping on soft beds, etc.).
10. Refrain from accepting money.

Individuals living by such moral precepts may stand out among others as good and ethical. They may receive awards and recognitions. We may seek them out in our relationships. In its highest forms, those who live at this level exhibit the Buddhism of compassion for the world that seeks to remove evil and suffering by living a pure life and contributing to the welfare of others.

Nevertheless, while thinking of the cultivation of one's life in terms of the success one has lived by moral precepts and its concomitant decrease of suffering is one level identified in Buddhist philosophy, there are other higher ones.

A second level of moral understanding is achieved in Buddhism when one realizes that the goal of training by means of precepts is not only to lessen suffering experienced and inflicted, but rather to enable one to extinguish one's attachments and desires (i.e., reach nirvana) entirely, and thereby cease suffering. While persons who are still thinking of life and existence under moral precepts may excel in moral living, from another point of view in Buddhism, they remain "in training," and to that extent they are somewhat still in bondage to volition, and to morality's rules and norms. In fact, their pursuit of adherence to moral rules may make them subject to mental anguish and suffering. This is because the desire to be good is still a desire, and suffering is rooted in desire itself, not merely in evil desires.

Following precepts may also function as part of a training regime leading to higher enlightenment. A crucial change occurs when one extinguishes desire (i.e., experiences nirvana). When this state is experienced, moral precepts may be dispensed with as well. Since one is emptied of the desires precepts are meant to restrain, then there is no longer any need for them to control one's behavior, nor any function for them to perform in relieving suffering. The job is done. One who has climbed to the heights no longer needs the ladder. A Buddhist enlightened one transcends ethics and precepts and is set free from morality totally. Such a person exudes excellence (*de*), although not as encapsulated in some set of moral terms or concepts. Obviously, any unenlightened person who discards moral norms may plunge into evil and suffering; however, the enlightened one lives above and apart from all moral expectation and moves through existence as one who has transcended morality and who neither causes suffering nor experiences it.

We have seen, then, that Confucian traditions looks forward to the individual whose self-cultivation yields the sort of person that has no need for courts or laws (*Analects* 12.13). The Lao-Zhuang lineage thinks of pre-occupation with the moral distinctions humans make as obstacles to oneness with *Dao* and being able to move spontaneously and effortlessly in life in *wu-wei.* Buddhists think of following moral

precepts as a kind of training regime that may aid enlightenment, but once one "awakes" as a Buddha, morality is no longer needed and has no function. In all these cases, self-cultivation is recognized not by continuing to follow rules or duties, or being able to manipulate these by exceptions and prioritizations. It is ultimately expressed in the exhibition of moral excellence (*de*) quite beyond the distinctions of right and wrong, or good and evil.

4 The Way to Moral Excellence

In some streams of Western morality, the task is to determine the duties or moral rules that should guide contact and then to follow them. Indeed, the prominent Western philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote more than one work dedicated to the identification of these duties and their application (Paton, 1956; Abbot, 2002). According to such an understanding, moral norms function in ways similar to how a stranger traveling in a country might use a map or landmarks to show the way (Carter, 2001). Likewise, Western morality counsels a person not to act in a situation of moral import until he has weighed out the options rationally and calculated the possible outcomes and consequences for the widest range of persons involved. Only then, can one know what is right to do. In this sense, reasoning plays a role not merely in setting out the rules and guidelines that illuminate action, but also in helping one determine the actual conduct to undertake and thereby realize moral excellence.

In contrast, within Chinese self-cultivation, *de* is not shown through superior reasoning or skill in the technical aspects of decisions. A person who equates moral excellence with intellectual distinctions and having the superior argument may actually be little more than a clever Machiavellian in a Western sense or Hanfeizi's amoral ruler in a Chinese sense (Littlejohn, 2016, 186–7). In Daoism, *de* is exhibited in the effortlessness movement for which Daoists use the concept *wu-wei* (無為, *Daodejing* 2, 3, 10, 43, 47, 57, 63, and 64). "The [persons who possess the] highest *de* do not strive for *de* and so they have it" (*Daodejing* 38). *Wu-wei* movement unravels the tangles we have created for ourselves by the moral and legal rules and distinctions that themselves clutter our minds and generate tension in our life together. *Wu-wei* accords in any situation with an efficacy that can be attributed to the *Dao*, but it is not the result of human wisdom, planning, or contrivance. Of course, the *Daodejing* does not say that this efficacy ignores or has no connection with the conventional virtues we use as distinctions in language. This is not the point of the text's thoroughgoing criticism of such discriminations. The force of that criticism means that following the demands and rules set up by convention as though they were ends in themselves will lead only to frustration and misery. The Buddhists say they will lead to suffering. For Buddhists, this is the two-edged sword of following moral precepts. On the one hand, as we have noticed, moral rules may help us control the desires that lead to our suffering or to cause suffering of others. On the other hand, a devotion to ethical precepts can create attachments and desires that cause us to suffer.

The *Zhuangzi* provides examples of what it means to move in *wu-wei.* Moving in *wu-wei* is like the ferryman in the gulf of Shangshen (觴深) who handles his boat with commensurate skill (Watson, 1968, 200), the amazing hunchback cicada catching man (Watson, 1968, 19; 199), Bohun Wuren's skill in archery (Watson, 1968, 230–231), Qing who makes bell stands that seem to be the work of the spirits (Watson, 1968, 205–206), and Chui the artist who can draw free-hand as true as a compass or T-square (Watson, 1968, 206). All of these stories are examples of persons who seem to be able to perform in highly skilled and efficacious ways with naturalness, effortlessness, and spontaneity.

Where Daoists speak of *wu-wei*, the Confucian thinker Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) shifts the grammar to *liangzhi* (良知) to make a closely related point. Wang writes, "The thousand sages are all passing shadows; pure knowledge (*liangzhi*) alone is my teacher" (Ivanhoe, 2000, 68). For Wang, pure knowledge is unobstructed by self-centered desires, and it spontaneously responds to any moral situation in a seamless process of perceiving, understanding, judging, willing, and acting (Ivanhoe, 2000, 99–100). So, *liangzhi* is a form of consciousness that is best understood by an analogy to vision. It can be compared to seeing clearly, without any fuzziness or distortion. In this sense, *liangzhi* is a direct, unmediated apprehension of how to act (*Instructions for Practical Living* 221, Chan, 1963, 199). *Liangzhi* is not a precept or a set of precepts, and neither is it a form of practical reasoning, but it is more like seeing an aspect or dimension of something that another person misses.

> The sense of right and wrong is knowledge possessed by men without deliberation and an ability possessed by them, without their having acquired it by learning. It is what we call "Pure Knowledge" (*liangzhi*). This knowledge is inherent in the human mind whether that of the sage or of the stupid person, for it is the same for the whole world and for all ages. If [exemplary persons, *junzi*] of the world merely devote their effort to extending their [Pure] Knowledge they will naturally share with all a universal sense of right and wrong, share their likes and dislikes, regard other people as their own persons, regard the people of other countries as their own family, and look upon Heaven, Earth, and all things as one body. When this is done, even if we wanted the world to be without order, it would not be possible. (*Instructions for Practical Living* 179, Chan, 1963, 166–7)

Where does Wang Yangming's understanding of the power of *liangzhi* to discriminate actions fit among the other models we have been describing? Wang believes that moral dilemmas and confusions originate within a person, not in the flow of reality. They arise because of lack of self-cultivation. In contrast to a moral theory that might take fixed and universal principles and try to conform and adapt them to new situations and dilemmas, *liangzhi* enables the cultivated person to move with reality seamlessly, without the intervention of rational analysis and deliberation, and even apart from reference to moral distinctions and precepts. The way through life cannot be fully known rationally, but it can be "seen" through *liangzhi* as an "instant realization" (*Instructions for Practical Living* 139, Chan, 1963, 109–10).

There is no hard division between act (duty), consequence, and sentiment here. Wang Yangming's version of this teaching is expressed in *Instructions for Practical Living*.

> The great person regards heaven, earth, and the myriad things as one body (*yiti* 一体). He regards the world as one family and the country as one person. Those who make a cleavage between objects and distinguish between the self and others are small men (i.e., "petty persons," *xiaoren* 小人). That the great man can regard heaven, earth, and the myriad things as one body is not because he deliberately wants to do so, but because it is natural to the humane nature of his mind that he does so. Forming one body with heaven, earth, and the myriad things is not only true of the great man even the mind of the small man is no different. Only he himself makes it small. Therefore, when he [the great person] sees the child about to fall into a well, he cannot help having a feeling of alarm and commiseration (*Mencius* 2A.6). This shows that his humaneness forms one body with the child. Again, when he observes the pitiful cries and frightened appearance of the birds and animals about to be slaughtered, he cannot help feeling an 'inability to bear' their suffering. This shows that his humanity forms one body with birds and animals. (*Inquiry on the Great Learning*, Chan, 1963, 272)

For Wang, *liangzhi* is the distinguishing characteristic of the mind of what he calls the sage. In the sage (a.k.a., *junzi, zhenren, sengren*) to be guided by *liangzhi* is like the sun emerging from behind the clouds. The experience of this kind of moral enlightenment brings not only clear knowledge about what choice is right and good, but it also carries a transformation of our desire and affections, fulfilling Mencius's original insight that the self-cultivated person is drawn to what is right in a similar way that a delicious dish pleases our taste. What we must not overlook is that Wang is not saying that we have only a cognitive gain in moral knowledge, and then we must use our will to redirect our desires and passions to act upon that knowledge.

Wang is saying that *liangzhi* is the sort of knowledge that is will-transforming. P. J. Ivanhoe calls our attention to the distinction in Chinese between "real knowledge" (*zhenzhi* 真知) and "ordinary knowledge" (*changzhi* 常知) (Ivanhoe, 2000, 62–63). Ordinary knowledge is just that. It is the sort of commonplace knowing that everyone has. Real knowledge is what Wang is pointing to; the knowledge that brings together the cognitive and volitional dimensions of our experience. In *Instructions for Practical Living*, Wang makes it clear that possessing *liangzhi* is an experience in which knowledge and action are not separated. "Real knowledge" forms a bond between knowledge and action similar to our attraction to a beautiful color or being repulsed by a bad odor.

Herein lies the full meaning of moral excellence (*de*) and the way this term is connected to both power and virtue. To *de* is to no longer need the cultural proprieties of the age (*li*) nor any moral precepts. It is a *demonstration* of self-cultivation *as* self-transformation. And, within his community, the person exhibiting *de* is like the wind, and when the wind moves, the grass is sure to bend (*Analects* 12:19).

For Wang, "Pure Knowledge", if unobstructed by self-centered desires, spontaneously responds to any moral situation in a seamless process of perceiving, understanding, judging, willing, and action (Ivanhoe, 2009, 99–100). In a poem entitled, "Four Verses on Pure Knowing Written for My Students," Wang's third verse is revealing.

> Everyone has within an unerring compass;
>
> The root and source of the myriad transformations lies in the heart-mind.
>
> I laugh when I think that, earlier, I saw things the other way around;
>
> Following branches and leaves, I searched outside! (Ivanhoe, 2009: 181)

We may extend Wang's remarks on *liangzhi* even further. *Hua-yan* (華嚴 Flower Garland) Buddhism valorizes the Bodhisattva as the supreme accomplishment. To be a Bodhisattva is to dwell in the margins between experienced enlightenment and the moral and karmic views of those around one who are still guided by precepts. Bodhisattvas serve and work with ordinary beings of the world, meaning that they continue to live with those who think of the world under moral distinctions and rules of blame and reward.

What is it that a Bodhisattva does that makes such a person a distinctive moral being? The Bodhisattva is free from attachments and their accompanying desires and, thus, from suffering. Bodhisattvas have experienced nirvana, but out of compassion for others they continue to work with them under the moral distinctions which they believe to be real. That is, they go on to engage with others in a world thought of under the condition of moral precepts and distinctions. The Bodhisattva has already abandoned desires and the discriminations of the mundane world that are the cause of suffering. Such a one dwells in this world with a mind that transcends all the distinctions and desires that cause suffering; however, those who are still caught in this world of illusion suffer because of the desires that attachments to these distinctions create. When a Bodhisattva lives among such people, the difference is obvious, and the other sentient beings see that the Bodhisattva does not suffer. This draws them to their Bodhisattva as a savior who is perfuming existence by simply living in enlightenment among those still in dreaming illusion.

5 The Self-cultivated Life as Happiness

In the theory, we are suggesting, based as it is on Chinese philosophies, a central feature is that the self-cultivated life is happiness. Here, we intentionally do not say that happiness is the reward or outcome of self-cultivation, but that self-cultivated living *is* happiness. In Western moral philosophy, it makes sense to ask whether the virtuous (moral) life always lead to happiness or if an evil person can be happy. These questions really are not meaningful within the understanding of self-cultivation as moral education we have been building on Chinese sources.

As we understand the Chinese tradition, consummate self-cultivated living with moral excellence (*de*) is happiness. It is not the gateway to happiness or the cause of happiness, as though happiness were something separate from the way one lives (See Ames, 2011, 168–169). If we take happiness to mean harmonious well-being, as we think our Chinese sources do, then happiness is an activity not some state of being that is achieved at the end of a process of moral realization. The self-cultivated person lives happiness (happily?), rather than possesses it.

Western philosophers often engage in discussions about the ultimate meaning or goal of human life, frequently associating it with happiness, or asking whether it should be happiness, our construction of a Chinese approach to self-cultivation and moral education sets the need for this controversy aside. Consider that Zhu Xi speaks of the exemplary person as one who has cultivated the life activity of balance (*zhong*

中) and harmony (*he* 和) in all things (*zonghe*, 总和). Zhu takes his inspiration for this view from the classical Confucian text known as the *Zhongyong* 中庸. This text says bluntly: "Exemplary persons *zhong* their daily affairs (君子中庸)." The kind of self-cultivated happiness or balance Zhu Xi recommends is not so much "knowing yourself" as Socrates would have it, nor is it identical with Aristotle's highest good as *eudaimonia* (i.e., human flourishing), but it offers the position that harmony (in his sense) is the Chinese substitute for the Socratic and Aristotelean projects. The principal difference is that Zhu understands this as an activity, not a state of being.

The Qing dynasty scholar Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–1777) took the position that the greatest contribution of Chinese philosophy on self-cultivation lay in the ways that the various traditions shared the belief that moral excellence (*de*) *revealed the person in whom morality and desire went hand-in-hand*. Dai saw that there is something philosophically at stake about our moral education in the view we take toward desire. The person of *de* not only does the good, but also desires the good and is happy in it (Tiwald, 2009). So, happiness is not the reward of living morally. Living morally is the harmonious balance that is happiness.

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The Confucian Revival and Self-Cultivation: A Critical Inquiry into the *Dújing* Movement (讀經運動) and *Rules for Youngsters* (弟子規)

Ruyu Hung

Abstract This paper aims to examine the feasibility of teaching the classics as a means to enhance moral education. It begins by introducing the 'reading classics' or *Dújing* (讀經) movement and the Confucian revival, which are becoming popular in East Asia. The most popular reading material during the Dújing Movement—*Rules for Youngsters*—is scrutinised to show that the implicit aim of reading the classics is to discipline students under the pretext of moral education. Although the Chinese character *jing* (經) is usually translated into 'classics', these two words have subtly different meanings. In Chinese, *jing* is apotheosised as a sacred canon that is believed to have patronising and moralising power. I propose that learning materials should not be labelled *jing*, nor should the study of the classics be called *Dújing*. Classical texts should be studied with a more appropriate attitude—with prudence and criticality instead of inexplicable reverence.

Keywords Confucianism · Moral education · Rules for youngsters · RFY · Reading classics · Dújing

1 The Confucian Revival and the Educative Project—*Dújing*

In the 1990s, a Confucian revival movement or popular Confucianism movement emerged in Chinese cultural societies (Billioud & Thoraval, 2007; Choukroune & Garapon, 2007; Dutournier & Zhe, 2009). The Confucian revival movement, which can be interpreted as a form of national studies, has two processes (Billioud & Thoraval, 2007). The first process affects academic elites who are eager to conduct research on Chinese history and culture in a 'depoliticised' way. The second process takes place among the general population. Tradition is appropriated in different aspects of Chinese heritage cultures, as in the following examples:

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_4

> … the present fashion of genealogies (家譜*jiapǔ*), the revival of certain popular holidays, the passion for Chinese antiques, the evolution of names given to businesses (it was fashionable in the 1980s to give Western-sounding names, but now it is more common to use traditional ones), more traditional decoration of restaurants, the renewed popularity of "tea culture," etc. (Billioud & Thoraval, 2007, p. 5, note 5).

Against this background, the study of Confucian classics is a noteworthy educative project for children and adults in many public and private institutions. In the Confucian tradition, there is a particular approach to the study of classical texts, which is called *Dújing*, meaning 'reading classics'. The study of the classics is considered the most important part of education because it contributes not only to the acquisition of classical knowledge but also to the improvement of moral character.

The *Dújing* movement was started by a Taiwanese scholar named Caigui Wang in 1994. With the aid of a private institution, Huashan Hall (華山講堂), Wang set up a centre for the promotion of children reading classics (*értóng dújing*). Wang ardently promoted the értóng dújing movement and published *The Handbook of Children Reading Classics* (Wang, 1995). In 2000, C. Wang created an annual national qualification examination on the classics (經典總會考) for children. More than 6500 children registered but only 818 passed. In the following decade, an average of at least 3,000 children registered for the examination each year. In 2006, Wang established the Global Educative Foundation of Reading Classics (GEFRC or 全球讀經教育基金會) to expand the movement's sphere of influence. The foundation now has more than 500 branches with tutors promoting értóng dújing all over Taiwan (GEFRC, n.d.).

Értóng dújing as an educative project of the Confucian revival has been a remarkable success in Taiwan. C. Wang's view has been broadly accepted in China since the 1990s. Many institutions supporting a Confucian revival generally promote the értóng dújing movement under Wang's influence, such as Yidan Private School in Beijing (Yidan xuetang or一耽學堂); Lujiang Cultural Education Centre in Anhui Province, China (Lujiang wenhua jiaoyu zhongxin or 廬江文化教育中心); and the International Classics Culture Association in Hong Kong. In addition, Wang established the Wenli College in Beijing (Wenli shuyuan or 文禮書院) in 2012. In 2015, Wenli College moved to Zhejian Province in China. The students to be recruited will be over 13 years old. Overall, the értóng dújing movement remains popular in Chinese culture, and Wang plays a vital role in promoting the movement at the international level.

C. Wang has three fundamental ideas with respect to children reading the classics: First, the classics are texts of highest value. Second, regarding the method of learning, 'swotting—simply reading aloud' is more important than understanding. Third, concerning learners, children are capable of learning the classics (Wang, 1995).

Wang (2013a, 2013b) classified the classics into four categories. The first category is the Confucian classics: the Four Books (四書), namely the *Analects, Mencius, Great Learning* (*Dàxúe* or 大學) and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong Yung* or 中庸). The second category is the Daoist classics, including the *Book of Change* (*Yìjing* or 易經)*, Daodejing, Zhuangzi* and the *Book of Poetry* (*The Odes* or 詩經). The third

category is literary works. The fourth category is books for children, including *Rules for Youngsters* (弟子規), which will be discussed in the next section.

Caigui Wang's (1995) argument that 'swotting is more important than understanding' has attracted much criticism. He claimed that the fundamental way for children to learn the classics is to read and recite the text as much as they can. He described the method as follows: The teacher reads one sentence aloud, and then the students repeat it. After finishing a paragraph, the teacher lets the students practise reading it aloud several times by themselves. Some students or groups take turns reading the text aloud. Finally, the students memorise the text. Wang claimed that everyone could teach and learn using this method. He stated that the point is recitation with little or no explanation (Wang, 1995).

In a lecture delivered to teachers and parents, Wang further explained his view on the duration, frequency and volume of reading texts. He said that one cannot simply read the classics to a child without thinking about whether the child understands the text. He emphasised the importance of just reading and nothing else—reading eight hours a day with no other forms of amusement. He said that children should read as much as possible; the more words and the more often, the better (Wang, 2013b, pp. 49–50).

However, the word 'teach' may not be appropriate to describe the classroom activity used in this method. Caigui Wang's method of teaching children to read the classics is rote learning that strongly emphasises mechanical memorisation. Wang stated that children must do nothing but read and that adults need not explain the meaning of the text. Children read, recite and memorise the text without questioning or reflecting on its meanings. Children are like empty cans or jars in a factory, ready to be stuffed with the classics. In Chinese, this method of teaching or learning is called 'duck-stuffing' (*tíanya*). Many critics of duck-stuffing have pointed out that it hinders children's creativity and activity and reduces children's learning to mechanical indoctrination (Liu, 2002, 2004a, b, 2005, 2006). The proponents of duck-stuffing (Wang, 2004, 2013) have argued that children's rote recitation of texts is less like 'duck-stuffing' and more like 'cow-feeding'. Cows are ruminants that eat a lot of food, regurgitate it and then chew their cud. In J. C. Wang's view, the process of rumination will occur sometime in the child's life. The point is to make sure that there is plenty of food or cud, which is the classical text, to be ruminated. As the process of rumination begins, the child begins to comprehend the meaning of the text. The more texts children memorise, the more materials they can ruminate and the more meanings they will understand. Moreover, recitation without understanding the meaning of the text is viewed as a form of moral education (Wang, 2016). After interviewing students engaged in reading the classics, Wang (2016, p. 441) asserted that spending the whole day memorising the classics without interpretation is boring but 'a way of tempering their willpower, and a process of developing their capabilities in self-control and self-discipline'.

Critics such as Liu (2002, 2004b) contend that regardless of whether it is cow-feeding or duck-stuffing, children's recitation of the classics deprives them of freedom and happiness. It is an act of indoctrination, coercion and oppression that goes against the nature of children. However, supporters of the *értóng dújing* movement insist that

this way of learning enables the acquisition of tacit knowledge of moral education. According to Wang (2013, p. 256–257),

> When memorising a text, children do not fully understand the meaning, but they at least acquire the language in its tacit form. … Since language orients our thoughts, and our thoughts influence our actions, this moral language readily serves to invoke an internal dialogue within the moral agent about what to think and do.

This raises the following questions: What is moral language in its tacit form? Does it exist in the material that children recite?

1.1 Rules for Youngsters *and Moral Education*

This section focuses on the reading materials used for recitation, which *értóng dújing* supporters claim to be the source of moral language in its tacit form. The most popular reading material used in the Dújing movement is *Rules for Youngsters* (RFY; *dì zǐ gui* or 弟子規). 'Gui' means rule, 'dì' means younger brother and 'zǐ' means son. The title of the book indicates that RFY is about the rules governing the conduct of a younger brother or son—rules for younger generations.

RFY was written by Confucian scholar Lee Yùxìu (李毓秀) during the reign of the Kongxi Emperor (1661–1722) in the Qing dynasty. RFY was based on the Confucian classical text the *Analects*. In the Confucian tradition, books for children are called primers (*mónshu* or 蒙書), which means 'books for the obscure'. RFY has become the most popular *mónshu* in recent years. It is written in three-character verses with a rhythmic structure. It is considered a useful tool for enhancing children's moral education. Many empirical studies have shown the positive effects of teaching RFY on children's moral or character education in Taiwan and China (Chen, 2012; Cheng, 2015; Hsu, 2012; Lee, 2012; Li, 2015; Wu, 2014). The use of RFY in moral education is not only for children; it is also used as an efficient tool for fostering adult moral character and strengthening communal bonds and social solidarity. RFY is taught in colleges, universities and associations in Chinese cultural societies. For example, RFY is the only text chosen for students of the Lujian Cultural Education Centre. In Malaysia, RFY is promoted by academic and religious communities, such as the Amitabha Buddhist Society of Kelantan Malaysia (Persatuan Penganut Agama Buddha Amitabha Kelantan or 吉蘭丹淨宗學會) and Danjian Education Centre (丹江弟子規教學中心; Zhu, 2015). In Chinese societies in South Asia, RFY is promoted as a simplified version of the *Analects* and is highly praised (Zhu, 2015).

Including the *Analects* segment, RFY has 1080 words in total. The main body of RFY is the interpretation of the sixth section of Chap "Introduction: Educational Philosophies of Self-Cultivation (*Xíe Ér*) of the *Analects:*"

> A youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the

> good. When he has time and opportunity, after the performance of these things, he should employ them in [literary] studies. (Legge, 1861)[1]

The content of RFY is based on the above quotation from the *Analects*. RFY can be divided into eight sections. The first section rephrases the sixth section of Chap "Introduction: Educational Philosophies of Self-Cultivation" of the *Analects* in trisyllabic and rhymed form:

> 弟子規, 聖人訓。
>
> The Rules for Youngsters [are] the sages' instructions.
>
> 首孝弟;
>
> The most important [virtues] are filial piety and respect for elders,
>
> 次謹信;
>
> followed by prudence and trustworthiness.
>
> 汎愛眾,
>
> Love all humankind
>
> 而親仁;
>
> and be keen on the good.
>
> 有餘力, 則學文。
>
> Having done all the above, one can then pursue literary studies.

The first section of RFY points out six Confucian cardinal virtues and one subject of learning. The six virtues are filial piety (*xìao* or 孝), respect for elders (*tì* or弟), prudence (*jǐn* or 謹), trustworthiness (*xìn* or 信), philanthropy (愛眾) and preference for the good (親仁). The suggested subject is literary studies. The remaining parts of RFY are detailed explanations of these virtues and the subject. In addition to helping children develop a sense of moral literacy by acquainting them with moral language, another advantage of teaching children the Confucian classics is that it engenders 'in children positive emotions about virtue' (Wang, 2013, p. 257). In so doing, children 'get in the habit of striving for moral excellence' (Wang, 2013, p. 257). In this regard, RFY contains moral language that develops children's habit of striving for moral excellence.

Let us take a closer look at the meaning of the moral language used in RFY. The second section of RFY, 'On filial piety', begins with the following words:

> 父母呼, 應勿緩。
>
> When your parents call, respond to them immediately.
>
> 父母命, 行勿懶。
>
> When your parents give an order, obey them without hesitation.
>
> 父母教,須敬聽。
>
> When your parents give instructions, listen to them respectfully.
>
> 父母責,須順承。
>
> When your parents reproach you, accept it meekly.

[1] 弟子入則孝出則弟, 謹而信, 汎愛眾而親仁, 行有餘力則以學文。(論語學而, 1:6).

The second section focuses on how to serve parents with the proper attitude, and the third section focuses on how to respect elders. The first two sentences of Sect. 3, 'Respect elders', are as follows: 'Elder brothers, treat younger ones gently, and younger brothers, treat elders respectfully. If there is harmony between siblings, there will be filial piety in the family' (兄道友, 弟道恭。兄弟睦, 孝其中。). RFY provides instructions on waiting on parents or elders on various occasions. For example, RFY states the following: Children should try the medicine of their ill parents before serving it to them; after a child's parent passes away, the child should keep vigil for at least three years; children or juniors should walk a few steps behind their parents or elders; it is improper for children to start a conversation with their parents or elders; and children should stay silent until they are asked to reply. Some instructions are contentious and problematic. For example, RFY does not specify the rationale of requiring a filial child to taste his parents' medicine before serving it to them. The filial son tastes the medicine to make sure that the taste and temperature are correct and that it is ready to serve, as traditional Chinese medicine uses decoction. The medicine can be very hot when it has just been prepared. However, this advice may cause unexpected disasters because one man's medicine could be another's poison.

The fourth section, 'On prudence', offers advice about personal hygiene, the proper attire and maintaining one's health. It begins with the following advice: 'Get up early [earlier than parents] and go to bed late [later than parents in order to serve parents]. Grow old unconsciously [time flies] and grasp the time. Wash your face and brush your teeth in the morning. Wash your hands after using the toilet' (朝起早, 夜眠遲。老易至, 惜此時。晨必盥, 兼漱口, 便溺回, 輒洗手。). RFY also gives advice on polite behaviours, including how to walk, dine, bow, stand up straight and control the volume of one's voice. Most parts of RFY are about developing good habits and manners, especially towards parents and elders. The aim of RFY is to cultivate good habits and manners in young people so that they can become socially accepted. In the Confucian context, filial piety is the most admired and respected virtue. Being socially accepted is mainly about pleasing, satisfying and obeying elder family members and relatives and treating them with great respect. In a Confucian cultural society, there is no higher admiration than apprising one 'filial son' (孝子). Manners are usually understood as instructions on how to behave as a filial son, how to show politeness and courtesy and how to act and speak properly. The specific goal of RFY is to raise filial sons with the proper manners. Nevertheless, it is deeply problematic to equate the development of good manners with moral education.

This does not mean that learning manners and etiquette is worthless. Etiquette is sometimes seen as part of morality. It represents commonly accepted conduct. As an accepted code of social behaviour, etiquette provides descriptions and norms of behaviour that members of a group use to show their respect. More often than not, however, etiquette and manners are aesthetic rather than moral. Moral education should be more about developing polite and courteous behaviours. A moral agent should be able to think deliberately and act responsibly on moral issues. For individuals to act as moral agents, they must have the ability to think carefully about the complex circumstances surrounding moral issues in order to make prudent evaluations, judgements and decisions. The outcomes of moral reasoning are not

necessarily in accord with social practices or norms. Sometimes, a much deliberated ethical action could challenge social norms or even be socially unacceptable, such as nonviolent resistance or civil disobedience. A person with good manners may do unethical things; for instance, a courteous person may own a factory that emits pollution. Morally right actions and decisions cannot be reduced to doing things with politeness, courtesy and respect. The moral value of an action cannot be judged by how it is executed or by the actor's manners and etiquette. The intentions behind actions and the consequences of actions are fundamental elements of moral deliberation.

Given the complexity of moral education, the underlying problems of RFY are its manners-driven content and its oversimplification of interpersonal relationships and humanity. Interactions between people are 'regulated' or 'prescribed' by social conventions, especially kinship. The interpersonal relationships described in RFY tend to be oversimplified and reified and therefore run the risk of ignoring the dynamics of interactions.

1.2 Dújing *and Moral Education*

The previous discussion shows the difficulty of viewing *Dújing* as a means of enhancing moral education. Nevertheless, supportive reformers of the *értóng dújing* movement defend the value of the classics and assert innovative ways of teaching (Feng, 2006; Jin & Zhang, 2005; Wang, 2013). There are two arguments for the defence. First, the Confucian classics can be taught in an open and dialogic environment. Many supporters, such as Feng (2006), Jin and Zhang (2005) and Wang (2013), emphasise an innovative environment for learning—an open and tolerant atmosphere in which children can learn the classics. Children are allowed to ask questions and actively respond to the teachers. Second, the classics contain rich aesthetic value, especially the cadence of their language; therefore, they are educational. Children can learn about the beauty of language by reciting the classics.

Although the classics undoubtedly have aesthetic and artistic value and can be taught in a modern, innovative and stimulating way, these two advantages are not necessarily related to ethics and moral education. Any material can be taught in an innovative, creative and interesting way. However, innovative and interesting learning processes do not necessarily enhance moral development. Likewise, the acquisition of the aesthetics of language cannot be equated with enhancing moral sense and knowledge. Thus, the *értóng dújing* movement provides neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for improving children's ethical reasoning and moral character.

The second defence of the *értóng dújing* movement about the need for children to read the ancient classics for moral education is that the classics promote important traditional and moral virtues and ideas, such as benevolence, righteousness and trustworthiness. The ancient classics are a useful tool for advocating Chinese traditional culture, national spirit and solidarity (Jin & Zhang, 2005). As these virtues are taught, the intertwined conservative and nationalistic values are likely to be imbibed. As Jin

and Zhang (2005, p. 131) stated, the *értóng dújing* movement responds to the call of the Chinese party-state government and plays an important role in implementing national spirit education and strengthening adolescents' moral development. The Chinese ancient classics have many traditional virtues, including patriotism, loyalty, filial piety and benevolence. Reading the classics is a way of developing traditional virtues. In the eyes of supporters, this is the benefit of children reading the classics. Yet not all traditional values are worth learning without questioning. Patriotism, national spirit and solidarity in imperial times could be virtuous, but it is contentious to develop patriotism and nationalism as moral virtues, particularly by rote.

In summary, these defences do not guarantee the instrumental and substantial value of classical texts or *Dújing* as a tool for moral education. Furthermore, if the reading materials, namely the traditional texts, are studied in an innovative and critical way—that is, if they are questioned, examined, interrogated and criticised—then certain traditional values might be problematised, and manners are unlikely to be considered equivalent to moral character. *Dújing* seems to be a general way of studying the classics and is no different from the study of other kinds of texts. What makes the Dújing movement especially attractive to its supporters? What makes supporters believe that Dújing is especially good at enhancing children's moral character?

2 A Further Inquiry into *Jing*

The key of the *Dújing* movement lies in the *jing*—the so-called classics. In Chinese tradition, not all texts can be labelled *jing* (經). Thus, to understand how a text functions when it is or is not labelled *jing*, the meaning of jing must be clarified.

The word 'jing' (經) in Chinese has multiple meanings. As the eighteenth century imperial dictionary *Kongxi Zìdǐan* (Kongxi Dictionary; Kongxi Emperor, 1716) indicates, *jing* can refer to measurement, longitude, fabric texture, law, order, rule, periodicals or classical works. The use of *jing* is related to a certain standard unit for measuring or following. When the word 'jing' is applied to a written work, this work is recognised as canon. Thus, not all works can be called *jing* or *jing dǐan* (經典); only those that are respected and honoured can be labelled as such. In Chinese literary tradition, *jing* mainly refers to sacred religious scriptures and the most significant texts in Confucian tradition. Concerning the religious scriptures, the Buddhist canon in Chinese is generally called *fó jing* (佛經) or *Dàzàngjīng* (大藏經), which means the 'Great Treasury of Sūtras'. In religious Daoism, the most well-known canons are Laozi's and Zhuangzi's works: *Dàodéjing* (道德經) and *Nánhúajing* (南華經). The Bible is translated into Chinese as *shèng jing* (聖經), meaning sacred texts. Labelling a text 'jing' shows high respect and great honour for the text.

Regarding Confucian classical texts, the most prominent collections of Chinese classics are the Six Jing (Six Classics or 六經), Five Jing (Five Classics or 五經), Four Books (四書) and Thirteen Jing (Thirteen Classics or 十三經). The texts included in these titles overlap. The term of Six Jing first appeared in *Zhuangzǐ* in the Warring States period (481 BC–221 BC). As Zhuangzi wrote,

> Their intelligence, as seen in all their regulations, was handed down from age to age in their old laws, and much of it was still to be found in the Historians. What of it was in the Shi, the Shu, the Li [or Lǐ], and the Yue [or Yûe], might be learned from the scholars of Zou and Lu, and the girdled members of the various courts. The Shi describes what should be the aim of the mind; the Shu, the course of events; the Li is intended to direct the conduct; the Yue, to set forth harmony; the Yi [or Yì], to show the action of the Yin and Yang; and the Chun Qiu, to display names and the duties belonging to them. (Legge, 1891)[2]

The Six Classics are the *Odes* (Classic of Poetry, *Shi/Shijing* or 詩經), the *Book of Documents* (*Shu/Shujing* or 書經), the *Book of Rites* (*Lǐ/Lǐjì* or 禮記), the *Book of Music* (*Yûe/Yûejì* or 樂記), the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching/Yì/Yìjing* or 易經) and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqui* or 春秋). Except for the *Book of Music*, these texts were preserved as the fundamental works of Confucian literature. They were adopted, renamed and reedited as the Five Jing in the Western Han dynasty (221–206 BC). The Five Classics and Four Books were defined by the Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200 CE) of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279 CE) as the core texts of Confucianism. On this basis, the Thirteen Jing was edited in the Ming dynasty (1368–1844 CE). The Thirteen Classics, as the latest collection, includes the Four Books and Five Classics in different editions, with the addition of *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xìao Jing* or 孝經) and *Ěryǎ* (爾雅), the oldest Chinese dictionary. These texts formed the pillars of the official curriculum and the source of imperial examinations in ancient China for two thousand years.

The meaning of *jing* as the greatest canons is apparent in the classification of collections in the imperial library. *Sìkù Qúanshu* (the Complete Collection of Books of Four Libraries or 四庫全書) is the largest collection of books in Chinese history. It was commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing dynasty in 1773. The collection is divided into four categories: *jing* (classics or 經), *shǐ* (works in history or geography or 史), *zǐ* (works of schools of thought or 子) and *jí* (anthologies of Chinese literature or 集). Since Confucianism is a leading school of thought in Chinese history, works about Confucianism are included in the category of *zǐ*. However, works about the Four Books belong to the category of jing. The Four Books were compiled with an exegesis by Zhu Xi during the Song dynasty. They are the four fundamental texts of Confucianism: the *Analects, Mencius, Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*. *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*, originally chapters of the *Book of Rites*, were selected as monographs by Zhu Xi. The four-category classification system originated from the first century (Lee, 1993). The historian Ban Gù (班固, 32–92 BC) of the Eastern Han dynasty was the editor and compiler of the *Book of Han* (*Han Shu* or 漢書). Among the chapters is a bibliographical section entitled 'Book on Literature' (*Yìwénzhì* or 藝文志). The Book on Literature classifies libraries into six domains: six arts (六藝略), schools of thought (諸子略), poetry and prose (詩賦略), militaries (兵書略), astrology and divination (術數略) and herbal medicine and alchemy (方技略; Ban, n.d.; Lee, 1993). The domain of six arts later turned into

[2] 其明而在數度者, 舊法世傳之史尚多有之。其在於《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》者, 鄒、魯之士、搢紳先生多能明之。《詩》以道志,《書》以道事,《禮》以道行,《樂》以道和,《易》以道陰陽,《春秋》以道名分。(莊子外篇天下, 3.11.1).

the category of *jing*, meaning the Confucian texts, which are records of the sages' words.

This discussion of how *jing* has been used in Chinese literature shows the particularity of *jing* as texts. Works entitled 'jing' are valuable, so they are divinised. The Confucian core texts are interpreted as 'words of sages or saints'. When *jing* refers to religious scriptures, it entails sanctity. The belief in the superior, honorific and divine features of *jing* is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. *Jing* refers to the greatest, noblest, most admirable and sacred Confucian canon, and Confucian followers are those who transmit and carry on the tradition. In the introduction to the *Book on Literature*, Ban wrote that the Confucian school is formed by official scholars in charge of education. Their profession is to help rulers, to educate people and to conform to the *yin* and *yan*. They study the Six Classics and attend to the virtues of *rén* (benevolence) and *yì* (righteousness). They are successors of the former sage kings Yáo (堯) and Shùn (舜), King Wén of Zhou (周文王), King Wǔ of Zhou (周武王) and Confucius the Master, whose words are emphasised and valued in Chinese tradition. Ban stated that the Confucian school is the greatest among all schools with respect to the understanding of *dao*.

According to Ban, Confucian scholars are more privileged in acquiring *dao* than scholars of other schools of thought because they follow, carry forward and teach the tradition of the sages. As written in the ancient Confucian classic the *Book of Documents*, rulers and teachers are made by Heaven to govern the ordinary people; thus, their eminence and privilege are recognised.[3] Teachers assist rulers in governing by following the instructions of *jing* and teaching people about *jing*. The roles of rulers and teachers in the Confucian tradition overlap in the sense that they are the keepers and protectors of *jing*. Through the privilege of accessing *jing*, rulers are entitled to dominate, and teachers are authorised to guide.

3 Conclusion: Rethinking *Dújing* and *Jing* in Modern Times

In modern times, the domination of rulers is no longer legitimised by Heaven, but the belief that *jing* authorises and legitimises still partly underlies the contemporary *Dújing* movement against the broad background of the Confucian revival. This belief turns into the confirmation of the teacher's authority by *jing*. An implicit but fundamental function of the *Dújing* movement and the broader Confucian revival is to reclaim the authority and privilege of teachers in charge of *jing*. Anyone who takes charge of *jing* is an authority. The person or institution that accesses and uses *jing* shows privilege and authority in an academic and moral sense. In

[3] Heaven, for the help of the inferior people, made for them rulers, and made for them instructors, that they might be able to be aiding to God, and secure the tranquillity of the four quarters (of the kingdom). (Trans. Legge, 1879). 天佑下民, 作之君, 作之師, 惟其克相上帝, 寵綏四方。(書經, 泰勢上:1).

modern classics reading clubs, teachers or instructors who guide students in studying the sacred classics possess authority as well. Although some non-Confucian texts will be chosen, these materials are dubbed *jing* in the clubs. Through the title of *jing*, these materials are given a dubious high status. The word 'jing' is separate from its linguistic context and endowed with an independent esteem. This way of understanding decontextualises, reifies and apotheosises the concept of *jing*.

In the Chinese Confucian tradition, the term 'jing' is privileged as sacred canon in politics and pedagogy. However, the conceptualisation of jing is problematic and risky. *Jing* becomes an authority that is beyond challenge. A text that is labelled *jing* will not be studied, examined, challenged and scrutinised in a critical and cautious way. The term 'jing' becomes a boundary that limits the minds of pedagogues and students. If individuals genuinely hope to study a classical text in depth, ask questions, engage with the text, create new ideas and be stimulated and inspired, they must not treat it as *jing*.

In sum, the use of the title 'jing' for any work should be given thoughtful consideration. It is more appropriate to call the ancient Chinese great works (*gǔ dǐen zhù zuò* or 古典著作) 'classics' or 'classical texts' rather than *jing*. In this way, readers, scholars, teachers and students can treat and study the text with dignity, integrity and justice rather than in a servile manner.

Acknowledgements The support of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan. MOST-109-2410-H-415 -001.

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Self-cultivation in Japanese Traditions: Shugyo, Keiko, Yojo, and Shuyo in Dialogue

Tadashi Nishihira

Abstract This chapter explores how self-cultivation has been a consistent and important theme in Japanese thought. Seeking to link this discussion to European thought, I refer to Michel Foucault's lectures, The Hermeneutics of the Subject (1981–1982), in which he sought to reveal the Greek precept 'care of the self.' I follow a similar approach: going back to the pre-modern Japan and looking for the different forms of self-cultivation, with the aim of reinfusing modern society with renewed creativity. We find that in Japanese there are many different terms for self-cultivation: shugyo (修行), keiko (稽古), yojo (養生), and shuyo (修養). Each of these terms has different nuances and emphases, which are lost when all are translated into European languages as simply 'cultivation.' The approach herein is to examine and define these term through a dialogue between them. In this way, the encounter with the English term 'cultivation' makes it possible to disentangle keiko, shuyo, shugyo, and yojo. Ultimately, the message here is that returning to history and diverse languages maybe one key means of finding new inspiration in the growing discourses surrounding self-cultivation. Paying attention to differences or different articulations between different languages is vital for thinking in new ways about this perennial theme.

1 'Self-cultivation' in Dialogue with Foucault's 'Care of the Self'

This chapter reveals that self-cultivation has been a consistent and important theme in Japanese thought, particularly in the field of education. Seeking to bridge this work with European thought, I occasionally refer to Michel Foucault's lectures, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981–1982), in which he sought to bring to light the Greek precept 'souci de soi (care of the self).' (Foucault, 2001). Foucault contrasts

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_5

'care of the self' with the precept 'know thyself,' i.e., practice as opposed to knowledge. Foucault pays close attention to the historical shift in emphasis from the former to the latter, showing that in the history of western philosophy, the domain of practice (activity) came to be evaluated lower than knowledge (theory). Foucault's approach was largely empirical: reaching back to the ancient Greek thought to look for different forms of knowledge of the self, and to use these alternatives to reaffirm the enduring significance of practice. Herein, I follow a similar approach: going back to pre-modern Japan, and look for the different forms of self-cultivation.

Prior to entering into the main analysis, however, we need to confirm the connotation of the original Greek for 'care of the self': *epimeleia heautou. Epimeleia* comes from the Greek root *meletē* meaning 'exercise' or 'meditation,' suggesting a practice requiring attention, repetition, and effort, and one encompassing both body and mind. In Plato's Alcibiades, which Foucault refers to, *epimeleia heautou* is translated as 'taking pains over the self.' Foucault's own French translation of this concept was 'soucie pour le soi.' Herein, the connotation of the Greek precept of 'care of the self' appears to be more active and weighty than how we have come to use the term care today. It is in this sense that this term comes overlaps with the notion of self-cultivation.

1.1 Self-cultivation in Japanese Thought: Multiple Terms and Traditions

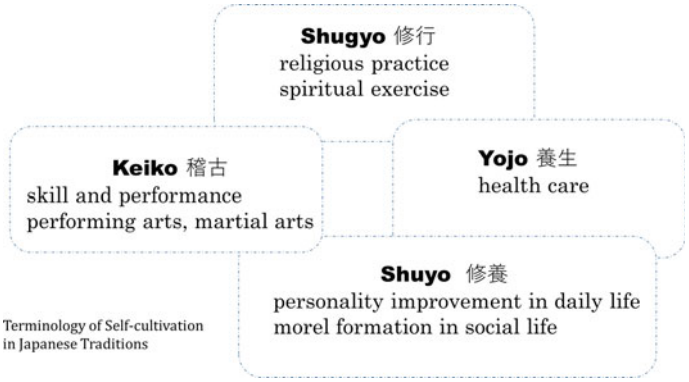
Throughout the history of Japanese thought, practice has rarely—perhaps even never—evaluated on a lower level than knowledge. In fact, practice has most frequently been evaluated as higher. And this esteem extends to multiple forms of practice, rather than only a particular or limited number of practices. That is, Japanese history bears witness to the respect for the notion of practice overall, as opposed to simply knowledge. One America scholar who researched Japanese culture during the Edo era (1603–1868) even went so far as to conclude that the idea of 'personal cultivation' (mi wo osameru, 身を修める; shushin, 修身) was the unifying endeavor of the period:

> The terminology of *personal cultivation* is also broad enough to comprehend phenomena that are implicitly channeled into distinct field of study by the English-language rubrics 'religion', 'morality', 'divination', 'health', and 'education', but that in Japanese texts of the time are often presented as a unified human endeavor. (Sawada, 2004)

While the notion of unification may be an overstatement, it is indeed true there are many different terms in Japanese that approximate various 'distinct fields' including: shuyo, yojo, shugyo, and keiko. And indeed, when translated into European languages, this diversity becomes truncated and rendered as simply 'cultivation' (Nishihira, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2020, 2021).

Here then, a major step toward understanding self-cultivation in the Japanese tradition(s) is to gain definitional clarity on these terms, as a first step to understanding their different genealogies and emphases.[1] We may thus offer tentative initial definitions to these Japanese terms:

- Shugyu signifies religious practice, with a particular nuance of asceticism;
- Keiko—defined as exercise and expertise, in the sense of a musician, musical performer, or athlete;
- Yojo—as care of health in the sense of total body–mind (especially as linked to tapping vital energy);
- Shuyo—as personality improvement or moral formation in social life.



We will examine each of these term, paying particular attention to the intricate relationship or dialogue between them. For example, keiko developed a high level of theoretical sophistication based on Zen Philosophy and describes the mastery of particular skills, while shuyo was used more widely among the populace and was understood as daily practices. Again all of these terms might be understood as 'self-cultivation' or Foucault's 'care of the self' when rendered in Western languages and intellectual history. However, in Japanese, each term has its own characteristics.

2 Anatomy of Shugyo

The notion of shugyo is important and prominent place in Japanese religion. Taken literally, the word connotes training, apprenticeship, and/or religious austerities. Although this word has sometimes been rendered as 'asceticism,' shugyo is never limited to strictly religious ascetic exercise or performing penance but represents a

[1] For readers who do not read Japanese but are interested in more about the general backgrounds and writings that constitute Japanese tradition(s), the appearance of recent English language compilations are helpful (Heisig et al. 2011; Kasulis 2018).

general practice of religious training. For example, in a dictionary of seventeenth century (‘*Vocabulário da Língua do Japão,*’ a Japanese to Portuguese dictionary compiled by Jesuit missionaries and published in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1603), this word ‘shugyo (Xuguio)’ was explained as ‘to learn and study anything in arts, works, and vocations,’ or ‘to travel over the provinces on foot or to make a pilgrimage around several parts of the country’ (Nishihira, 2020, 2021).

2.1 Heteronomous or Autonomous Constraints

‘The Body (『身体』 Shintai)’ written by Yasuo Yuasa is famous work outlining ‘an eastern Mind–Body theory’ (Yuasa, 1987). The English translators of the work, S. Nagatomo and T. P. Kasulis, utilized the term cultivation as an equivalent to shugyo, which, in Yuasa’s terminology, implies various practices that encompass not only religious exercises but also the traditional performing arts (geido, 芸道) and the martial arts (budo, 武道). In this sense, as shown in the figure above, shugyo and keiko have, in some instances, overlapped.

In that discussion, Kasulis emphasizes the significance and interrelationship of body and practice in Japanese religion. Not only are religious beliefs embodied through religious practices, but ‘in fact, the practice may be said to precede the belief.’ (Kasulis, Editor’s Introduction, Yuasa, 1987, p. 7). This phenomenological fact is all too easy to overlook, and subsequently, the significance of the practice is in danger of being forgotten.[2] Meanwhile, Yuasa uses the analogy of a medical cure to describe shugyo. While a cure works ‘from disease to health,’ shugyo works ‘from health to something more.’ That is, shugyo aims at the achievement of a level of ‘more than’ average: ‘cultivation is to impose on one’s own body–mind stricter constraints than are the norms of secular, ordinary experience, so as to reach a life beyond that which is led by the average person.’ (Yuasa, 1987, p. 98).

Here, it is crucial to remain aware of a fundamental historical shift in the meaning of ‘constraints’ in the history of Buddhism. At the outset of the Buddhist tradition, Indian Buddhism understood cultivation as ‘*extra-secular* practice,’ that is, a complete separation from secular order. However, when Buddhism arrived in China and the Mahayana approach flowered, cultivation became an ‘*intra-secular* practice’ which included the now characteristic Mahayana ambiguity of going beyond the secular standards while still in the midst of the secular order. Within the existing

[2] Kasulis also writes: It sounds like behaviorism; conditioned to do by the environment, “however, the key point is that the conditioning comes from oneself,” or, it is not a conditioning but a sensitivity, like an appreciation of music or art. “Continued and prolonged exposure deepens one’s awareness and appreciation.” (Kasulis, Editor’s Introduction, Yuasa, 1987, p. 8).

order of secular morality, those inspired by the Mahayana approach came to evaluate morality in a positive form such as 'I will not,' instead of the more prohibitive external imperative 'Thou Shalt Not.'[3]

The point here is that cultivation can be composed of both autonomous and heteronomous constraints. While the autonomous moral attitude is based on the belief that human nature is fundamentally good, the heteronomous moral attitude is based on the belief that human nature inclined toward vice or sin. Here, it may be useful to think of shygyo as a strict regimen of cultivation, based on a heteronomous moral attitude against vice or sin, with the most extreme forms as the asceticism. In contrast, a 'softer' form of cultivation, based on an autonomous moral attitude based on fundamental goodness, is what we might call shuyo.

2.2 Social Availability

As discussed, the original form of shugyo found in Indian Buddhism implied '*extra-secular* practice' which opened separation from the secular order. This means that shugyo would never be available within secular society, thus, one who decided to undertake shugyo had to abandon secular values and secular life. In contrast, Japan's shuyo concept is not so strict. Shuyo is a practice that can be done within daily life. Ito Jinsai (伊藤仁斎: Japanese Confucian in Edo era 1627–1705) insisted that 'everydayness' is more important than achieving something 'higher' or 'remarkable.' The mundane activities which are found in everyday life and makes one's own family happy is the most valuable. Jinsai[4] even explicitly denied the value of the '*extra-secular* practice,' something that Jinsai himself had desperately searched for in his younger days (Watanabe, 2012). Nitobe Inazo (新渡戸稲造, 1862–1933), famous abroad for his somewhat nationalistically tinged English book entitled 'Bushido: the soul of Japan' (1899), presented a schematic of horizontal and vertical axis of Japanese tradition(s), wherein the horizontal dimension signified human relationships in the society, while the vertical dimension represented the relationship of man to something transcendent (e.g., God, the universe, etc.). Here, Nitobe usefully insisted that shuyo was horizontal, and shugyo vertical. Indeed, shuyo emerges as the wisdom of people in everyday life who wants to improve their own character, including their family and/or businesses along the horizontal social axis. Indeed, as we will see in more detail below, shuyo counsels people how to improve their personal character through immersing themselves on their individual vocation, and watching it consequently bear fruit. Yet, shuyo never advocates going even further with the abandonment of these fruits, meaning it is limited within the horizon of secular life.

[3] Neo-Confucianism later carried forward this ideal, especially on the basis of its own belief that human nature is fundamentally good (Tu 1978). That is, it holds everyone has the innate goodness which motivates oneself towards "I will not…", autonomously.

[4] Jinsai is his first name, however, we conventionally call the pre-modern thinkers with their first name, even in the academic texts. Just same as the case of Kaibara Ekken, as below.

In contrast, shugyo precedes all worldly values and advocates abandoning all secular relationships. Shugyo quests toward a vertical goal, even if it may damage one's own healthy or lead to the abandonment of secular gains (in this sense, real asceticism).[5]

3 Anatomy of Keiko

The notion of keiko comes primarily from Japan's traditional performing arts (geido, 芸道, which includes tea ceremony and Noh-theater), as well as from the arena of martial arts (budo, 武道, which includes archery, judo, karate, etc.). Importantly, it bears the strong imprint of Zen Buddhist philosophy, particularly, in the heavy emphasis it places on 'leaving behind once acquired skills,' a dimension sometimes called a 'Mushin' (no-mind) performance.

3.1 Way(s) (道)

One Canadian philosopher who spent many years in Japan, experiencing some performing and martial arts practices later reflected on his experience, giving us an entry point for those less familiar with Japan (Carter, 2008). Carter first self-reflectively emphasizes that these arts are 'Ways (dō道)' which are 'unlike sports, or hobbies, or even vocational and commercial activities as we know them in the West.' Instead, these represent avenues of self-development, leading to toward continual transformation: 'In short, each of these arts, if seriously engaged in, is itself enlightenment in some form.' (Ibid., p. 3) Interestingly, Carter calls these lifelong practices of Way shugyo, instead of keiko. He writes while 'Keiko refers to shorter-term practice, or even a single session,' 'shugyo is a term that applies to rigorous, dedicated, long-term, or lifelong practice.' Carter appears to here evaluate keiko less highly than shugyo.

However, this reading is not one I agree with. In the history of the Japanese language, these two categories are not hierarchical but instead cover different genres. Or perhaps we can say that there is some narrative exchange between the two. Nevertheless, Carter does point out some of crucial important characteristics of keiko (which in his terminology is considered shugyo). That is, he is right that the practices of Japanese art are all designed to make the one who practices keiko a better person. Ethics here focuses on the development of character of the whole person, and a correct ethical action is understood to grow out of concrete, physical training, or repetition. For example, the way of walking or eating in daily life is a form of ethics in keiko. Ethics in Japan is, indeed, a way of being in the world. Carter is also right that another characteristic of keiko is the sense of 'being empty.' To explain,

[5] The mysticism of various religions considers that shugyo precedes all worldly values; however, all forms of mysticism do not require asceticism (Izutsu, 1966–67).

he shares his favorite Zen story: an arrogant man who comes to a Zen master for instruction, wherein the Zen master promptly invites him to tea, and then proceeds to pour tea into the man's tea cup long after it is full. When the guest complains the cup was already full, the master responded to him that like a tea cup, one with a mind that is already full will be unable to learn anything new. Being empty is the first step to learn and to open to the other.

3.2 Learning and Unlearning

At this point, we may turn to examine the process of keiko. In the entire process of keiko, acquisition of skills constitutes only the first half. To master, a particular skill is not the final goal. Nevertheless, students must acquire the distinguished skill perfectly, but not remain with it but learn to depart from it. According to the keiko teachings, 'to remain with one skill' means to be overly identified with it, or, to be prepossessed by the skill itself, which is detrimental because it disturbs the performer from a natural performance. In the field of keiko, natural performance, one which arises from neither private calculation nor personal intention, is evaluated more highly as compared with the artificial performances arising from these personal motives. This is why students have to leave their skill in the latter half of the process: doing so allows their body–mind to move naturally. This natural performance is sometimes called a Mushin performance (Mushin no mai/waza, 無心の舞・わざ). This performance from no-mind-ness, might be close to the 'zone' described by top athletes or the 'groovy' experiences of Jazz players. In this sense, the process of keiko is composed of both learning and unlearning, and the ultimate performance is recognized as a performance beyond artificial skills. (Nishihira, 2017a, 2017b, 2019).

3.3 Insight of Kata (型)

Kata, which connotes a particular form or model, is another characteristic aspect of keiko. Students or disciples should master a particular kata, a form under which all skills and techniques must find their place. While kata meets sometimes with severe criticism that it regiments natural flow and destroys natural performance, it has another function of inspiring creativity (Nishihira, 2017a). To understand how this is possible, it is important to follow the keiko process, step by step. At first, student has to accept kata even if she/he does not like it. This implies that kata never originates from a spontaneous movement of a student, but comes from the 'outside,' that is from parents, masters, and/or tradition. Yet, when the student masters kata after a long process of keiko practice, she/he feels that this kata is the most natural way of performance: It is never used consciously but instead the performance comes to be unconsciously based upon it.

However, the time will eventually come when the student feels this acquired kata is uneasy or restraining. This signifies that the creativity of student has grown up beyond the limit of this particular kata. At this point, she/he has to leave this kata and look for a new version or seek a higher level. Here, kata may also be seen as both a criterion for a student to reflect oneself and/or as a designated model of self-formation. Perhaps, if Foucault had heard this insight, he could have recognized this kata as another form of *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) or 'the practices of self-formation of the subject' (Bernauer & Rasmussen, 1988, p. 2).

3.4 Success (成功) and Consummation (成就)

But what then is the final goal of keiko? People may practice keiko in order to win a martial arts match or to perform perfectly on stage, in the case of theater. Viewed in way, the term 'rehearsal' might approximate keiko, and might be understood as merely preparation for the sake of a success at the final match or the final performance, i.e., to win applause or to gain social appraisal.

Yet, there is another goal of keiko. Zeami (1366–1443, the founder of Noh performing arts) suggested the term of 'consummation (jōju 成就)' to describe this other goal. In English, we might say it to come into a state of completion. When keiko comes into state of completion, everything falls into place. Without this sense of everything falling into place, there can be no consummation in our minds. Importantly, this consummation may well happen without being recognized socially (that is, without gaining social approval). Even in cases where we are defeated, if keiko has come into a state of completion and fallen into place, there could be consummation in our minds. In contrast, even if we win a match or receive approval, if the keiko has not come into a state of completion, there could be no consummation in our minds (Zeami, 2008).

The wisdom of keiko is that it teaches us that we need both of these different goals. On the one hand, keiko is the preparation for the success and should be strategic. We must acquire the distinguished skill for the sake of success. On the other hand, keiko is never preparation for anything outside of itself; but even (or only) has meaning within itself realized at every moment. In this regard, the everyday of keiko is already the final goal. As mentioned above, the arts associated with keiko are called Way. This term Way means method, direction, and/or road in a daily use, but in the tradition of Taoism, it signifies the Tao which is the natural force that unites all things in the universe. Or rather, all things are different manifestation of Tao itself. Based on the mundane definition, the Way of keiko simply means a method or a road to success. However, based on this more sublime understanding, keiko itself is the 'event' of manifestation of Tao. Keiko thus represents a wonderful occasion for Tao to appear into a person. When Tao comes to appear naturally (in)to us, we call this a performance as No-mind-ness, and this 'zone' or 'groovy' state we call consummation. In this sense, consummation is never the private satisfaction of an autonomous ego but an event of Tao. And in this dimension, keiko is nearly

synonymous with shugyo, or better yet: viewed through Taoism, all self-cultivation—shugyo, keiko, yojo, shuyo—are events of Tao (Nishihira, 2009).

4 Anatomy of Yojo

The concept of yojo first appeared in texts in ancient China (e.g., Zhuangzi 荘子). Literally, yojo means 'nurturing life' or 'nourishing vitality' and it aims for 'perennial youth and long life.' Yet, the theory of yojo is quite intricate, making it difficult to understand as a coherent whole. In terms of ideas, yojo was originally based on Taoism and the Immortality Ideas (Shinsen-sisou, 神仙思想). The Immortality Ideas implies a belief of Xianren (仙人), which indicates 'saints' having an immortal lifespan, and also implies the various skills necessary to become Xian.[6] In this sense, the theory and practice of yojo spans a wide range in ancient Chinese: philosophy, medicine, pharmacology, and Taoist religion.

4.1 Kaibara Ekken Yojokun *(養生訓)*

Many theories and practices of yojo were introduced into Japan from China and subsequently understood within the Japanese cultural context in Edo Period (1603–1867). Kaibara Ekken (貝原益軒 a Japanese Neo-Confucian philosopher and botanist) is the representative thinker of this genre (Tucker, 1989). *Yojokun*, which might be translated to 'Lessons for Nurturing Life,' which Ekken completed shortly before he passed away, has been evaluated as the culmination of his study how people may remain vigorous and healthy throughout their lifespan. However, the main purpose of this text was not to provide medicinal recipes or cures, but to outline a lifestyle that prevents disease (Ekken, 2008). Ekken took a holistic view of health and paid attention to the one's daily habit, activities, and psychological conditions. According to his insight, good health was based on a vigorous *ch'i* 気, or the balance of yin and yang. (W. S. Wilson, Introduction to '*Yojokun,*' Ekken, 2008, p 18f.). Yojo means, according to Ekken, 'to nourish *ch'I,*' 'to let *ch'i* flow and never make it stagnant,' keep breathing without agitation, never get angry or become worried, and control one's own desire, gradually making it less and less. Ekken recognized that the nourishment of *ch'i* included both studying the 'principle of nature' and balance. That is, he criticized, on the one hand, the practice of just nourishing *ch'i* which

[6] The idea of yojo originally arose as distinct from this Immortality Ideas, however, Laozi 老子and Zhuangzi 荘子 who discussed yojo and later came to be recognized as the founder(s) of Taoism, adopted the Immortality Ideas as primary doctrine. This is roughly how yojo became to be connected with the Inmortality Ideas of Taoism.

he saw in the Immortality Ideas, and on the other hand, only studying without any exercise which he saw in Confucian scholars.[7]

4.2 *Yojo and Giri (義理, Social Obligation)*

At the beginning of *Yojokun*, Ekken summarized his main principles as follows:

> As you are born and then nourished by Heaven and Earth and your father and mother, you cannot truly consider your body a personal possession with which you can do as you choose. … You should cherish it, nourish it, neither damage nor destroy it, and take care of it for the natural span of its life. (Ekken, 2008, p 33, General Remarks)

Here, we must take care of our body, which is bestowed by Heaven and Earth. This is a personal duty for each one of us and extends throughout the natural span of our life. Yet, Ekken was also a *samurai* who had a duty to be ready for death. That is, in a case of emergency, *samurai* had to be ready to quickly surrender one's own life in service to the feudal lord (大名daimyo). Ekken wrote that samurai should sacrifice his own life in the name of righteousness and die for the sake of principle.

This was the crucial double bind for Japanese Confucians in the Edo era. While they had a duty to cherish their own life, they had a parallel obligation to surrender their life to the feudal lord. Ekken responded to this dilemma with two categories he called the usual (常) and the unusual (変). He explained:

> When the unusual arises, you should put the unusual in to play. But in uneventful times, taking care of your body and following the Way of Nurturing Life corresponds to the usual. To give up your life without hesitation for a righteous cause corresponds to the unusual. (Ibid., p. 52)

Ekken thought that yojo (Nurturing Life) belonged to the usual, and the obligation to the social righteousness (Gigi 義理) belonged to the unusual. He further wrote:

> If you do not follow the Way of Nurturing Life beforehand to increase your stamina, when some great event does happen and you must fight stubbornly, your body will be weak and you will be unable to accomplish your goal, whether or not you are forced to sacrifice your life (ibid.).

This then becomes yojo for a 'good death.' Yojo cherishes one's own body and aims a long healthy life, however, yojo also calls forth the duty to be ready to sacrifice one's life. We might say that this is the crucial conflict inherent in Japanese yojo, especially for the Confucian samurai in the Edo era. That said, we can arguably see the same conflict arising ancient China as well. Roughly speaking, while Chinese Taoists sought a long healthy life, Confucianists were inclined to emphasize social obligations. However, the dilemmas these different streams of thought cause can

[7] Ekken's notions of yojo are no longer connected with the Immortality Ideas, even though it was deeply rooted in the Chinese theory of yojo. Ekken advocated directly observing nature and things, with a practical perspective, in order to study the *li* of nature.

often become very confusing and the debates intricate, so it is best to recognize this ambiguity as an inherent, unresolved characteristic of yojo: a personal 'care of the self' while in the midst of the social relationships. As we will see later, shuyo has been identified with yojo in the original notion of Taoism, and we might call it 'care of the self' (Nishihira, 2020, 2021).

By way of contrast, one never uses the term shugyo for issues related to health. It would sound very strange to claim that we practice shugyo in order to care for our health. Rather, shugyo could be ascetic, aiming to go beyond human health. In contrast to this, yojo is friendly to health and happiness in everyday life. Meanwhile, shuyo is somehow close to yojo, but more comprehensive. It cares not simply of the physical body but also of social manners, decency, and regularity in the daily life. And shuyo does not force people to build themselves up, but yet still tries to cultivate self-reliance. To understand this better, we can again refer to Foucault's *epimeleia heautou*: it is not a solipsistic exercise, but it is constituted by attitudes, practices, and actions that are all originated within the presence of others. It is a way of being with oneself that is at the same time concerned with one's relations to others. We might think yojo as a way of being with oneself, especially on matters of physical health, and shuyo as a way of being with one's relations to others. However, these two dimensions inevitable overlap within the larger concept of care of the self.

5 Anatomy of Shuyo

Shuyo is located among common people and is a form of daily practice. For example, Nitobe recommended in his book *Shuyo* (1911), to regularly arise early in the morning as the first step of shuyo, or to consistently read a good book one page per minute, everyday. In this sense, shuyo is similar to the formation of good habits. But we can also find many different types of shuyo, for example, to purify one's own mind/body through reading of 'Great Books' (i.e., classical texts, which could vary by situation and school); to keep one's mind steadfast and never become emotional; to behave decently in social life or to work honestly on one's obligatory duties. For these purposes, any exercise, endeavor, and undertaking could be an opportunity for shuyo. Kiyozawa Manshi (清沢満之), a Buddhist philosopher in Meiji era, once famously said that 'any trouble and pain in the life could be a good chance for shuyo.'[8] Yet despite similarities, we can nevertheless realize some unique characteristics of shuyo, as compared to keiko and the other forms of self-cultivation.

[8] In this regards 'exercices spirituels (spiritual exercise)' of P. Hadot, French Philosopher, would qualify. (Hadot, 2002; Nishihira, 2020, 2021).

5.1 Skills and Result

Compared to keiko, shuyo does not necessarily mean acquiring skills. Keiko implies the acquisition of special skills, but not in shuyo. Therefore, shuyo is sometimes regarded as a lower level of keiko, and here keiko is respected as a way leading to expertise. However, another usage of shuyo is as a platform or foundation of keiko. Related to this understanding, the meaning of 'result, outcome, and accomplishment' would be different. Keiko pursues a specific result; winning a game or an appraisal for a performance. However, shuyo does not. Shuyo means a long-term process toward maturity of one's personality or a continual effort to deliberately penetrate into one's body/mind. By way of contrast, the modern term renshu (練習) has a more definite target than keiko. This term means definitely a 'preparation' for a short-term goal, while keiko means, on the one hand, a preparation for the short-term result, but on the other hand, a long-term process of 'personality formation,' similar to shuyo.[9]

5.2 Relationship to Society

One never practices keiko in order to make a better society, nor is keiko thought about as a means of making a good family. The purpose of keiko is very specific. By contrast, the purpose of shuyo is comprehensive. In addition, the term of shuyo in its original state within Confucianism has sometimes been a teaching for students of politics; 'cultivate yourself, before leading people' (修己治人). Shuyo is the way to be leaders, and the idea of personal cultivation has been strongly connected with the making of a good society. This means shuyo signifies a secular dimension. Compared to shugyo as religious practice, shuyo practices are undertaken within secular society. Shugyo leaves or rejects the secular values and thus faces the possibility (or danger) of exceeding commonsense. Meanwhile, by remaining within the existing current society, shuyo can incline toward conformism.

In this regard, theories of shuyo in the Meiji era (明治期修養論) are representative (Nishihira, 2020, 2021). The establishment of Meiji Japan needed teachings for young men (it was mostly men then) who would criticize the government or stand up against social injustice. The teachings of shuyo emphasized a shared moral vision that advocated devoting oneself to one's own daily life within one's own given place or vocation. This implies that in using their skills effectively, and the more useful they become in the society, the more obedient they would also become. Shuyo in the Meiji era thus functioned not only to improve the mind/bodies' skills, but also prevent these skills from being used to revolt against existing power structures. Shuyo was employed with the push to forge a national identity, and in order to numb

[9] Here are connections to the German terminology of 'Übung' which has extensive reach—practice, exercise, training, keiko, renshu—has been given an important position in the German educational studies. (Brinkmann, 2012).

critical debate. I see this as very similar to the 'disciplinary power' of Foucault's theory, as—to repeat—shuyo is exercised within secular society and inclines toward conformism.

5.3 Trust in Human Nature

Shuyo is primarily based on the belief that human nature is fundamentally good (性善説, as original expounded by Mencius 孟子). Yet while human nature is good we often deviate from it, because of our greed, bad habits, etc. Yet, these are seen as just dirt or dust on our good nature, and thus we can remove those. Here, we are brought back to the original state. This is the primal image of shuyo. In contrast to this, one aspect of shugyo (asceticism) is based on the belief that human nature is fundamentally evil (性悪説, originally from Xunji, 荀子, or original sin in Christianity). According to these beliefs, we have to correct ourselves and keep distance from a corrupting human nature. Obedience and subjection to the ideal-traditional teaching thus becomes the key point of cultivation in shuyo. Compared to shugyo, then, shuyo trusts in human nature, and we might say that in yojo that trust is even higher.

6 Self-cultivation Toward 'No-Self'

Following this brief survey of 'self-cultivation' in Japanese tradition(s), it is important to also discuss the changes that took place with the transition to modern Japan (post-1868), wherein these tradition(s) were strongly influenced by western cultures or values. Herein, the terminology of pre-modern self-cultivation has been mostly replaced by modern terms that were coined for the sake of quick translation of western culture(s). Given that direct importation took precedence over wholesale acceptance of the total cultural context(s), the word-formation in these initial translations was abstract. In the haste to adapt to these changes, there was insufficient time to attend to the continuation of the traditional terminology. Or rather one might say that the modern Japanese society tried to abandon all traditional terminology and quickly mint new ones to support the new school system and new ways of life. Terms like gakushu (learning, 学習), which means literally learning and practice, renshu (practice or lesson, 練習), and kunren (training, discipline, 訓練) were all new terms that arose then and naturally belong within the sphere of cultivation. However, people of the Meiji period, like most Japanese today, could not understand the relations to the traditional terminology, and simply felt that a new era had come and the old were to be left behind.

As such, shugyo and keiko became largely inactive in the Meiji era (1868–1912). That said, periodically these terms were re-evaluated and/or employed by the nationalistic movements. In the prewar era, these gradually merged by the militarism and were absorbed into the term shuushin (修身), which encapsulates the suppressive

school system under Japanese militarism. Meanwhile, yojo was virtually demolished by the arrival of western medicine. That is, the western medical system, including the practices of personal body training and social hygiene, has taken the place of yojo. This was motivated by the feeling that modern Japan needed the 'disciplined body' in order to develop a vigorous capitalism and modern army. 'To be healthy' became a personal duty linked to obligations to the state and/or the Emperor. It is true that some doctors and teachers criticized this monopoly of the western medicine and re-evaluated traditions of yojo, especially in Taisho era (1912–26). Yet, when doing so they no longer called their alternative practices yojo.

In stark contrast, the term shuyo achieved widespread popularity in the late Meiji era, for reasons mentioned above. This term was used as an ideal for common morality, which many thought modern Japan needed as an equivalency to Christian morality underpinning western society. While this shuyo movement gained much popularity, however, it was not successful and short-lived. This movement, not based on careful study of traditional thoughts, was merely an improvised preparation, and after the short boom, it enjoyed no one took further pains to develop it. After the Second World War, Japanese people basically forgot all these tradition(s) in the rush to leave behind the past. However, it seems that today there is a gradual and growing interest again. Interestingly, Japanese people realize their own traditions in the eyes of western people, for example, in the American counter-culture movement or the 'new age' movement that came thereafter. In truth, the terminology of Japanese traditional self-formation is not so popular in Japan today, but we may think that they have potentiality to be activated and contribute to the location of alternatives beyond the modern school system or modern way of life.

6.1 Hypothesis for Future Research

In conclusion, I would like to present one hypothesis that may catalyze future research and dialogue within and beyond East Asia. To state it boldly, without fear of being misunderstood, this hypothesis is that the final aim of Japanese self-cultivation—as a whole—might be 'to surrender oneself' to something beyond. Put differently, the Japanese notion of self-cultivation—*in all its forms*—seems to be rooted in cultivation toward 'no-self.'

Regarding to this core point, there is almost no major difference between Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto-ism. Furthermore, this idea of no-self has been a shared ideal and basis for common morality. By saying this, I do not mean that all Japanese have explicitly sought the moral ideal of no-self, but simply that self-cultivation in Japan has placed a very heavy emphasis of no-self as ideal. For example, Nitobe insisted on the significance of shuyo to enable Japanese to construct a modern subjectivity, which he thought Japanese people would need in the international world. At the same time, however, Nitobe emphasized the significance of surrender oneself to 'something great' or 'cosmic energy.' In this sense, we can at least say that Nitobe never thought that it would be enough for personal formation

to lead to the establishment of a social ego or to remain a subject (as against objects) (Nishihira, 2020, 2021).

Keiko, the process of learning and unlearning, is fairly representative of this idea. In shuyo, this emphasis is not so clear and, moreover, there have been diverse directions of self-cultivation. However, shuyo was often based on the belief that human nature is fundamentally good, which meant a place where 'self' has not yet taken place (one might think of 'self' here in the sense of a selfish self). In this regard, shuyo could be a way of returning to no-self, or appreciating the pureness of no-self. Cultivation toward no-self might sounds like 'devotion to God,' however, if the 'devotion to God' is understood as opposed to 'self-cultivation,' we have to be careful to get the nuance right. Cultivation toward no-self in Japan has never been placed in opposition to self-cultivation. This is the key distinction. The concept of self-cultivation in Japanese tradition(s) includes both the process of building up to 'self' and into 'no-self.' Or, one could also say that it includes a dimension of returning back to the original state where 'self' has not yet arisen. Perhaps, if Foucault had had time to study Japanese philosophy, he could have found another alternative which was close to the ancient Greek precepts, but discussed in diverse terms and undergoing a different development in the history.[10]

6.2 Conclusion: Rethinking the Modern

These 'Japanese' terms and intellectual themes are more widely important when we recognize increasing calls to think beyond modern society; the need to recognize intellectual resources from elsewhere. There have been increasing calls to do so lately but it has proved difficult given the dominant themes, frameworks, and languages of modernity. Here, returning to history and diverse languages maybe be one means of finding new inspiration. We have to go back to the history and examine old insights more closely. If those insights are genuine and authentic, they might give us new inspiration, particularly, when we open ourselves to them without being too burdened by the priorities of modernity. Specially, the old wisdom of one's own language may provide us with a vivid dissimilation and offer new perspectives.

However, it is important to stress that this should never mean a closed research paradigm. Rather, in order to learn the old wisdom of one's own language we need to look at research in other languages. For example, we already have many translations from Japanese classics into European languages. They give us, Japanese readers, a new interpretation of our own classics; alternative expressions and different articulations which de-familiarize us from a ready-made understanding of 'old' wisdom.

[10] Indeed, in an interview in Japan Foucault once said; "Thus, if philosophy of the future exists, it must be born outside of Europa or equally born in consequence of meetings and impacts between Europa and non-Europa." (translated by Christian Polac, in 'Michel Foucault and Zen: a stay in a Zen temple'.1978). My colleague, Jeremy Rappleye, brought my attention to this interview and encouraged me to develop these ideas more explicitly in relation to contemporary Western ideas.

Old means, in this context, 'non'-modern. If we try to share insights of 'non'-modern educational thoughts, we have to understand them not within the framework of 'modern education,' but to investigate an appropriate framework for the 'non'-modern modus itself. Dialogues with other culture are one of the best way to carry this out.

Returning to history thus does not signify a reversion to closed research communities and essentialism. In order to learn one's own language well, contact with other languages is crucial. It would not have been possible to disentangle keiko, shuyo, shugyo, and yojo without encountering the English term 'cultivation.' Returning to history and diverse languages maybe be one means of finding new inspiration. To continue paying attention to differences or different articulations between different languages can be a vital way of thinking in new ways, which is important as modern society appears less creative than it once was.

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Confucian Self-cultivation and the Paradox of Moral Education

Charlene Tan

1 Introduction

Self-cultivation 修其身 (*xiu qishen*) is a perennial concern in Confucianism. All Confucian scholars affirm the primacy of self-cultivation although they differ in their specific formulations and recommended ways to achieve it. In this chapter, I examine and compare the educational thought of two eminent Confucian philosophers: Mencius (Mengzi) 孟子 (372–289 B.C.E.) and Xunzi 荀子 (310–235 B.C.E). These two philosophers are the two foremost thinkers after Confucius in classical/early Confucianism. Contemporary scholars have compared their status in and contributions to Confucian intellectual traditions to those of Plato and Aristotle, respectively (Chan, 2014; Knoblock, 1988). Both Mencius and Xunzi have much to say about self-cultivation and its place in moral education. My focus for this chapter is on the relevance of Confucian self-cultivation to a specific dilemma in moral education known as the "paradox of moral education". This chapter proceeds as follows: an exposition of the philosophy of Mencius and Xunzi with respect to self-cultivation, a discussion of the paradox of moral education, and the pertinence of Mencius and Xunzi's ideas to the before-mentioned paradox.

2 Confucian Self-cultivation

That self-cultivation is required of everyone is stated in the *Great Learning* 大學 (*Daxue*), which is one of the *Four Books* 四書 in the Confucian canon (Chap. 3, my translation):

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_6

> From the Son of Heaven [emperor] down to the common people, all should regard self-cultivation as the root.

The passage above states that self-cultivation is the basis for moral development and self-transformation. Confucian self-cultivation entails disciplining oneself to nurture, manifest and propagate virtues. The *Great Learning* teaches that all human beings need to develop their innate moral predisposition, eschew their negative emotional impulses and act virtuously as members of the human community (Plaks, 2014). Confucian self-cultivation is fundamentally moral as it is character development towards *ren* 仁 (an achieved state of humanity). *Ren*, also translated as benevolence, humaneness and altruism, among others, is about becoming a *special* type of human—one who is authentic, fully human and perfectly realised. As explicated by Hall and Ames' (1987), *ren* is "an achieved state of humanity manifested as a signatory feature of all one's behaviours and identified as a source of admiration from and inspiration for one's community" (p. 114).

Confucian self-cultivation presupposes autonomy as it is an inward process of authentic moral motivation and self-actualisation. A person cultivates oneself through self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-creation—a lifelong journey that demands a constant and honest examination of one's thinking and conduct. Self-evaluation is pivotal in Confucianism, whereby a person considers her or his own moral integrity (Wang, 2004). The Confucian self, in short, is reflective and purposeful, engaging in moral reasoning through its interplay with the world (Cheng, 2004; Tan, 2021). A related point is that Confucian self-cultivation is not a solitary affair but a communal one—what may be called *selves*-cultivation—that takes place through human interdependence and co-creation (Hall & Ames, 1998). Individually and collectively, humans utilise the symbolic resources and embrace the sharable values of their community in the path of moral cultivation (Tu, 1985). The next section expands on the notion of Confucian self-cultivation by turning to the philosophy of Mencius and Xunzi.

2.1 Mencius

Mencius, articulating a cardinal Confucian belief, avers that self-cultivation is the key to sagehood. Like all Confucians, he posits that everyone has the potential to become a sage 聖人 such as sage-kings Yao and Shun from antiquity (Tan, 2018a). A sage is one who demonstrates virtuous feelings, thoughts and actions constantly and spontaneously. Mencius gives details as follows (*Mencius* 6B:2, all citations of Mencius are taken from Gardner, 2007):

> The Way of Yao and Shun is nothing but filial and brotherly respect. Wear the clothes of Yao, recite the words of Yao, behave as Yao behaved: this is all it takes to be a Yao. […] The Way is like a great road. It is not difficult to come to know.

The "Way" in the above passage is *dao* 道 which is believed by the ancient Chinese to be the guiding discourse for all human beings (Tan, 2013). Confucians hold that

dao is exemplified in the sage-kings as they have attained *ren* (an achieved state of humanity). *Dao* is also found in and transmitted by the traditional texts, social institutions and other cultural resources of the Zhou dynasty which is upheld as the golden age in China. Mencius in the above passage describes *dao* as "a great road" for humans to walk on. Indeed, the etymology of *dao* suggests a path that is immanent and interactive rather than a metaphysical entity that is transcendental and objective (Ni, 2014). Mencius teaches that *dao* is accessible to all human beings who also have the duty to realise it through self-cultivation. This line of thought conforms to Confucius' proclamation, "It is human beings who are able to broaden *dao*, not *dao* that broadens human beings" (*Analects* 15.29, my translation).

Mencius' prescription of self-cultivation for all human beings is premised on his conviction that human nature is good. He gives the example of a person who happens to see a young child about to fall into a well (2A.6). Mencius reasons that such a person would naturally feel alarmed and be moved with compassion towards the child. This example, according to Mencius, illustrates the innate goodness of all human beings which is encapsulated in the "four seeds" 四端 (*siduan*, also translated as "four beginnings"). He explains (2A:6):

> The heart-mind of compassion is the seed of *ren* (an achieved state of humanity); the heart-mind that is ashamed of evil in oneself and hates it in others is the seed of *yi* (appropriateness); the heart-mind of humility and deference is the seed of *li* (normative behaviours); the heart-mind of right and wrong is the seed of *zhi* (wisdom). People have these four seeds just as they have the four limbs (adapted from Van Norden, 2001).

The four seeds, as mentioned in the above passage, are *ren* 仁 (an achieved state of humanity), *yi* 義 (appropriateness), *li* 禮 (normative behaviours) and *zhi* 智 (wisdom). Mencius' comparison of the four seeds to the four limbs illustrates the inherent and universal existence of goodness in all humans. He also points out that the four seeds reside in one's "heart-mind"心 (*xin*) which is a distinctive Confucian concept. Confucians reject the Cartesian mind–body dualism by asserting that there are neither disembodied thoughts nor noncognitive feelings in the Confucian traditions (Hall and Ames, 1987). Instead, the cognitive and affective domains—or, to put it simply, one's consciousness and conscience—are integrated in the heart-mind. The four seeds synthesise a person's affective, cognitive and conative spheres that result in deliberate impulses and motivation to action (Stalnaker, 2010).

The four seeds are so-named as they are not yet fully developed and necessitate moral self-cultivation. Highlighting the importance of nurture over nature, Mencius holds that personal effort coupled with the external environment determines the extent to which a person succeeds in bringing one's good nature to maturity (6A:8). Specifically, self-cultivation involves going beyond one's spontaneous moral reactions (recall the person who witnesses a child falling into a well) to love and do good to fellow human beings (6B13). Mencius elaborates on how we can extend our innate moral feelings of *ren* and *yi* (7B:31):

> People all have things that they will not bear. To extend this reaction to that which they will bear is *ren*. People all have things they will not do. To extend this reaction to that which they will do is *yi*. If people can fill out the heart-mind that does not desire to harm others, their

> *ren* will be inexhaustible. If people can fill out the heart-mind that will not trespass, their *yi* will be inexhaustible (adapted from Van Norden, 2001).

According to the passage, to extend one's moral feelings is to fill out one's heart-mind. To do so, one should not harm others or do anything that is unrighteous. At the same time, one needs to add to what one already possesses. Starting with our instinctual ethical responses, we are to extend our moral feelings to all people through self-cultivation (2A6.7). Wong (1991) highlights the cognitive function and intentional object of compassion in the course of extending our natural feelings. The cognitive function provides the rationale for a person to prevent or end human suffering whereas the intentional object of compassion enables one to identify with the suffering of a sentient being (Wong, 1991). A strength of Mencius' method of extension is that it starts with what we already have: our pre-existing and automatic emotion of compassion towards people and things. The Mencian extension from the "familiar" to the "new" speaks of "actions derived from habit structures that are conditioned more by *familiarity* than by arguments" (Waks, 2009: 594, italics in the original).

2.2 Xunzi

Xunzi, in contradistinction to Mencius' position on the innate goodness of humans, argues that human nature is bad. Xunzi posits as follows (*Xunzi* Chap. 23 lines 2–10, all citations are taken from Hutton, 2014):

> Now people's nature is such that they are born with a fondness for profit in them. If they follow along with this, then struggle and contention will arise, and yielding and deference will perish therein. They are born with feelings of hate and dislike in them. If they follow along with these, then cruelty and villainy will arise, and loyalty and trustworthiness will perish therein. They are born with desires of the eyes and ears, a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds. If they follow along with these, then lasciviousness and chaos will arise, and normative behaviours and appropriateness, proper form and order, will perish therein.

The picture painted by Xunzi is anarchy that is caused by an absence of an inborn moral compass and external social restraint. Such an abysmal outcome is strikingly similar to the "state of nature" depicted by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (Hutton, 2014). By foregrounding the evil nature of humans, however, Xunzi is not pessimistic about human potential or the future of humanity. On the contrary, Xunzi, like Mencius, believes that all human beings are capable of becoming sages (Chap. 23, lines 252–258):

> [P]eople on the streets all have the material for knowing *ren*, *yi*, lawfulness, and correctness, and they all have the equipment for practising *ren*, *yi*, lawfulness, and correctness. Thus, it is clear that they can become a Yu (adapted by Hutton, 2014).

To Xunzi, the evil human nature is precisely why self-cultivation is indispensable for all human beings. The attributes of a sage, namely an achieved state of

humanity, appropriateness, lawfulness and correctness, are not inborn but acquired through individual effort. Despite subscribing to the view that human nature is bad, Xunzi assumes that all humans possess the internal material or substance质 (*zhi*) and external equipment or tool具 (*ju*) to overcome their innate deficiencies. Put otherwise, Xunzi is confident that all human beings possess the cognitive and affective capacities to internalise these virtues (Tan, 2017). It is instructive that Xunzi differentiates human nature from the human mind. While the former is bad, the latter "can become perceptive, reflective, and develop critical powers of understanding and evaluation, providing moral norms of relevant and correct action" (Cheng, 2014: 180). Human beings should therefore consciously and consistently regulate their desires and passions to act morally, in opposition to their innate nature.

For Xunzi, self-cultivation is made possible through two major "equipment" (*ju*) or tools: studying the classics 经 (*jing*) and practising normative behaviours 禮 (*li*). He explains why learning the classics is the first step in self-cultivation (Chap. "Introduction: Educational Philosophies of Self-cultivation", lines 128–131):

> Where does learning begin? Where does learning end? I say: Its order begins with reciting the classics, and ends with studying normative behaviours. Its purpose begins with becoming a well-bred person, and ends with becoming a sage (adapted by Hutton, 2014).

According to Xunzi, classics such as the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of Songs*) and the *Shujing* 書經 (*Book of Documents*) should be mastered as they record and preserve the exemplary thought and actions of sage-kings who have attained *dao*. Reciting the classics allows a learner to study and emulate the sage-kings as part of self-improvement and self-transformation. Xunzi is not advocating rote learning since no amount of mechanical memorisation can turn one into a sage who thinks, feels and acts morally. Xunzi explains that "the purpose of repeated recitation is content mastery" and "the purpose of reflection is comprehension" (Chap. 1, lines 218–221, my translation). He adds in the same passage that the goal of learning is "the immersion of oneself" in the classics and "the elimination of what is harmful and preservation of what is good" (my translation). We find here the five activities for self-cultivation: recitation, reflection, understanding, internalisation and self-correction.

Complementing the study of classics is the practice of *li* (normative behaviours). Xunzi maintains that *li* is "that by which to correct your person" (Chap. 2, line 175) through human activities such as mourning, receiving constructive criticism and interacting with others. Through *li*, a learner "makes one's eyes not want to see what is not right, makes one's ears not want to hear what is not right, makes one's mouth not want to speak what is not right, and makes one's heart not want to deliberate over what is not right" (Chap. 1, lines 221–224). *Li* necessitates self-cultivation as it requires the prudent exercise of one's virtues based on a concrete analysis of the particular circumstances one is in. Confucian learning, according to Xunzi, is fundamentally socialisation as human beings learn to become moral by aligning their tendencies, emotions and aspirations with *dao*-derived norms (Tu, 1998). In short, a person learns to correct one's evil nature and evince moral character in communal and authentic settings through role performance.

2.3 Comparing Mencius and Xunzi

When we compare Mencius and Xunzi, a prominent divergence between them is their theories on human nature. As mentioned earlier, Mencius argues that human nature is good while Xunzi claims that human nature is bad. Cheng (2014) summarises the key differences between Mencius and Xunzi on morality, human nature and learning:

> In Mencius one sees a quest for understanding the identity of human in heaven and hence the identity of human in its intrinsic goodness which gives rise to natural morality. For Mencius morality is a matter of "return to oneself to reach integrity" (*fanshen ercheng*). Whereas we may think that Mencius, following Zisi, has argued for the identity of human with heaven at the source creativity of heaven, Xunzi argues for the development of human potential for fulfilment of heaven as the end of humans. In this sense his argument for the distinction and relation between humans and heaven is a form of identity of heaven and human with heaven as a means for the end of human development. If we can see Mencius' view as an 'enlightenment theory of human nature,' we can no doubt see Xunzi's view as an 'achievement theory of human nature' (186).

But the disparity between them is not as major as it seems, nor are their philosophical positions irreconcilable. For Mencius, his stance that human nature is good does not imply that human beings are actually or already good. Rather, human goodness is only in its incipient stage, as suggested by the word "seed" in the "four seeds"; all human beings need self-cultivation to enable the seeds to grow and bear fruit. Xunzi, on his part, is not stressing that human beings delight in doing evil, or are totally corrupt and incorrigible. His stand, rather, is that human beings are predisposed from birth to seek self-centred interests and gain. What he is cautioning against is the absence of external restraints that condone and instigate unhealthy competition, strife and chaos that arise from inborn selfish desires. For both Mencius and Xunzi, self-cultivation is the vehicle for human beings to become sages, either by expanding their innate goodness (for Mencius) or overcoming their innate evil (for Xunzi). Both philosophers concur that everyone without exception is of equal worth, dignity and potential. They are also in agreement that human beings need to invest in character development so as to attain *ren* (an achieved state of humanity) and become fully realised humans.

But the different starting points on human nature have resulted in different approaches to self-cultivation for Mencius and Xunzi. To explain the divergence, it is helpful to refer to the etymology of the English word "education". As explained by Ames and Hall (2001) who note that the two principal roots of "education" are *educere* and *educare*:

> The first means "to evoke, lead forth, draw out"; the second "to cultivate, rear, bring up". *Educare* resonates with the sense of education as rationally ordered mode of education. On the other hand, *educere* suggests the creative side of education that is complicit with aesthetic understanding (51).

Mencius' practice of self-cultivation is more aligned with *educere* as his emphasis is on drawing out the good nature that *already* exists in all human beings. As noted earlier, Mencius advocates the extension or leading forth of one's spontaneous moral (re)actions with regards to other people and things. By being aware of

our natural feelings and widening their application, we will cultivate *ren* (an achieved state of humanity), *yi* (appropriateness), *li* (normative behaviours) and *zhi* (wisdom) through our daily encounters. We will then succeed in establishing and sustaining a common humanity that is based on mutual respect, empathy and love. Xunzi, on the other hand, is more supportive of *educare* where the focus is on a more structured programme that pivots on the studying the classics and practising normative behaviours (*li*). These two main tools serve to bring up learners who succeed in overcoming their bad human nature through disciplining their minds and bodies in social settings. Another way to contrast the approaches to self-cultivation between Mencius and Xunzi is that of enlightenment versus achievement, to borrow the words of Cheng (2014). Self-cultivation for Mencius is essentially *enlightenment* where one discovers and enlarges one's pre-existing moral feelings. In contrast, self-cultivation for Xunzi is geared towards *achievement* where one makes incremental progress towards sagehood with the help of external aids such as the classics, instruction from teachers and enculturation. Having examined the ideas of Mencius and Xunzi on self-cultivation, the next section focusses on the topic of moral education.

3 The Paradox of Moral Education

A dilemma in moral education is what is known as the paradox of moral education. Peters (1966) explains:

> What then is the paradox of moral education as I conceive it? It is this: given that it is desirable to develop people who conduct themselves rationally, intelligently, and with a fair degree of spontaneity, the brute facts of child development reveal that at the most formative years of a child's development he [sic] is incapable of this form of life and impervious to the proper manner of passing it on (271).

The paradox can be analysed from various angles such as the psychological state of the learner or the philosophical notion of autonomy (e.g. see Cuypers, 2009; Haydon, 2009; Huang, 2011; Kristjánsson, 2006). But this chapter is primarily interested in the *pedagogic dilemma* engendered by the paradox for educators. Another clarification is that although the paradox applies to all learners, it is particularly germane to children who have yet to acquire rationality, intelligence and spontaneity, as noted by Peters in the above quote. The paradox of moral education poses a formidable challenge for teachers who wish to nurture moral character and reasoning in their students. A chief aim of moral education is to empower students to appreciate and possess the rational deliberation for and motivations behind moral actions. However, as noted by Taylor (1985), "(o)ffering the child moral reasons for acquiring the disposition in question presumes that the child is already disposed to believe that such reasons count; but this is what the moral educator is trying to establish" (21–22). It follows that educators may have to resort to nonrational, impositional and even indoctrinatory means for their students to become rational, intelligent and autonomous. Indoctrination is broadly taken to refer to the impairment of "the ability to hold beliefs on the grounds

that there are better reasons for holding these particular beliefs than others; so indoctrination interferes with the ability to be self-determining with regard to beliefs and judgments" (Taylor, 1985: 25; also see Kazepides, 1969; Tan, 2004, 2008, 2014, 2018b).

In attempting to resolve this pedagogic paradox, some scholars have argued for *nondirective moral education.* This form of education centres on equipping students with the basic tools of inquiry so that they can freely choose their own values (Sharp, 1984). Such an approach appeals to educators who believe that the paradox of moral education can be avoided or at least minimised because no values are transmitted to or imposed on the learners. The role of the teachers, as the argument goes, is to simply encourage the students to develop their own moral reasoning capabilities and choose their own versions of the good life. Examples of nondirective moral education are the *Values Clarification* and *Moral Reasoning* approaches. As explained by Halstead (2010),

> [A]dults who teach *Values Clarification* believe that values should not be imposed on students. Rather, adults should help students clarify their own feelings and views on a wide range of moral issues. Still other adults believe their role is simply to facilitate the development of *Moral Reasoning*. Lawrence Kohlberg originally included Moral Reasoning as a component of his influential theory of moral development, which posits six invariant stages of moral reasoning that characterise judgments about issues of distributive justice. Thus, the teacher's role is simply to stimulate moral development by encouraging students to move to progressively higher stages of moral reasoning (631).

A key criticism of nondirective moral education is its de-emphasis on moral contents and presumption of value-neutrality. Any form of moral education that is only concerned with the development of moral reasoning capacities in students is inadequate because a specific moral content *is* necessary for moral reasoning to take place. Arguing that structure cannot be taught without also teaching content, Giarelli (1981) contends that "a discussion of public moral education must be situated in a concrete context in which the opportunities presented to us for participating in an ethical life are seen as products of a particular historical and social situation" (371; also see Blair, 1983; Carr, 1991). Other philosophers such as Jonathan (1995, 1997) have also critiqued the neutralist liberal stance on moral education for marginalising the place of the social and material worlds in the construction of consciousness. Rejecting the possibility of values neutrality, Gardner (1989) writes that "there is surely something paradoxical in insisting on scepticism in morals while maintaining that teachers *ought* to tell pupils certain things and *ought* not to act in certain ways" (124).

Overall, it is questionable that a form of moral education that comprises only of moral reasoning skills can satisfactorily prepare students to know and do what is right. Effective moral education should include the inculcation of a set of beliefs and values as well as the intentions, attitudes, dispositions, behaviours and personal reflections pertaining to moral character (Halstead, 2010). At the heart of moral education is the internalisation and demonstration of virtues in students. It is a salient point that virtues can be executive or substantive. According to Kupfer (1994), executive virtues are qualities related to one's will power or self-mastery that are instrumental to our

carrying out plans and realising ends, such as determination, courage and patience. These virtues equip a person to engage in moral reasoning which is manifested in actions such as considering moral dilemmas, presenting opposing viewpoints, reflecting on different perspectives, formulating questions and arriving at their own conclusions. Substantive virtues, on the other hand, motivate our actions with virtues such as compassion, generosity, loyalty and kindness. The interdependence of executive and substantive virtues is seen in the fact that executive virtues without substantive virtues are directionless whereas substantive virtues without executive virtues are inefficacious.

An alternative to nondirective moral education is *directive moral education* that supports the cultivation of specific moral principles, beliefs and values. The pedagogic paradox faced by educators for directive moral education is how to justify the adoption of nonrational and even coercive means for the promotion of executive and substantive virtues in children. The next segment shall outline a Confucian response to the paradox by returning to the ideas of Mencius and Xunzi.

4 Mencius, Xunzi and the Paradox of Moral Education

The approach to moral education advocated by Mencius and Xunzi is aligned with directive moral education that calls for the imparting of a set of substantive moral principles, beliefs and values. As discussed earlier, the foundational virtues for both Mencius and Xunzi are an achieved state of humanity, appropriateness, normative behaviours, wisdom, lawfulness and correctness (*Mencius* 2A:6, *Xunzi* Chap. 23, lines 252–258). The paradigmatic person for both Mencius and Xunzi is a sage who has realised and broadened *dao* (Way) through self-cultivation.

It can be observed that the ethical orientation espoused by Mencius and Xunzi supports the *Caring* and *Character Education* approaches in moral education. According to Halstead (2010), the *Caring* approach to moral education emphasises a person's intuitive sense of concern for others rather than a set of rational principles as a guide to moral behaviour. The approach of *Character Education*, on the other hand, focusses on "mould[ing] children's character by directly teaching them moral values and shaping their behaviour in an attempt to produce positive behavioural patterns and habits" (631). Mencius' teaching on the development of innate goodness through the extension of moral feelings is in tandem with the *Caring* approach that plays up a person's instinctive love and empathy for others. Recall the example given by Mencius on a person feeling concerned for a child who is about to fall into a well. A person cares for others by harmonising one's thoughts, feelings and actions through *xin* (heart-mind). It is therefore essential for students to be conscious of their own moral feelings and extend them by loving others and performing their ethical obligations. The nurture of moral sentiments is particularly important for children as research has shown that human beings develop emotions and attitudes early in life (Saito, 2010). Xunzi's accent on moral development through studying the classics and demonstrating normative behaviours, on the other hand, is congruent with the

Character Education approach to moral education. The attention here is on shaping the learner's moral character through explicit teaching and habituation of virtues. For Xunzi, the classics offer valuable lessons on the praiseworthy thinking and actions of the sage-kings from the ancient times. The display of normative behaviours also reinforces the learning of the classics by putting theory into practice.

But what about the paradox of moral education and the associated risk of indoctrination if a directive form of moral education is enacted? Mencius and Xunzi do not see the adoption of nonrational methods to instil substantive and executive virtues in students as problematic. The reason is that both philosophers underline the dual need of values inculcation *and* self-cultivation in moral education. The transmission of substantive moral principles, beliefs and values is a necessary first step for learners to be cognisant of moral precepts and sensibilities. From a Confucian perspective, human beings are not born perfect with all the virtues of a sage. A directive approach to moral education is therefore necessary and warranted. On this note, Suttle's (1981) argument on why moral reasons are irrelevant to children who have yet to acquire a moral point of view is pertinent:

> (I)f a person has no moral precepts and sensibilities, then those deficiencies cannot be corrected by offering the person moral reasons and evidence for why he should acquire moral precepts and sensibilities. Without a general moral point of view, without a set of moral precepts and sensibilities, no moral arguments in support of having a moral point of view could be judged convincing, let alone recognised as moral arguments (156).

For Mencius and Xunzi, the employment of non-rational methods to imbue values in students is not objectionable because this process is supplemented and fortified by self-cultivation. As noted earlier, Mencius and Xunzi prioritise the personal commitment to and effort in self-transformation. Underscoring that everyone can become a sage, both philosophers outline their respective moral education programmes for all learners, whether it is the maturation of the four seeds through the extension of moral feelings for Mencius or the emulation of moral exemplars in the classics and exhibition of normative behaviours for Xunzi. The fostering of substantive virtues such as *ren* (an achieved state of humanity) and *zhi* (wisdom) goes hand in hand with the development of executive virtues such as self-mastery. With reference to moral reasoning as expounded by Kupfer (1994), Mencius and Xunzi would agree that their ideal moral person is one who is capable of engaging in critical discussions, considering different viewpoints, being open-minded and arriving at their own conclusions.

To amplify how the practice of self-cultivation according to Mencius and Xunzi avoids the indoctrination of moral principles and helps the learner develop one's rational autonomy, it is instructive to delve deeper into the Confucian understanding of *li* (normative behaviours). For Mencius and Xunzi, *li* is not a set of do's and don'ts that are imposed on the adherents who are expected to conform to them in an unthinking manner. On the contrary, both philosophers stress the need for one to exercise one's judgement and discretion based on circumstantial demands. Afterall, a sage manifests the moral values of benevolence, truthfulness, courage and firmness "not by following a set of abstract oral rules but by a continuous encounter with

the multiplicity of existential situations" (Tu, 1985: 68). Mencius foregrounds the primacy of exercising critical judgement in the following example:

> Mengzi debated Chunyu Kun, who asked, "Does ritual require that men and women not touch when handing something to one another?" Mengzi replied, "That is the ritual." Chunyu Kun then asked, "If your sister-in-law were drowning, would you pull her out with your hand?" Mengzi replied, "Only a beast would not pull out his sister-in-law if she were drowning. It is the ritual that men and women should not touch when handing something to one another, but if your sister-in-law is drowning, to pull her out with your hand is a matter of discretion" (*Mencius* 4A17.1)

The act of touching the hand of one's sister-in-law was a violation of social norm in ancient China. An indoctrinated person is likely to stick rigidly to rules and conventions, and is incapable of independent thinking. Only a person who possesses rational autonomy is able to act morally and appropriately based on contextual needs (Tan, 2019). Agreeing with Mencius is Xunzi who, despite valuing *li*, does not call for an inflexible and blind allegiance to it. On the contrary, he underlines the importance of exercising one's judgement in one's relationships with and responses to people and situations. He portrays a *junzi* (exemplary person) as one who "carefully acts according to the other person's character" (Chap. 1, line 201). Xunzi also welcomes critical discussion, stating that a *junzi* "never hesitates to ask questions" (Chap. 27, line 454) and that "he who rightly criticises me acts as a teacher towards me" (Chap. 2, lines 6–7). Hutton (2014) concludes that *li* is not inviolable for Xunzi as the latter "allows that people with developed moral judgement may need to depart from the strict dictates of ritual on some occasions" (xxvii). For Mencius and Xunzi, the development of rational autonomy that immunises one against the spectre of indoctrination is part of one's journey to become a sage. There is therefore no worry over indoctrination that may arise from the utilisation of nonrational teaching methods in Confucian education. The overall desired outcome for Confucian moral education is to develop sages who, to quote Peters (1966), conduct themselves rationally, intelligently, and with a fair degree of spontaneity.

A Confucian approach to moral education in general, and its resolution of the paradox of moral education in particular, illustrate the importance of a shared normative and cultural framework for the formation of moral dispositions. The educational thought of Mencius and Xunzi demonstrates the compatibility between socialisation within a primary culture and moral self-cultivation (Blair, 1983). Although the learning of moral principles or virtues has to be undertaken in a nonrational and directive manner, this process, in itself, is not indoctrination because the intention is not to paralyse the rational autonomy of students. Neither is the outcome necessarily indoctrinatory since educators are exhorted to enhance the ethical deliberation and actions of the students through self-cultivation. The primary culture therefore serves as a framework for the subsequent and gradual acquisition of moral reasoning in the students. Children are not cloistered within a primary culture that limits them to see things only from a dogmatic moral point of view and inhibits their intellectual imagination. The envisaged end is a moral agent who is open-minded, whole-hearted and intellectually responsible (Dewey, 1933; Tan, 2015). Such a person actively and critically explores the reasons behind and motivations for moral actions.

5 Conclusion

I have explored the Confucian notion of self-cultivation and its relevance to moral education from the perspectives of Mencius and Xunzi. In the first part of the essay, I have elucidated the common emphasis of Mencius and Xunzi on self-cultivation as the means to attain sagehood. For Mencius, self-cultivation draws out a person's innate goodness and enables one to extend the instinctual moral feelings to all people. For Xunzi, self-cultivation is instrumental in helping a person to overcome one's bad nature by studying the classics and practising normative behaviours. In the second part of the chapter, I have related Confucian self-cultivation to moral education by focussing on the paradox of moral education. This paradox arises because educators have to resort to nonrational and even coercive methods to develop their students' rationality and autonomy. Linked to this paradox is the fear of indoctrination where moral principles, beliefs and values are imposed on the learners which handicap their independent thinking and actions. I have argued that the moral education approaches from Mencius and Xunzi resolve the paradox by promoting both substantive and executive virtues through directive moral education and self-cultivation. In conclusion, self-cultivation should be brought to the fore in moral education so that students could acquire and demonstrate the "how" and "what" in moral education. Programmes, courses and activities in schools should be introduced to develop and strengthen the student's moral feelings and reactions to ethical situations. The moral thinking, feelings, dispositions and actions of students should also be encouraged, gradually expanded and consolidated so that they become instinctive and effortless in everyday life. This form of moral education empowers students to go beyond merely doing what is right, to doing what is right with the corresponding affective motives through self-cultivation.

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A Life Worth Pursuing: Confucian Ritual Propriety (禮) in Self-cultivation

Jin Li

Abstract What is Confucian ritual propriety, 禮 (*li*)? Why is it so important that throughout history Confucian thinkers regard it as one of the five cardinal moral/virtuous principles toward self-cultivation? Is ritual propriety still relevant to present-day people's lives across the so-called Confucian-heritage cultures? Surprisingly, little psychological research on ritual propriety exists despite increasing scholarship on it from humanities and other social sciences. An important part of East Asian lives is amiss if their ritual way of life is not understood. To take an initial step, I start with the central meaning, importance, and practice of Confucian ritual propriety. Next, I draw on the two senses of li: (1) A set of standards for behavior (passed down traditionally), translated as *rites* and (2) personal learning and tendency to practice li, translated as *ritual propriety*, as a personal virtue. However, the former provides the cultural background, but the latter is my focus for this chapter. Ritual propriety involves cognition, emotion, motivation, and behavior among other processes; therefore, it is surely a psychological domain. I present a conceptual delineation of what Confucian ritual propriety is, what functions it serves in East Asian lives, how it is usually practiced, and what the underlying principles are. I conclude the chapter by discussing the need to conduct general psychological research on ritual propriety.

Keywords Ritual propriety · East Asian · Confucian-heritage cultures · Self-cultivation

At a recent conference hosted by Asian Association of Social Psychology in Taiwan, a conference attendant from China related an anecdote to me: One of his colleagues received a present from a rural relative who came to visit. The relative brought homegrown millet. The colleague complained that he could have bought millet from a grocery store and that he saw no point of bringing such a gift from afar. The

To appear in M. A. Peters (Eds), *Moral Education and the ethics of self-cultivation.* New York: Springer.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_7

conference attendant replied to the colleague: "the millet presented by the relative is no longer millet; it is a ritual object (*liwu* 禮物). As our Chinese saying goes, 'the present is trifling, but big hearted humaneness is conveyed'" (禮輕人意重). The colleague realized that the devouring pace of contemporary city life has rendered him callous toward his own cultural ethos.

Millet as a ritual object? How did such an ordinary object turn into a ritual object? More importantly, to what end? What is ritual in Confucian-heritage cultures (CHCs, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam)? Why did it assume central importance throughout Chinese (and other East Asian) history? Is ritual a thing of the past, or is it still relevant to present-day East Asian lives? If so, what purposes and psychological functions does it serve in people's lives? How do people live and express it? These and many more questions merit inquiry. Despite the spontaneous and prevalent practice of ritual as the above example illustrates, people across CHCs may, surprisingly, not be disposed to explain what ritual is and why they practice it. A case in point was that a few years ago, I asked a group of 25 highly accomplished Chinese school principals if they knew the concept of ritual (*li* 禮). They all said yes, yet none could explain its meaning when asked to do so. Equally surprising is the lack of psychological research on ritual in spite of increasing scholarship on it from humanities and other social sciences.

To be sure, ritual is not only a subject of contemplation in the humanities and other social sciences (e.g., anthropology that studies "bizarre" cultural groups' ways of life), but it also is a psychological domain simply because individual humans across cultures—to different degrees—think, feel, and practice it. Recognizing this astonishing research gap, I hope to take an initial step toward a conceptual analysis of ritual in order to facilitate psychological research. Specifically, I begin with a brief summary of the importance of ritual traditional in CHCs. Next, I attempt to delineate what ritual is and is not. I further discuss ten functions ritual serves and use the example of ritual object (禮物) to illuminate what each function might be and how one may express it. I follow up with typical affects associated with ritual versus those that are not. I outline seven principles underlying ritual in general and conclude the chapter with some future research directions.

1 Ancient Origin but Abiding Importance of Ritual in CHCs

Some uncommon facts help us glimpse at the long-standing significance of ritual across CHCs. First, imperial China developed a governing system that consisted of the so-called Six-Ministries from the sixth century CE to 1905 (over 1300 years). One bore the title: "Ministry of Rites" (禮部), in charge of state ceremonies, rituals, and sacrifices, registering for Buddhist and Daoist priesthoods and even the reception of envoys from tributary states, foreign relations, and nontrivially, education, and the meritocracy exam system (for selecting officials, see Hucker, 1958). Ministry of Rites

was even more importantly placed than Ministries of Defense, Justice, and Public Works in government. Despite effortful searches, I failed to find another nation, state, or ancient polity throughout human history that had/has such a ministry devoted to ritual. Thus, this singular phenomenon is quite unusual in the large scheme of things across human civilizations.

Second, as if this were not strange enough, there were books devoted to the subject of ritual, most well-known, *the Record of Ritual* (禮記, Wu & Lai, 1992). It was originally compiled by Confucian scholars during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE-8 CE) and further compiled and annotated by the venerable Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130–1200) in the Song Dynasty to be one of the *Five Classics* (五經, Wu & Lai, 1992) that were required reading for every student (for ~800 years). This book was also a subject of the Imperial Civil Service Examination for selecting meritocratic government officials (Lee, 1999). *The Record of Ritual* describes ritual practice from the grand to the mundane. Prior to the book, *Xunzi* (荀子, Xunzi, 2016), purportedly written by the third most revered classical Confucian, Xunzi, 323–238 BCE, after Confucius and Mencius, articulated clearly the essence of ritual for Confucian self-cultivation and governance. The two chapters of *Xunzi, Discourse on Ritual* and *Discourse on Music*, give philosophical grounding on and vivid examples of ritual, epitomizing that "ritual is the ultimate in the human way" (禮者, 人道之極也, Xunzi, 2016, p. 205). Similar to the singular governing branch of rites, I failed to identify comparable philosophical texts regarding the essential role of ritual in other cultures. Thus, it seems that ritual was uniquely important in the Confucian world throughout history.

Given this deep-seated traditional value, we are compelled to ask: Is ritual still relevant to East Asians today? The response, without any hesitation, is a resounding yes. A search with the word 礼, the simplified character of the traditional 禮, in an online modern Chinese dictionary yielded 200 + items (Online Chinese Dictionary, n.d.). Six common terms are 禮節 (*etiquette*), 禮貌 (*politeness*), 禮物 (*ritual object*), 禮讓 (*comity*), 彬彬有禮 (*courteous*), and 禮尚往來 (*reciprocity*). Although some of these English translations may sound archaic, even uncool, they are everyday words that are wholly positive across the Chinese speaking world. Moreover, few East Asians would deny ritual's profundity and pervasiveness in contemporary life because ritual's force is immediately palpable when it is violated. Finally, the words 禮義廉恥 (ritual, rightness, integrity, and a sense of shame) are carved on the Boston Chinatown Gate and other communities' monuments across the Chinese diasporic world. There is no wonder why 禮 is the first word. This familiar phenomenon of Chinese migration settlements seems to indicate that ritual is not a location-bound (geocultural) phenomenon, but people-bound. Not only is it important and prevalent in Chinese regions, but it also follows the Chinese people into the world!

2 Ritual Propriety

Where do we start if we are to take the first step to analyze ritual's psychological functions and processes in contemporary life? As the opening anecdote suggests, the term *ritual object* (*liwu* 禮物) gave me some initial stirring. To clarify this startling realization of mine, I searched for the meaning of the English term *gift*, which is the common translation of *liwu.* According to etymonline (n.d.), the etymological origin of *gift* was "that which is given" with the terms such as *gipt*, *geftiz*, *ghifte*, and *geb* during the medieval time across Germanic regions, and eventually morphed into the current English *give*. Based on this etymology, we can conclude that *gift* is something that someone gives to another, end of meaning. The meaning of *gift* does not denote and connote ritual (the translation from *liwu* into the English *gift* captures only a very superficial meaning of the Chinese term).

However, in Chinese, a *gift* is literally called a ritual object continuously since ancient times. Then, the real thrust of our inquiry is why ritual? Undoubtedly, ritual remains an indispensable part of the Confucian conceptualization of personhood (Ames, 2018). Although the specifics might have changed over time, the fundamental meanings and functions of ritual, in my view, remain. I would go so far as to argue that an important part of East Asian lives is amiss if their ritual way of life is not understood.

2.1 Ritual's Two Senses

As stated previously, ritual traditionally covers the grand (e.g., state ceremonies) as well as the mundane (e.g., daily greetings). Ancient Chinese texts do not seem to make a philosophical distinction between different levels and processes. Eric Hutton for his recent retranslation of Xunzi (2016) distinguishes two senses of ritual in Chinese culture: (1) a set of standards for behavior that has been traditionally passed down (i.e., conventions that people follow), thus the translation *rites* and (2) personal tendency to practice ritual as a personal virtue, thus the translation *ritual propriety*. Hutton's distinction of the two senses of ritual is important for this chapter on the psychological functions and processes of ritual. Hutton's first sense is clearly not psychology per se, but the overarching cultural context, therefore not my focus here but the background for my analysis. Nevertheless, Hutton's second sense is my focus because of the notion "personal virtue." Henceforth, I use the term *ritual propriety* (RP) for the remainder of this chapter.

2.2 RP as a Personal Virtue

Virtue is generally conceptualized as a personal quality that has both a moral and an intellectual component (Aristotle, 2009, 2011). Building on Aristotle's two-sided

conception, Zagzebski (1996) delineated virtue with two further attributes: (1) a personal excellence and (2) a deep trait of a person. Thus, not only does the person possess the trait, but he/she is also consistently motivated to and actually succeeds in achieving the end (e.g., courage). I would provide three additional attributes: (3) the understanding of the trait sought, (4) affect involved in practicing a virtue, and (5) development required; that is, virtue is not present at birth, but developed.

Because RP is a human virtue, it is personal, thus a part of human individual psychology. Just like any other human personal quality, RP also involves thinking and understanding, emotion and feeling, and purposeful act (i.e., practice). RP as a personal virtue comes about through the developmental process, starting from childhood but continuing throughout one's life. Further, this development is not achieved by the person him- or herself alone, but instead requires sustained social support of family, school, and other agents over a long time. Last, but not least, RP is necessarily and quintessentially also interpersonal without which there would be no need for RP. Hence, analysis of RP needs to consider both the personal and the interpersonal processes.

2.3 What RP is Not

Given the lack of psychological research and difficulty to explain what RP is, it would illuminate our endeavor to think what RP is not before thinking what RP entails. However, an exhaustive list is unnecessary; some typical examples should suffice for my purposes. First and foremost, RP is not law, but it functions similarly to regulate human lives (C.-Y. Li, 2007). Although deeply involved in RP, affect itself (e.g., feeling love and happy) is not RP. Instead, RP is practiced primarily with other-oriented emotions (e.g., respect, honoring, and gratitude, Kitayama et al., 2006). Morality per se (i.e., knowing right from wrong and fulfilling moral duty) is not RP, but RP works to prevent people from getting near misconduct. RP is no doubt a personal virtue, but RP is not an ordinary virtue such as hardworking or generous as exercised primarily by the person. RP is, if I may, a super-virtue, that serves to promote one's overall virtue-development via human relationality. This may explain why ritual propriety (禮) is the first cardinal virtue carved on the Boston Chinatown Gate (the phrase originates from the book *Guanzi* (2015) recording the words and deeds of the ancient statesman and philosopher Guan Zhong (管仲, 725–645 BCE). Furthermore, it is clear that the expression of RP requires a performative act, yet performance per se (e.g., dancing) is not RP. Finally, an individual acting by him- or herself alone without implicating others is not RP either.

3 Ten Psychological Functions of Ritual Propriety: The Example of Gift-Giving

There may be many functions that RP serves. Based on my general reading on the subject of ritual, there are at least ten identifiable functions of RP and related processes. Here, I use one common RP practice in East Asia, friends giving ritual objects to each other as an example to illustrate each of the proposed ten psychological functions of RP. For convenience, I use the English term *gift* and two female friends to analyze how each psychological process unfolds and what each accomplishes with RP.

The first function of RP, as discussed by most ancient as well as contemporary scholars, is that RP creates an as-if world that is subjunctive (i.e., never real or not yet real) but felt and experienced as real. This fundamental psychological function is to allow humans to deal with the chaotic, fractured, and unpredictable world. On performing sacrificial ceremonies recorded in *Analects*, Confucius acknowledged, "sacrifice to the spirits as if the spirits are present…. If I myself do not participate in the sacrifice, it is as though I have not sacrificed at all" (祭如在, 祭神如神在….吾不与祭, 如不祭, see Ames & Rosemont, 1998, 3.12, p. 85). Xunzi (2016) also offered extensive descriptions and philosophical exposition on the importance of this as-if world. A recent treatise devoted to the subject of ritual by Seligman and associates (2008) further advanced the theory on the subjunctive in ritual practice. In my view, the most cogent and comprehensive as-if world theory of Confucian RP is advanced by the contemporary Chinese philosophy Zehou Li in his book *From Shamanism to Ritual, Recasting Ritual as Human-Heartedness* (2015).

Let us illuminate this first function by examining the gift-giving example. The gift-giver (G) begins by thinking about how to turn an ordinary object (e.g., a scarf, chicken soup) into a ritual object to serve a subjunctive occasion. There are at least two conditions that need to be met: (1) G holds the friend (F) in high esteem. She desires and values the friendship. (2) This affection is untainted by utilitarian purposes, hence is genuine and ready to generate moral and virtuous responses. The occasion is subjunctive because it has not come yet. It might but it might not occur. At this point, it is more an imagined occasion.

The second function of RP enables another to engage with the self (e.g., the initiative to invite someone to a celebration); therefore, human relationality is requisite for RP. However, RP as a practice is not general such that anyone can just follow a given rule to perform it. RP is an act for a particular relationship. Hence, G's gift-giving is not directed toward any of her friends indiscriminantly, but the particular one, here with F. This specific RP act aims at deepening their relationship. For this reason, G's valuation of her relationship with F influences her choice of a gift, format, style, performance, and delivery. G knows that doing this right will generate a positive response from F.

RP's third function structures the experience (Seligman et al., 2008), yet the structure is not rigid but with openness and creativity as to allow participants to find a way suitable to practice RP in a given context. The structure for G is the format

that guides her gift-giving on the occasion (e.g., an upcoming visit). G will follow the familiar way to select an object and then decorate it as Chinese culture informs her. The openness and creativity lie in that G can choose and prepare any object as her intentions and feelings motivate her. For example, G knows that F has two cats and loves them. So G purchases a wooden carved cat and decorates it with hope that it will be appreciated by F.

The fourth function of RP serves to guide participants to adhere to a structural format, resulting in its renewal and familiarity, hence ensuring social coordination. Accordingly, getting the crafty cat for G's visit and following the right way to prepare the gift is the enactment of the Chinese RP pertaining to gift-giving for a dear friend. G's observance of the format serves to distinguish as well as to perpetuate it as part of Chinese culture's RP repertoire.

RP's fifth function strengthens particular relationships between people, fostering and deepening the involved parties' mutuality and reciprocity, so as to sustain each other's commitment and care. By presenting a gift with care, sincerity, and respect (honoring 尊), mutuality is centralized in that F will likely reciprocate similarly to G, thus strengthening their friendship.

The sixth role of RP is to perform the act within the format in order to deliver one's intended expression appropriately. G's performative part here starts with the preparation of the gift in the established format and then to present the now repurposed object in a style that delivers the intended message appropriately. For example, upon arrival at F's place, F and G will greet each other, which is a kind of RP in its own right (Seligman et al., 2008). Shortly after G has been warmly welcomed and ushered in, G will present the decorated gift to F while uttering words like "Oh, look at those cats! I have a little gift for you. I just saw this wooden carved cat figurine and thought that you might find it cute." Being showered with such affection, as G anticipated, F is bound, again according to Chinese RP tradition, to reply something like "oh, no, no gift for me! What are you doing?! You just bring yourself to my place; that's all you need to do! It was so nice of you to think of me and my cats!".

RP's seventh function is performance, which allows deep but well channeled intentionality and emotions to become symbolic, transforming the raw and transient (e.g., millet) into something enduring (e.g., human-heartedness). Returning to our example, all of the exchanges may appear to be mere formality (i.e., schmoozing). Nonetheless, because of the heart and mind that went into the gift, the object (wooden carving) is transformed into a vehicle of G's intentionality and affection. Once the gift has been delivered, the object-vehicle becomes irrelevant, losing its physicality. What is left is the delivered message imbued with goodness and positive emotions, inviting F to savor the symbolic meaning. This is the only thing that matters to their friendship.

What might be the difference between G just coming to visit without the gift and just saying "I like/love you. You are my dear friend." To be sure, that would make F feel good about G at the time. It is, however, doubtful that such words not backed with any real acts would convey the same message as a ritual object. The weight of mere words may be much less significant than the ritual object. Words as opposed to deeds are notoriously used to do all kinds of things that are not genuine,

respectful, and dignifying, such as lying, ingratiating, manipulating, boasting, and so forth. Confucian teaching especially emphasizes deeds, that is, what one does and embodies, as opposed to words, that is, what one says (see Li, 2012 for focused discussion on this topic) as the only measure of one's moral and virtuous conduct. Thus, in RP, the recipient of the gift may not value words nearly as much as the object, delivered it with human-heartedness.

The eighth function of RP, by such performance, invites participants to beautify each other, elevating the ordinary to the esthetic such as transforming millet to human-heartedness. In the process of gift-giving, the message through an actual object graced with affection is delivered in a style refined with esthetics. The transformation of the original object's physicality (wooden carving or millet) with care, decoration, intentionality, sincerity, and respect is both virtuous and esthetic in nature, hence the notion of style of preparation and delivery. As such, both parties experience beauty through the ritual object.

RP'a nineth function channels participants to honor each other, bringing out the best in them, promoting each other's virtue, encouraging moral/virtuous aspiration. In the gift-giving example, F feels honored, for the object is no longer the original raw material, but transformed with humaneness. G's virtues are highlighted with an esthetic quality. The transformed object is still palpable, much like a sentimental object, and every time F sees it, the human-heartedness of G is recalled. Yet, the full meaning of the gift is not exhaustively articulatable. This degree of richness enables G to express creativity as well as for F to savor and interpret the meaning.

And finally, RP paves the way for individuals' moral and virtuous self-cultivation toward the ultimate human excellence conceptualized by Confucius as "ren" (仁), the most genuine, sincere, and humane person one can become (Tu, 1979), or to use a newer translation, a consummate human conduct one can achieve (Ames, 2011). In this light, both parties are elevated on their journeys of moral and virtuous development. We could readily expect that F, being honored and moved, will likely engage in the same RP, not only to G but also to her other relationships. This is the vision of Confucian radial self-cultivation (修身, Ames, 2011; Li, 2012, 2020). It encourages people to engage in the ever-expanding process by not just thinking and aspiring to it, but more importantly by living it (practice) from the most mundane moments in daily life to the most sacred or special occasions (e.g., funeral and annual tomb cleaning for a deceased parent).Undoubtedly, most humans do some of RP, and all human cultures have RP. However, East Asians live by it, with it, and through it to accomplish their life purposes. No wonder, RP has been so fundamental in Confucian teaching since ancient times all the way to the present.

4 Affects Associated with RP

It is quite clear that human emotions are involved in practicing RP. The power and effectiveness of RP can be further appreciated by looking at the kinds of typical affects people experience versus those not often experienced with RP. In their book on

ritual's unique functions and importance in human societies, Seligman and associates (2008) recount that ritual was once prevalent in the Western world. However, it has declined, deliberately abandoned such that there have been movements in recent history against ritual. In this process, ritual has been regarded as an archaic thing of the past, hollow of meaning, frilly to modern and most modern "authentic" life, and stifling to individual creativity. Although East Asia as a whole, too, has entered the modern/post-modern world and much of their RP has changed, I would argue that their way of RP has not fundamentally deteriorated. As stated previously, I would even suggest that much of their RP-way of life has survived and is in some way even more flourishing. There are many reasons why RP remains in East Asia, and a fuller discussion on the topic is beyond the present chapter. Nevertheless, I venture to make two observations as probable reasons: typical affects are virtually all self-conscious emotions and they are overwhelmingly positive.

4.1 Positive Self-conscious Affects Are Typical in RP

Typical affects involved in RP are sincerity, care, awe, respect, admiration, honor, gratitude, humility, generosity, face, longing, celebration, desire to repair a strained relationship and to make peace, overture of a new relational intent, and more. Self-conscious affects are different from human basic emotions. Research documents (Ekman, 1989; Izard, 1977) that human infants have basic emotional facial expressions that can be readily recognized across cultures, such as happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. Because these occur soon after birth, they cannot be learned through the social process. These emotions are believed to be our endowed capacity to respond and to adapt to the world (Izard et al., 2010; Oster, 2005; Schore, 2016). Therefore, these emotions are more self-focused and intrinsic, not depending on social relationships to occur (e.g., the infant is happy when getting milk). Self-focused and intrinsic emotions continue to develop as children grow older, and some may become more complex. For instance, we can on our own experience joy, enjoyment, pleasure, and ecstasy without involving others or any social relationship.

However, self-conscious emotions develop later in life. They rest on our sense of self in relation to others. For example, gratitude is not directed at self, but someone else, yet it is the self that expresses gratitude (thankfulness) to the other for benefits the self has received from the other (Emmons et al., 2019). For this reason, self-conscious emotions are generated, felt, and regulated in social situations and relationships where the self is necessarily and fundamentally implicated (Fischer & Tangney, 1995; Tracy et al., 2007). As alluded to earlier, RP's purpose and functions are to promote human relationality, reciprocity, and virtues in self-cultivation but in a world replete with chaos, fracture, and unpredictability. In order to move forward on this self-cultivating pathway, self-conscious emotions are naturally involved and fostered in RP.

Furthermore, self-conscious affects in RP are overwhelmingly positive. As the gift-giving example demonstrates, G experiences such emotions from the very beginning of the first thought about turning an ordinary thing to a ritual object through

the very end of presenting the gift to F. However, the RP process does not end there but continues with F reciprocating the same to G and expands the positivity to her other relationships. In this ripple effect, negative self-focused emotions such as anger, aggression, and fear that function to break relationality are unlikely to rise. Moreover, negative self-conscious emotions that serve to cause relational harm (e.g., disgust, contempt, scorn, jealousy, disrespect, and humiliation) are not only unlikely to erupt but also to be changed from negativity to positivity if such affects erupt in RP practice. A telling example is provided in the *Analects* (18.7, Ames & Rosemont, 1998) when Zilu, Confucius' student often described as "rash" or easily arousable to hasty action, encountered the following:

> Zilu was accompanying the Master when he fell behind. He came across an old man using his staff to tote his baskets on his shoulder.
>
> "Have you seen my Master?" asked Zilu.
>
> The old man replied,
>
> "You—'a person who does no work, and who can't tell one grain from another'—who would your Master be?" He then stuck his staff in the ground and continued his weeding.
>
> *Zilu stood by him with his hands cupped respectfully in a salute* [italics added]. The old man invited Zilu to spend the night. He killed a chicken and prepared some special millet for the occasion, and presented his two sons to his guest. On the following day, Zilu took his leave, and reported the event to Confucius.
>
> "He is a recluse," said the Master, and sent Zilu back to see him again. On Zilu's arrival, he discovered the old man had already left.
>
> ….

Picture yourself in the scene as Zilu. It seems clear that the recluse was unkind and aggressive. Anyone even in our not so ritual-oriented present-day world would be offended if a stranger just insults one like that. When Zilu asked "Have you seen my Master?" he was being simply deferential toward Confucius as ritual required during that time, nothing unusual. Yet, the recluse replied with an insult. We can easily imagine that a Zilu equivalent today would insult back, get into a shouting match, or even physical fighting. However, instead, Zilu, presumably by now self-cultivated by the side of Confucius, showed RP (see the italicized description of Zilu's ritualized bodily response; the gesture is seen amply in current martial arts movies). What did he accomplish with RP? The old man changed immediately from being unkind to being kind and hospitable, inviting Zilu to his home and treating Zilu with the best meal they had.

Had Zilu insulted him back, what might have happened? In the *Analects*, there are no details about what Zilu underwent to show RP instead of insult in kind. Nevertheless, we can readily fill in the missing psychological part: his initial gut reaction was probably anger (a typically self-focused emotion, Kitayama et al., 2006), upon hearing the recluse's reply. But then, he paused and chose to respond with RP. The gesture of standing with one's cupped hands respectfully in a salute could signal a number of intentions, such as "may I humbly request…?" "may I apologize…?" or "may I be instructed by you…?" At the moment of his pausing for RP, Zilu's self-focused anger was broken, quelled, and subsequently redirected positively to

the other, the recluse. Seeing this unexpected response by Zilu, the recluse must have felt shame, thus breaking and turning his own negative emotion and behavior into RP as well. The recluse's warm invitation of Zilu to his home and hospitality are testament to the power of RP. Thus, RP begets RP. It turns a negatively inclined person with negatively self-focused emotions to engage positively with others right there.

The positivity engendered with positive self-conscious affects throughout the RP process is likely to motivate people to engage in RP more, consequently renewing the practice. With wide-spread participation by cultural members, RP as a whole is likely to endure in the culture. Given the positivity associated with RP, there is little wonder why RP has been so valued in Confucian persuasion. When one embodies RP in life, one has a better chance to regulate one's own negative affects and related acts. As a result, one is better self-cultivated as well as help others better self-cultivate.

To summarize, RP is a matter and process of managing the unpredictable, fractured, and chaotic nature of human lives. RP may be an effective way to support human moral and virtuous aspiration and effort. All human cultures have RP, and most people do it, even in the most individualistic culture where personal rights, choice, decision-making reign supreme (e.g., an unwrapped Christmas present, supposedly from Santa Claus to a child, would strike people as odd—a sense of violation of RP in the US). But for CHCs, it is not a matter of choice or preference, but a way of life. Anything less than that would be oddities and violations of life as the ordinary.

5 Seven General Principles of RP

I proposed the ten functions of RP for the purpose of analyzing RP's psychological process when one engages in the practice in a CHC. The analysis of these functions traces the sequence of the steps as one carries out a particular act of RP such as gift-giving. In this section, I attempt to conceptualize RP from a more theoretical perspective to clarify a set of definitional attributes that can be applied to any particular act/performance of RP.

First is the mutuality principle. RP would not work and would in fact be pointless if individuals act alone or do not understand what RP is for and why it is necessary to practice RP. Individuals can certainly face and respond to the chaotic, fractured, and unpredictable world alone. However, the lonesome life is not only lonely but ineffective, psychologically exhausting and costly, likely resulting in negative consequences. Second is the intentionality principle. RP practice requires that one party of the relationship starts with a desire to cultivate the relationship, to maintain and to deepen it. Intentionality is intimately intertwined with another part of human social engagement: intersubjectivity. Intentionality and intersubjectivity is the interactive process on which human infants and all later human life depend for survival and well-being (Ammaniti & Gallese, 2014; Stern, 1985; Tomasello, 2014, 2018; Trevarthen, 1998). For example, early on, as the infant demonstrates a need for food or desire to engage the caregiver, she responds with food or attention. By

doing so, the first party, the infant, starts with the desire to engage the other, hence signaling intentionality. When the other receives the infants' initiation, the infant enters the caregiver's subjective state. As she responds, she, too enters the infant's subjective state (of intention/desire) and becomes part of the infant's mental and emotional world. In turn, the infant responds further with a smile, which leads the caregiver to smile back. This very natural self-other interaction is captured in the idea of intersubjectivity in psychology. No human grows up without intentionality and intersubjectivity. RP is designed to foster routinized intentionality in order to promote mutuality (intersubjectivity) among people.

Third is the performance principle. As discussed earlier, RP is not a mere thought or feeling, but an intentional and socially engaging act, practice. Performance here aims at turning the ordinary to the ritualistic. However, without the mutuality and intentionality principles, performance would be meaningless, just like knee-jerking. Fourth is the format principle. As discussed previously, format is not only a constant feature of RP but also that of all rites/ritual (Seligman et al., 2008). This principle generates order, dependability, and continuity of RP. The format principle is probably why present-day people in CHCs have relative ease accessing ancient Chinese RP practice as recorded in the *Analects*, the *Record of Ritual*, *Xunzi*, other texts that date back several thousand years.

Fifth is the esthetic principle. The first three principals would be superficial without esthetics. However, esthetics in RP is not a matter of touch-ups for appearance, impression management, or manipulation, but to move the interaction and relationship to a deeper level. The esthetic effect on the person is similar to listening to profound music, reading indelible poetry, or viewing stirring visual art. Jonathan Haidt (2003) similarly used "elevation" to refer to the positive effect of joint moral/virtuous and esthetic experiences. Yet, because RP is routinized in everyday living, people who practice RP experience its esthetics often. Sixth is the affect principle. In the section on positive self-conscious emotion, this principle is analyzed. Without such mutually penetrating and motivating affects, all of the above principles would be lifeless.

Last but most important is the moral/virtuous principle. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, RP is a super-virtue to be cultivated by oneself for the purpose of one's moral/virtuous development. Not only is there a body of millennia-long conventions for CHC members to observe (the first sense of ritual by Xunzi, 2016), but RP is a part of Confucian moral/virtuous self-cultivation expected of every child starting early in life all the way through the end. This moral/virtuous principle is not only about thoughts and feelings inside our bodies, but about each member actually turning thoughts and feelings into action. Such practice is not carried out once in a while for special occasions, but every day. It takes place first at home, caring for, interacting with, and honoring each other, such as a mother handing the first bowl of food to a child who then takes it to his grandma sitting at the most prominent seat at the table to express her filial piety. Then, the process extends to other social contexts such as neighbors (e.g., a lonely elderly man invited to join another family's New Year dinner to warm his heart), schools (e.g., students stand up to greet in unison their teacher when he or she enters the classroom to express their deference to authority),

and workplace (e.g., the owner of the company presents red envelopes—bonus—to the employees at the end of the year to thank them for their hard work). Without the moral/virtuous principle, all of the above six principles would be an empty game. As is clear, all seven principles form an organic whole and guide people in RP practice.

The ten functions and the seven principles discussed in this chapter can help generate research questions and hypotheses in both general and developmental psychology across many sociocultural contexts. For example, to study how RP accomplishes mutuality and reciprocity among children who just enter a new school, scholars might ask how RP can help children express their desire for friendship, make their overture to potential friends, and then maintain friendship. There is plenty of research on the spontaneously occurring process of friendship making and stability (Gottman, 1983; Poulin & Chan, 2010; Selman & Schultz, 1990), but not through RP. Another area to research would be to examine the effects of everyday RP and document if it helps to root desired moral traits more firmly into a person's character. To my knowledge, there is no empirical research on the special role RP plays in human lives. Such research can not only enable us to understand RP's role in this important developmental area, but also help many children gain crucial social skills that also foster their moral and virtuous development.

6 A Life with RP Worth Pursuing

Doing RP with a particular other in mind is like having a blank canvas for both. Each takes turns to contribute to the work of art. Both attending to a format, but also free to continue with openness and creativity, they co-create a work. It is initially more subjunctive and unreal, but in the end may feel very real because the affective effects on each other are biologically real (a bodily response) as well as psychologically felt real. No one is born with RP; one must learn how to do it, with the unending support of one's sociocultural world. However, this learning has no end to it; it is a lifelong task. Doing it well generates more positivity for oneself and others with whom the self builds relationships throughout life. This self-cultivation process of RP is not only morally motivating and spiritually uplifting, but it is also esthetically enriching. For this reason, ritual propriety is called by Confucians a beautiful virtue (美德). A life with ritual propriety well done is a life indeed very worth pursuing.

Acknowledgments I am grateful to David Wong for suggesting a paper by Jonathan Haidt and for possible empirical research on how ritual propriety in daily life may help children develop their stronger moral character.

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Wang Yang-Ming's Theory of Aesthetic Experience: Beauty in the Extension of Innate Knowledge and Its Implications for Moral Education

Zhuran You and Yingzi Hu

Abstract Wang Yang-Ming is widely known for his philosophical contributions to Neo-Confucianism with the conceptual frameworks such as the heart as li, the extension of innate knowledge, and the unity of knowing and acting, but rarely has his aesthetics been thoroughly examined and investigated for its moral cultivation purpose. In effect, Wang's theory of aesthetic experience is deeply grounded in his doctrine of extension of innate knowledge, which simultaneously generates the sense of beauty and facilitates moral understanding in the heart-mind. The chapter suggests that the characteristics in the extension of innate knowledge such as metaphysical connotations, individuality, combining reason and emotion, transcendental intuition, and sudden enlightenment give rise to an aesthetic experience serving the purpose of moral cultivation. The sense of beauty emerging in the three realms of moral development in Wang's philosophy also buttresses this claim with wide-ranging implications for today's moral education.

Keywords Wang Yang-Ming · Theory of aesthetic experience · The extension of innate knowledge · Moral education

Worldwide, modern philosophers tend to regard aesthetics as a branch of philosophy centering on the nature of beauty and taste. Many even hold the view of "art-for-art's sake," divorcing art from its traditional obligations, and as a result, it is rarely connected to social functions like promoting people's moral development. This, however, is not the case in Confucianism as aesthetics and ethics are inseparable in traditional Chinese culture (Lu, 2008; Mattice, 2013). There are a couple of reasons behind this philosophical penchant. Firstly, Confucianism is essentially a philosophy of moral cultivation based on the idea of "unity of heaven and man" (Li, 2005). The cosmological framework states that heaven possesses the highest moral good and that humans as a product of nature should actively recover the innate goodness endowed by heaven. In so doing, people become integrated with heaven and earth or nature

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_8

spiritually, which triggers not just a journey of moral perfection, but also an aesthetic experience. Next, Confucianism is a philosophy of life emphasizing people's moral development through living a life of principles and harmony. Thus, art activities in daily life such as archery, poetry, music, and dance "would have both a moral and an aesthetic meaning" (Gier, 2001). That's why Li Zhehou, a leading Chinese aesthetician, contended that the highest goodness resided in the realm of beauty in the most fundamental and broad sense (Li & Liu, 1999), which implies a unique approach of moral education through aesthetic experience.

This propensity is well illustrated by the philosophy of Neo-Confucianism in Song and Ming Dynasties represented by Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-Ming. Wang Yang-Ming in the School of Mind, in particular, had developed a complete theory of aesthetical experience with the concept of extension of innate knowledge (zhi liang zhi) aimed at facilitating people's moral development. He substantiated and enhanced the framework of "unity of heaven and man" by introducing the concepts of the heart and innate knowledge (Liang zhi). Based on the idea of "my heart as the universe" by Lu Jiuyuan, Wang proposed a set of interconnected conceptual frameworks with a logical progression: "the heart as the heavenly principle (li or tian li)," "innate knowledge as the substance of the heart," and "innate knowledge as the heavenly principle" (Wang, 1992), which placed innate knowledge as the substance of the universe. He further put forward the conceptual framework of "the extension of innate knowledge" as his doctrine of moral cultivation and an important concept in aesthetics. As innate knowledge has endowed morality with the transcendental implication of cosmology, the idea of the extension of innate heavenly principle, on the one hand, enriches the content of aesthetics, on the other hand, makes the process of moral development an aesthetic experience (Zou, 2002).

1 Aesthetic Experience in the Extension of Innate Knowledge

Wang Yang-Ming's theory of aesthetic experience is built upon the characteristics of innate knowledge. The concept of innate knowledge was developed from Mencius' conception of "good conscience," which is an endowed nature enabling people to know right from wrong without having to considerate it first. Wang further provided this natural capacity with cosmological and ontological significance, claiming that innate knowledge is the heavenly principle in the heart and the substance of the universe. Nonetheless, innate knowledge is usually blocked by people's own selfish lusts and bad influences in life such that it needs recovering through moral reflection and self-examination. To this end, Wang proposed a doctrine of moral cultivation, namely the extension of innate knowledge, a process that people endeavor to revive their good conscience by cleaning up the deceitful desires and outwardly applying the heavenly principle.

The two dimensions of extension of innate knowledge, internal understanding, and external application, occur integrally and simultaneously. The internal dimension tries to recover innate knowledge possessed in people's heart through meditating, removing obscurity, self-examining, and self-reflecting, and eventually acquires a profound understanding of the heavenly principle, whereas the external application is to put the moral principles into practice in real-life situations. This idea of moral education originated from Wang's objection toward the social tendency in his time that neglected practice in moral cultivation. Wang claimed that if one just deliberated but did not put those knowledge into practice, he would be overwhelmed when encountering tricky events in real life (Wang, 1992), which justified a combination of both. Moreover, the two dimensions are not separate or sequential actions but a simultaneous process. While the practice should be directed by one's understanding of innate knowledge, the feedback out of practice in turn further nourishes and strengthens his or her comprehension about innate knowledge, each reinforcing the other. Through unifying body and mind, knowing and doing, the process of extending innate knowledge encompasses both individual understanding of one's own mind and ethical deliberations about human relations, which helps to generate an experience of aesthetic appreciation that deepens people's moral understanding (You et al., 2008).

1.1 Key Characteristics in the Extension of Innate Knowledge

In brief, the extension of innate knowledge is a collection of mental activities including mind-righting, being sincere, inquiring, empathy, intuition, unity of knowing and acting, and even sudden enlightenment in the heart, which gives people a sense of beauty and joy out of moral development. Thus, innate knowledge is the substance of aesthetic experience in Wang's philosophy and that the extension of innate knowledge can be perceived as a process of moral perfection and aesthetic development organically integrated. Its ultimate purpose is to reach sagehood, namely the supreme spiritual and moral state experienced by sages. From a historical perspective, it was an important methodology of moral self-cultivation that had inspired Chinese people of many generations henceforth.

1.1.1 Metaphysical Connotations and Beauty

Metaphysical connotations are a key characteristic of innate knowledge that helps to unify good and beauty. Compared with prior Confucians, Wang Yang-Ming's philosophy of mind possesses more transcendental faculties, which broadens the implications of his theory. In fact, the most important contribution that Confucian scholars in Song and Ming dynasties had made is to construct or at least reinforce the metaphysical foundation of classical Confucianism. While philosophers in the school of principle designated the heavenly principle as the substance of the world, scholars like Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yang-Ming contended that the heart was the

ultimate source of the universe that embodied the supreme moral truth. For Wang, the heart, the heavenly principle, and innate knowledge were the same (Wang, 1992), which highlight the roles of each individual's subjectivity and sensitivity in their own moral cultivation.

These concepts were developed, at least partly, by introducing and revising the metaphysical frameworks of Taoism and Buddhism, which enriched and strengthened the originally weak metaphysical system in classical Confucianism. Wang Yang-Ming, for instance, incorporated the conceptual framework of the heart-mind and the methodology of sudden enlightenment from Buddhism into his philosophy. This effort had helped to integrate the practical connotations of ethics with the transcendental implications of aesthetics. The process of the extension of innate knowledge, accordingly, embodies the experience of moral development and the appreciation of beauty concurrently. Wang once stated that the substance of the heart was neither good nor bad; it was the arising of ideas that triggered the issues concerning evil or goodness (Wang, 1992). Thus, a return to the original state of the heart helps to transcend the practical functions of morality and introduces an aesthetic experience out of the perfection of moral character. In this sense, morality and aesthetics are the two sides of a coin in innate knowledge. The extension of innate knowledge thereby contains the possibility of experiencing both good and beauty.

For instance, a close look at Wang's ontological concept of innate knowledge reveals a strong influence from Chan Buddhism, which emphasizes the role of the heart-mind in retrieving one's own Buddha nature, oftentimes by means of sudden enlightenment. Wang replaced the religious pursuit of Buddha nature with the heavenly moral principle, which added ontological significance to Mencius' original concept of good conscience (innate knowledge). He tended to believe that moral self-cultivation was a process of mental effort trying to return to the original state of the heart-mind, thus, recovering innate knowledge in the heart with or without sudden enlightenment. The experience is not unlike what a Chan Master' cultivating the heart to recognize his own Dharma nature, a process often described metaphorically as re-shining a tarnished bronze mirror. By doing so, the extension of innate knowledge includes not just moral education implications of doing good and eradicating evils, but also a transcendental experience full of aesthetic bliss through understanding the intrinsic relationship between universe and human life.

In addition to metaphysical connotations, there are a few other characteristics in the extension of innate knowledge that have contributed to the moral-aesthetic integration. It features individuality in moral discernment and self-examination, emphasizes both reason and emotion in comprehending innate knowledge, and underlines transcendental intuition and sudden enlightenment for profound ethical understanding. The enlightenment of the moral truth or the recovery of innate knowledge is usually accomplished by a coordination between external judgment upon human-relation issues and inner moral self-reflection, generating a transcendental experience that embraces personal satisfaction and the universal truth of the world.

1.1.2 Beauty in Individuality

Firstly, in the extension of innate knowledge there exists a due nature of universality and individuality (Zou, 2002), which forms the psychological foundation for the unity of morals and aesthetics. The former dimension indicates one of the key characteristics of the heavenly principle, that is, it contains universal truth applying for all people in all places at all times. Thus, it echoes the belief of Confucian scholars in the school of principle, e.g., Chu Hsi and Chen Brothers, who underscored the role of the heavenly principle as the universal truth in people's moral development. However, different from Chu Hsi's sole emphasis on the universality of li, Wang Yang-Ming also highlighted individuality by discussing the ontological implications of the heart and the idea of one's own innate knowledge, which granted people leeway and autonomy in interpreting the connotations of the moral laws based on their specific situations. For Wang, it is the interplays and accord between universality and individuality in innate knowledge that have instilled life and vigor into the learning experience and generated an aesthetic experience serving the purpose of moral growth.

Individuality lends support to the development of aesthetic perception as it highlights subjectivity like self-motivation and emotion (Lu, 2008). Hence, innate knowledge or good conscience, saturated with personal feelings, is actually a complex ethical and psychological structure of human beings, in which reason and emotion are both contradictory and unified. Due to this cognitive-affective union, Wang's doctrine of innate knowledge can successfully bridge the rift and conciliates conflicts between universality and individuality in moral learning. While the universal nature defines moral principles, the latter allows people to have individualized understanding or judgment on real-life moral issues, accentuating people's autonomy, emotion, and initiatives. Since Wang's philosophy centered on the subject of moral education, this proclivity eases the tension of strict universal requirement and produces a sense of liberty in educational experience, which allows people to make moral progress through consciously identifying right and wrong, good and bad, beauty and ugliness, etc. The exercise of this due nature of the doctrine, therefore, reconciles the conflicts between seeking universal morality and considering the individualized scenarios, and in this way, it encourages innovations and subjectivity needed for aesthetic experience to arise.

1.1.3 Beauty in the Unity of Emotion and Reason

Aside from universality and individuality, there is a unity of emotion and reason in the extension of innate knowledge. As innate knowledge is the nature of human heart containing the heavenly principle, the extension of this mental structure inevitably invokes conflicts and fusion between reason and emotion, which too render the process of extension of innate knowledge a unique aesthetic experience. Unlike many prior Neo-Confucians who downplayed the role of individual feelings in moral cultivation, Wang held that innate knowledge intrinsically included not only moral

principles but also human emotions. In so doing, he had on the one hand brought the heavenly principle into the heart of people, and on the other hand, placed an emphasis upon adding the ingredient of affections into the recipe of moral learning (Yang, 2016). This stance in the extension of innate knowledge helps to eschew the sanctification and petrification of moral laws (Qian, 2002), lending support to the development of more human-based moral education methods in ancient China.

The heart-mind plays a crucial role in this unity because Wang contended that the heart or the will of sincerity controls and integrates people's feelings and li (yi tong zhi qing). The stance differed from the traditional predisposition of stressing li (moral principles based on reason) or the new wave of ideologies highlighting feelings and desires. On the one hand, Wang tended to believe that overemphasis on the universality of moral laws would suppress individual's initiatives in moral learning; on the other hand, he was cautious about the tendency of indulging in one's own desires and neglecting the significant role of the heavenly principle in directing moral development. Hence, while highlighting the importance of personal affections, Wang stressed the heart-mind's functions such as sublimating feelings and the attitude of sincerity in moral self-education as well. Such a standpoint helps to avoid the two extremes, namely moral rigidity or the trend of devaluing the universal significance of moral laws. The retrieval of innate knowledge in the heart, accordingly, had special implications for moral education as it connects both norms and affections. While the dimension of reason holds to the universal dimension of moral principles and ethical education, the dimension of emotion provides a certain degree of latitude, and by a union of both through the heart, the extension of innate knowledge presents an aesthetic experience concerning moral self-cultivation with interactions between initiatives and self-control.

1.1.4 Aesthetic Experience in Transcendental Intuition and Sudden Enlightenment

It is noteworthy that Wang's philosophy, with his emphasis on the function of the heart, stresses intuitive, and transcendental experience rather than the mental activities of analysis and cognition (Lu, 2008).This transcendental attribute in the concept of innate knowledge too helps yield an aesthetic experience conducive to moral education purpose. Unlike Chu Hsi's emphasis on reading and inquiring in seeking the moral truth, Wang stressed the importance of transcendental perception and intuitive thinking in recovering people's innate knowledge. The key is that innate knowledge or the heavenly principle represents the substance of the universe, therefore, transcendental intuition, instead of logics and reasoning, plays a major role in retrieving innate knowledge. It helps people to directly grasp the cosmological and ontological significance of the highest moral truth through fusing subjectivity and objectivity; the utilization of transcendental intuition itself generates a sense of beauty via directly experiencing the presence of life and the subtlety of the heart. In reaching the realm of the supreme good, moral agents would enjoy an aesthetic experience as the good is the utmost beauty in traditional Chinese culture. The extension

of innate knowledge, therefore, features an aesthetic experience seeking the highest good in people and the world.

The use of transcendental intuition is epitomized by sudden enlightenment. Sudden enlightenment is a methodology of spiritual cultivation borrowed from Chan Buddhism by Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yang-Ming for the purpose of moral education, which relies on people's intuition and insight in the heart-mind. In this approach, learners try to gain a qualitative leap in understanding with regard to perceiving the heavenly principle as the ultimate truth of the universe, which grants them a sense of beauty and a deep comprehension about morality blended seamlessly. Therefore, the process of extension of innate knowledge, with sudden enlightenment as one of its major methods, constitutes an aesthetic experience that aims at realizing the great moral enlightenment. In this manner, learners do not just grasp moral knowledge, but also acquire the absolute spiritual freedom with a transcendental bliss. The process is not unlikely Chan master's recognition of Buddha nature through instantaneous enlightenment with intuitive understanding and holistic thinking, only that the epiphany of religious truth is substituted by the enlightenment of moral truth in Wang's doctrine.

In short, the concept of innate knowledge with its ontological significance, has both moral implications and faculties transcending pure morality, which, in its highest status, manifests no distinctions between good and evil (Zou, 1998). As such, the extension of innate knowledge is less a logical analysis or inquisition with reason, but more a direct and intuitive understanding of moral issues with regard to the meaning of life and the ultimate truth of the world (Wang, 2006), which produces an aesthetic experience plenty of implications for moral education. It indicates a unique way of moral self-development that underscores instinct and holistic comprehension of morality by connecting people directly to their conscience in the heart as well as reflecting on moral issues in life. The implementation of this method is rich in its connotations, involving not only moral ideas, but also factors such as feelings, sense of beauty and joy, imagination, subjective spirit, bodily knowing, and concerns for society and the world. Here, the elements of moral development and aesthetic enjoyment are interpenetrated and intertwined. On the one hand, the experience of recovering innate knowledge constitutes the core characteristic in Wang's theory of aesthetic experience; on the one hand, such an aesthetic experience acts as a method of learning, an indicator of success, and one of the eventual goals of the endeavor of extension of innate knowledge, which in essence is a conscious construction of values and significances in the heart-mind.

2 Beauty in the Realms of Recovering Innate Knowledge

2.1 The Consummate Experience

To a certain sense, the purpose of the extension of innate knowledge is to internalize the heavenly principle into one's own heart-mind (Lu, 2009), which helps them reach a consummate experience by fusing different elements into oneness. First of all, it demands a congruence between moral development and aesthetic experience. As Wang's philosophy centers on people's moral development, even his aesthetics has worldly purpose such that it aims at helping people cultivate their own moral character (An, 1996; Yang, 2016). Therefore, the implications of extension of innate knowledge are not limited to ethics, but also aesthetics which originates from as well as transcends moral philosophy, or, we should argue that his philosophy embraces a moral aesthetics in essence. Further, Wang's theory involves discussions of ontology, aesthetics, ethical teaching, the unity of knowing and acting, and all of these components are arguably devoted to the purpose of moral development. Such a great fusion gives rise to a consummate experience: by inquiring into one's own moral heart while appreciating the splendor of the world, he or she can obtain an experience that incorporates beauty, grace, sense of righteousness, autonomy, joy out of moral development, etc. This experience is indicative of a superlative state of spiritual freedom that Wang would call it the realm of sages, that is, the highest spiritual realm where one's innate knowledge has been fully recovered.

2.2 Beauty in the Three Realms of Moral Development

Like many prior Confucians, the ultimate purpose of Wang Yang-Ming's philosophy is to help people to cultivate his or her virtues so as to become a sage. The so-called sage, noted for supreme moral character, is a virtuous and wise paragon who had fully recovered his innate knowledge. Sagehood, accordingly, is the supreme moral state uniting individual and group, generality and particularity, morality and aesthetics such that a person is integrated with heaven and earth spiritually. However, this sagehood cannot be reached at a single stroke. It takes time and efforts for people to progress from lower level of moral realms to higher level ones. Hence, discussing the characteristics of each realm and how to reach the realm of sages manifest a process of moral perfection in Wang's doctrine of extension of innate knowledge.

The word of realm (jìng jiè) was originally a religious term from Buddhism. It denoted a subjective mental status with different levels of understanding regarding transcendental awareness and spiritual cultivation. The idea of realm is widely utilized in Chinese culture, indicating a positive and stable spiritual status and capacity in religious deliberation, moral understanding from self-cultivation, and artistic appreciation. Thus, it connotes not just a stage of moral development but also a kingdom of beauty. The concept of realm allows each individual to judge the quality

of self-cultivation with the aesthetic experience as a criterion. Put differently, if you sense an aesthetic experience in the heart it is likely you have made great moral progress. In the highest realm, people would transcend the limitation of personal considerations and mundane chores, entering the spiritual world of freedom. As this realm features a sublime experience of the truth of the universe, it cannot be described by words but only be comprehended through intuition and transcendental perception, leading to the ultimate sense of beauty and joy.

The introduction of the term "realm" into Chinese philosophy was accomplished by Neo-Confucians in the Song and Ming Dynasties, who tried to philosophize and strengthen Confucian values and moral cultivation by providing them with metaphysical underpinnings (Wang, 2006). Confucian scholars such as Wang Yang-Ming believed that the realm of beauty in fact is the highest realm of spiritual life of goodness or the realm of sages. Following Confucian traditions, he tended to categorize the course of moral self-cultivation into three realms, namely the realm of sincerity, the realm of benevolence, and the realm of bliss ranked from low to high levels. These realms denote an integral experience impregnated with moral implications and aesthetic appreciation, coinciding with the process of extension of innate knowledge and exhibiting a simple and effective way to reach sagehood.

The realm of sincerity represents an experience of being honest and authentic to one's own original heart. While advocating faithfulness toward moral principles, it places emphasis on cultivating a concomitant feeling to make it a sincere state of mind. The character is so important for moral development that Wang even called sincerity the substance of the heart or it is innate knowledge per se (Wang, 1992) In this logic, "sincerity" is also the substance of the universe as he held the heart as the substance of the universe. Therefore, being sincere generates an experience that includes not only moral growth, but also idealistic and aesthetic involvement for better life. That is why Wang contended that "being good is not an endeavor seeking outside, but to seek inwardly within one's own heart" (Wang, 1992, p. 925) as sincerity is the premise of any meaningful moral improvement.

One way to reach the realm of sincerity is to observe the doctrine of unifying knowing and acting. This union is a good demonstration of being sincere because a person is practicing what he or she believes. It also reflects Wang's thought that one's moral character should be developed and honed by applying moral principles in solving the problems in real-life situations, the feedback of which in turn triggers further moral reflection in the heart. What's more, it helps to eschew the hypocrisy that one claims to hold moral virtues but his behavior does not conform to them. In so doing, people can remove the shadows or stains that have covered up his innate knowledge, gaining intrinsic understanding about the heavenly principle while enjoying a sense of beauty as a result of remaining true to one's own heart.

The realm of benevolence is a moral state of being good and kind to others. To reach the realm of benevolence, people need to distinguish good from evil, and consciously promote good and eliminate evil. For this aim, people's self-cultivation should include not only moral self-disciplining or the understanding and practice of the principle of benevolence, but also the effort of expanding his or her heart to incorporate the world as Wang claimed that a person of benevolence should integrate all things between

heaven and earth such that he or she would view people all under heaven as a family, and all Chinese people as one person (Wang, 1992). By this means, the implication of benevolence has been extended from a norm dealing with daily human relations to a fundamental principle of perceiving/interacting with the world. The expansion of the connotations of benevolence and the vision of the heart, accordingly, would arouse a sense of grandeur and sublime that fuels people's determination and motivation for their own moral development.

For Wang, the realm of bliss depicted a culminated spiritual stage when innate knowledge had been fully recovered. It is a natural state of mind that has transcended morality in the realm of sincerity and the realm of benevolence so that it no longer centers on distinguishing good and evil, authenticity, and inauthenticity, but is characterized by an experience of liberty and happiness in the heart. In this realm, innate knowledge, sagehood, and bliss are equivalents (Yang, 2016), and the noble sense of morality and joy from beauty have reached a consensus in the consummate experience. Thus, people, through revealing the original nature, can feel the bliss because he does not have to be self-disciplined or make efforts to be good, rather this person enjoys the spiritual freedom in whatever he does on the grounds that his behaviors conform to the demand of morality or norms naturally. As a result, the person feels happiness by achieving the unification of form and content and enjoys an aesthetic experience out of fulfillment and satisfaction toward moral impeccability.

Referring its relation to innate knowledge, Wang Yang-Ming deemed that "bliss is the substance of the heart. As the heart of people of benevolence has integrated with heaven and earth, he would feel the real joy and happiness… hence innate knowledge is the substance of bliss" (Wang, 1992, p.194). To be more specific, the experience of bliss is intrinsically out of doing good. It is through continuous moral self-perfection that one eventually achieves the consummation of his or her spirit and the serenity of the heart. Wang further explicated that "while a small man find happiness in satisfying his desires and lusts, a supreme man enjoys the attainment of Tao" (Wang, 1992, p.925), or put differently, the happiness comes from the successful extension of one's innate knowledge. This is the utmost, the most beautiful and the supreme good experience for a person as he enjoys the sublime happiness by eventually recovering his sacred nature in the heart, which is different from those in the realm of sincerity or benevolence who need to take efforts to sense the joy (Huang, 2010; Pan, 2005). In addition, the experience of bliss, as modern scholars conclude from Wang's works, could be further categorized into the joy of human relations, the joy of self-achievement in fulfilling social responsibility, the joy of modesty in moral development, and the joy of loving the beauty of natural landscape, which further enrich the content of aesthetic experience and bolster the claim that the realm of bliss brings people a supreme experience contributing to a moral and aesthetic development.

To conclude, the route of reaching the realms of sincerity, benevolence, and bliss in effect constitutes the process of extension of innate knowledge, which, at its acme, is an experience full of implications for moral education and aesthetic appreciation. Albeit the three realms approximately belong to three different levels, they should not be regarded as being isolated or completely independent from each other. Even

if the first two realms seem to be devoted to people's moral development, they as a matter of fact contain the sense of joy too, that is, people would experience beauty and happiness when they have fully achieved sincerity and benevolence. And when this happens, their experience begins to shift to the realm of bliss. The successful development of the characters of sincerity and benevolence, thereby, are prerequisites for people to access the realm of bliss. In this sense, the realm of bliss might not be an entirely independent state of mind, but an aesthetic experience that can be incorporated into the realms of sincerity and benevolence.

It is worth reiterating that the realm of bliss marks the ultimate destination of Wang's doctrine of extension of innate knowledge. When one's innate knowledge is fully recovered, he or she would experience spiritual pleasure and freedom by integrating heaven and man, human spirit, and the spirit of the universe. The realm is epitomized by Confucius' adage that since the age of 70, he had been able to do whatever he intended freely without breaking the rules (Chu, 1983). Although moral cultivation is not emphasized in the realm, that is, just because the person has already reached the highest level of his moral development characterized by the aesthetic experience of joy. In this stage, no labors or pains are needed for a person to become moral. Virtue is just a natural part of the experience of spiritual liberation and delight.

3 Implications for Promoting Today's Moral Education

In the main body of this paper, we have discussed Wang Yang-Ming's theory of aesthetic experience which is grounded in his doctrine of extension of innate knowledge, and addressed the theory's implications for moral cultivation. What's below we will further discuss a few important takeaways drawn from the theory that can contribute to today's moral education.

First of all, aesthetic experience and the experience of moral development are integral in Wang's extension of innate knowledge, which gives rise to the idea of using aesthetic experience for the purpose of promoting moral education. In this sense, daily art activities like singing, dancing, painting, watching operas, poetry writing, and field-tripping can help people to develop morally and aesthetically. Mindful that these artistic activities should be properly designed so that the experience can convey contents and values for moral education needs. This congruency between beauty and morality will turn daily life into an aesthetic experience contributing to people's moral growth by osmosis.

The second lesson we draw from above, in other theories as well, is that the real and most profound moral development should be based on the experience from one's own heart or conscience (innate knowledge). Those moral education activities or lectures on moral knowledge are basically ineffective if they do not touch the heart. The significances of highlighting conscience or the heart-mind in the effort of moral education are as follows: it emphasizes the role of individuality that can enhance people's self-awareness and initiatives in moral learning. Referring to ethical

evaluation and judgment, individuality from one's heart helps to avoid rigidity and inflexibility in employing moral norms and prepare people for adaptation, innovation, and flexibility needed for examining complex moral issues and appraising muddy and diversified situations. What's more, good conscience encompasses both reason and emotion that can promote considerateness. Coupled with reason, moral feelings like sympathy and empathy allow people to think in the shoe of others, triggering moral imagination and reflections. That being said, the involvement of individuality and emotions makes the process of moral education an aesthetic experience, which helps people understand moral principles as living knowledge rather than absolute and callous codes.

Next, the idea of intuitive enlightenment sheds light on the possible innovation of contemporary moral education. One problem of today's moral teaching is that it pays too much attention to the use of reasoning and cognition but ignores intuitive and direct understanding or enlightenment from one's own heart. People's moral development, in close association with his or her nature, should not completely rely on logical analysis and rational inference. The intuition in the heart too can help each individual to understand what is right from wrong and prompt them to behave in a moral way. This old method of self-cultivation, widely used in seeking the religious truth in Buddhism and moral truth in Confucianism, can be employed for promoting moral education today as people could be enlightened by holding conversation directly with their innate good conscience and reflecting upon moral issues. The beauty out of the moral intuition in the heart can contribute to a qualitative leap of people's understanding and expedite the process of moral growth without having to resort to didactic instruction and value inculcation.

Last but not least, the sense of delight from the extension of innate knowledge also gives insight into today's moral education: moral education should not merely evoke passive emotions like regrets, confession, and agony, it needs to bring about more positive feelings like grandeur, fulfillment, and happiness as well, which give people incentives for further learning. To this end, teachers should encourage or remind students to experience true happiness and delight out of doing good deeds like helping others or satisfaction upon correcting wrong behaviors. In addition, the idea of unity of knowing and acting also enhances people's understanding and authenticity about morals, which in turn breed the sense of fulfillment and confidence to life. All in all, the reward is bountiful as it brings an aesthetic experience impregnated with the peace of mind, serenity, joy, and self-satisfaction to people, who would be inspired to continuously advance their moral self-cultivation. In this sense, Wang's theory of aesthetic experience, developed to facilitate the process of moral cultivation, can bring insight into the present moral education, which oftentimes is stagnant due to lack of motivations and inspirations.

The chapter is funded by Zhejiang Provincial project of Philosophy and Social Sciences (19NDJC123YB) "The Transformation and Development of Philosophy of Chinese Moral Education: Contributions of Zhejiang Thinkers".

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Cultivating an Inclusive Individuality: Critical Reflections on the Idea of Quality Education in Contemporary China

Huajun Zhang

Abstract Quality education reform in China gives high importance to developing the individual's full potential of individuality. However, the education system is dominated by a kind of exclusive competitiveness in which high stakes examinations shape the learning process. This paper seeks to bring a philosophical perspective regarding the disjunction between the intent of reform and the reality of an exam-oriented system by proposing a conception of inclusive individuality. I argue that the conception of inclusive individuality pays particular attention to the inner strength of every unique student and is crucial to realizing the individual's full potential. The ideas of three philosophers, John Dewey, Liang Shuming, and Albert Camus, are drawn upon in formulating this conception of inclusive individuality. At the practical level, the paper suggests the use of narrative approach as a way of developing students' inner strength to bring their lives into the classroom and empowering them to interact with the formal curriculum and develop their own inclusive individuality.

Keywords Quality education · Inclusive individuality · Inner strength · Narrative

1 Introduction

China had a long history on the practice of self-cultivation (*xiushen*, 修身), especially in the Confucian tradition. Confucius once said in *Analect*: "In ancient times, men learned with a view to their own improvement. Nowadays, men learn with a view to the approbation of others." (古之学者为己, 今之学者为人). This idea of self-cultivation was highlighted by Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) in Song Dynasty and further developed by Wang Yangming (王阳明, 1472–1529) in Ming Dynasty with

This chapter is a revised version of a published article "Cultivating an Inclusive Individuality: Critical Reflections on the Idea of Quality Education in Contemporary China," *Frontiers of Education in China*, 2010, 5(2): 222–237.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_9

his philosophy of *liangzhi* (良知之学). However, this tradition of self-cultivation was interrupted in the modern transition of Chinese education. China borrowed the educational systems mainly from the West to establish the modern education system. Obtaining knowledge became the core aim of the educational practice, instead of cultivating good persons (*junzi*, 君子).

In the recent decades, the critique of China's modern education gradually focused on the critique of exam-oriented education (*yingshi*, 应试) and a new idea of education called quality education (*suzhi*, 素质教育) was proposed to initiate the broad spread educational reform. Could it be considered as an opportunity to revival the traditional of self-cultivation?

1.1 Background of Quality Education Reform in China Since the 1990s

China began to restore its education system after the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in 1978. Education has again become a right that is open to everybody rather than an arena for class struggle and the elimination of class enemies. Examinations are seen as a fair mechanism to select qualified students to move up within the system. Quality education (*suzhi,* 素质教育) was firstly mentioned in the government document *Outline of Chinese Education Reform and Development*, put forward in 1993 and later an official document with the title *The Decision to Continue the Education Reform and Implement Quality Education,* promulgated in 1999, in connection with the need for an education that can nurture citizens' all-round quality. The term "quality education" encompasses a range of educational ideals, which might be summed up as a more holistic style of education for an all-round person (Dello-Iacovo, 2009). In another important government document from Ministry of Education (2001), *Outline of the Reform in Basic Education Curriculum*, it was clearly stated that students' diverse individualities and needs should be respected and students' full potential should be developed. This vision of quality education is well received in schools since it is widely recognized that the dominant exam-oriented education seriously limits students' learning motivation and thus limits students' chances for the development of potential individuality. This exam-oriented education has resulted in a situation where most educational activities are designed to meet the requirements of standardized exams rather than the learning needs of students. Quality education reform is thus a call to reform teaching and learning practices, methods of evaluation, and the content of the curriculum in ways that it will encourage students to become interested in creative study and independent research. The boundaries among different subject areas are broken down and students are expected to acquire knowledge in a comprehensive way.

1.2 Challenge of Quality Education Reform in China

Though the ideal of quality education is widely accepted and applauded in China, the practice faces resistance in schools. There is a saying about the practice of quality education which goes like this: "It is said to be important, but is secondary in reality and is put aside when busy" (Pang, 2004, p. 3). In fact, exam-oriented education dominates practice in most schools even though it is criticized for ignoring students' diversity and restricting students' creativity. Many external social factors lead to this situation. Exam scores are still almost the sole way to gain a place in universities, and they determine whether one will enter top-level national universities or less prestigious local universities. This is related, in turn, to the intense competition for jobs, unequal development between rural and urban areas, and a widely used quota system for recruiting personnel, all of which cause people to favor exam-oriented education as the only practical choice (Du & Wu, 2001).

A consequence of this exam-oriented education, which locates students' attention to external goals, is students' incapability to plan their own lives. Students do not dare to challenge the designated track and expand their own vision for the future beyond its parameters. They fear of being marginalized by the system and thus being failed to take on the most important lesson: learning for the cultivation of the self. Even though the education system may produce competent engineers, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals, it cannot cultivate vibrant and creative lives. If there is no attention given to the inner landscape of students' minds, education is only a tool for external purposes and goals. It cannot become its own purpose, in the way Dewey envisaged in his influential text, *Democracy and Education* (Dewey, 1944).

1.3 Development of an Inclusive Individuality as a Way Forward

To respond to the reality of unsuccessful practice of quality education and the domination of the practice of exam-oriented education, I suggest that we need to further clarify the meaning of individuality, which quality education indicates. When individuals are motivated solely by the external purpose of surpassing others in a designed track, they cannot realize their own vision for life and thus cannot experience intrinsic motivation to develop their potential. Personal growth needs to identify the boundary of the self and expand that boundary to reach a richer individuality. Individual thus needs to open mind and heart to an uncertain path rather than follow the designated route and compete for identified resources, in the way the current exam-oriented education practice suggests. This point is supported by my reflection on three philosophers' ideas. Their thinking has helped me to develop the conception of "inclusive individuality" as a way of overcoming the disjuncture between the aims of quality education and the realities of the exam-oriented education system.

In the main body of this chapter, I will first address the ideas of John Dewey (1859–1952), then the Chinese Confucian scholar Liang Shuming (1893–1988), and finally the French writer Albert Camus (1913–1960) as philosophical resources for the proposed concept of inclusive individuality. I will argue further that the legitimacy given to exclusive competitiveness in contemporary China is a barrier to the implementation of quality education. To release the full potential of the individual as called for by the quality education reform, it is crucial to create space for students to develop their own interests and identify their own pathways to success. The development of inclusive individuality is suggested as a way to help students create life space of their own. Finally, learning to narrate life stories is recommended as a practice that will nurture inclusive individuality for students.

2 Philosophical Resources for the Idea of "Inclusive Individuality"

As suggested above, this paper proposes a new conception of individuality as a response to the problem of competition and the neglect of the development of individuality in Chinese educational practice. This new conception of inclusive individuality is developed through my reading of three philosophers' ideas. John Dewey's philosophical idea of genuine interest as core to the sense of "self" is important in this discussion. Developing one's genuine interest happens through identifying problems in experience, opening one's self to uncertainties, building new connection with others, and including others as part of the self. However, the twentieth-century Confucian scholar, Liang Shuming, suggested that identifying problems in one's experience was not sufficient to develop one's self, especially in the context of radical social change. There is a further need to develop the inner power of self-enlightenment as something relatively stable that can sustain continuity in the various ruptures of human experience. Albert Camus' story of Sisyphus makes possible a deeper exploration of Liang's idea of self-enlightenment. It is the inner power to reach a deep sense of one's own mission in the world and thus sustain the continuity of the self in face of radical social change that is beyond the individual's control. In the following sections, I will unfold these ideas of Dewey, Liang, and Camus one after the other.

2.1 John Dewey: Genuine Interest as a Sense of the Self

Dewey was an important figure in the development of Chinese modern education. His two-year visit to China from 1919 to 1921 deeply influenced the establishment of the new education system in China in that early modern period. Such famous disciples as Tao Xingzhi (1891–1946) and Hu Shi (1891–1962) continued practicing his philosophy in their own ways. Even though Dewey was harshly criticized and

completely rejected since 1950s until the end of the Cultural Revolution, his ideas have been revived with enthusiasm in the current quality education reform movement and his book *Democracy and Education* became a must-read for students majored in education. The official documents on the current quality education reform are replete with such phrases as "learning by doing," "education as a way of esthetic living," and "respecting students' diversity," with their obvious Dewey's flavor (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China & State Council, 1993; Ministry of Education, 2001). Yet there is still a question mark around the way teachers and administrators interpret these terms. It is thus necessary to discuss Dewey's philosophy of education by clarifying a key concept in his philosophy, interest. A central point in Dewey's interpretation is genuine interest as a sense of the self (Dewey, 1944).

Dewey (1944, p. 126) claimed that interest meant that "self and world are engaged with each other in a developing situation." In this sentence, Dewey corrected two contrasting views on interest. First, interest does not arise from an isolated mind. It cannot be solely imagined from the inner mind and then arouse enthusiasm toward an object. On the other hand, it is not solely from somewhere in the external world. It cannot only be encouraged by others or stimulated by rewards from outside. Rather it has to be developed through activities that the individual is engaged in. It is not the means but the consequence of the ongoing activity. From what we are doing, we discover how our individuality is constituted. In this sense, interest is not a matter of having, but a matter of being: It is a sense of the self.

When interest is about the self not just a means for the self, it becomes part of an ongoing activity, rather than something added from outside. When it is a part of the change process, it opens one up to new possibilities in the present situation rather than sticking to already-fixed interests from past experience. Its openness to the new situation helps one to gain broader perspectives on the ongoing situation and thus recognize more alternatives and create connections between the past and ongoing experience. If the interest does not adjust with the changing situation, it will be difficult to find new connections. Without the sense of connection, not to say engagement, the interest will disappear before long. Also, the sense of the self will get lost in the changing situation.

On the other hand, opening to new possibilities also means willingness to face uncertainties and unexpected challenges all the time. Interest, when it closes the gap between "I" and the "world," brings unique happiness, which only "I" can feel, but also brings suffering or pain due to uncertainties and challenges. It is this unique feeling of happiness and pain that gives significance to the rich meaning of individuality. It constitutes self-identity, which is about who I am and what I want to be in this world. In Dewey's (1984b, p.101) words, "it alone justifies struggle in creative activity and gives opportunity for the emergence of the genuinely new."

If the individual is always open to the ongoing and changing situation, s/he needs to respond to her/his true feeling regarding the new situation. This true feeling is an "impelling desire of his own" (Dewey, 1984a, p. 57). The interest is aroused from this impelling desire and finds new connections between the already-made self and

the new situation. This old self then opens itself to new transformation when the new connection is found.

Some may argue that if we let students develop their own interests, they may give up hard work. It is crucial to distinguish the word "interest" in daily use and the idea of genuine interest that Dewey puts forward. When the individual identifies some particular problem from her/his own life experience, s/he is willing to be engaged with the problem (the identified subject) with all the intelligence and emotion that can be mustered, no matter how difficult the problem is. The individual is willing to face difficulty and even failure when s/he is motivated by a genuine interest to solve the problem s/he identifies. It is only when emotion and intelligence are integrated in the experience of full engagement with the subject that the individual can find the meaning of her/his interest and life itself becomes more meaningful for the individual as well. This subject is transformed from something external to being a part of the developing self. Individuality is also developed when genuine interests are identified. Indeed, the process of learning is about including the unknown/unfamiliar others into the inclusive self. Dewey's idea of genuine interest as a sense of the self provides an insight in highlighting the characteristics of inclusiveness of the self.

2.2 Liang Shuming: The Inner Power of Self-Enlightenment in the Context of Radical Social Change

Liang Shuming was a self-educated Chinese scholar who established his reputation as a modern Confucianist with his book *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies,* published in 1921, in the midst of struggles in China with the social challenges of modernization. Liang came of age intellectually in this turbulent period in Chinese history when the nation seemed to be caught in a no-man's-land between a dying socio-political tradition and a future yet to be born. This crisis of continuity at both the existential and cultural levels—essentially an inability to frame coherent purposes from past and present experience—focused Liang's philosophical reflection on the search for the individual and social resources necessary to survive in the dramatic social ruptures. That inquiry, motivated by his early experience of rapid and profound social change, led him to revive Confucianism in his own way.

What resources did Liang found in his reading of Confucianism, alongside his encounter with Dewey's pragmatism[1] that provided him energy to reach equilibrium in the social turbulence of twentieth century China? With his unique experience living in the radically changing social context, Liang explored a question which Dewey did not discuss much: How can the individual sustain a consistent self when facing a society with radical change? In Liang's view, we need to seek the unchanged self in the changing environment. Even though life is changing every minute, the individual

[1] Liang widely read many Western philosophers' works, including Dewey's. Liang (1990) once wrote a review on Dewey's philosophy of education called "The fundamental thoughts of John Dewey's philosophy of education."

should not be trapped in the change but should be able to develop a relatively stable vision to cope with this change. In other words, individuals do not only need to learn about their genuine interest and find solutions for the identified problems, but they also need to learn how to discover the relatively stable self when opening up to unknown challenges. But Liang is not an essentialist.

In Liang's (2000, p. 217) view, the emergence of individuality from its immersion in the environment and the realization of the strength of human potential requires "self-enlightenment" (*zijue*, 自觉). This self-enlightenment emerges from the development of the "inner self," a term I translated from the original Chinese words Liang used, which are *shenxin* (深心) or "deep heart." I use the idea of "inner self" to capture Liang's description of the stable element of the self. Inner self is like the deep water at the bottom of the river. It is different from the essentialist perspective of the self. In essentialism, the self is pre-made and has a fixed nature. It is independent of the external environment and does not change when the environment changes. In Liang's view, the self is always open to change but intensively interacts with the environment, a view similar to Dewey's. The "inner self" is the true feeling you have in your heart and the authentic thoughts you have in your mind. It is the intrinsic need when the mind is cleared from external desires and temptations.

The idea of "inner self" comes from an understanding of the predicament of life everyone may experience, the feeling of silent despair in life. When feeling this despair in life, the need to get out of it comes to the fore. This need is not an external imposition but a true feeling from inside. From one's life experience, the individual develops an inner self which has a strong will to get through the predicament of life and thus realize freedom from the bond of social conventions and the various difficult conditions encountered in life. In Liang's view, this inner self develops from an interactive experience with the world, but it is more than that. Because the inner self is developed through the despair the individual encounters in life, it is more stable and has remarkable energy to deal with problems from the outside. It is the source to build one's inner strength. For Liang, it is possible to cultivate the self through social interaction, but we also need to go beyond being a social organism and act with deep motivation from inside. This inner self is less influenced by the changing environment and more influenced by self-reflection on one's condition of being in this world.

There is no guarantee that individuals can get an answer in the despair they feel over questions like "Who am I? Who do I want to be? How can I lead a life of my own?" But it is their decision, an exercise of their strong will, to place themselves in uncertainty. It is this decision that leads them into the landscape of learning. It is this despair which leads individuals to seek an answer. Individuals will not be easily distracted by various changes in the environment but see a consistent theme in their journey. This consistency is not some defined meaning which is already clear. This consistency is about the unique question in their own life that individuals try to find an answer to. This despair also connects the individual with others because they may have different questions about their lives but they all share sympathy and respect for life in general if they feel this despair. The inner self is this consistent

sense of self-questioning for a unique life which is relatively stable for individual development in the changing social environment.

The strength of the inner self is an impelling force stirring the feeling and emotion of the individual to respond. "Self-enlightenment" is the word Liang used to describe this energy, the feeling from deep in the heart. Self-enlightenment is the status of this harmony that individuals have with their surroundings when they become part of objects and objects become part of the self. There is no other purpose beyond that of harmonizing the relationship between the self and objects. The emergence of self-enlightenment starts from concrete situations but moves beyond concrete situations in order to reach a more stable and deeper self. In the following paragraphs, I will use the story of Sisyphus in Albert Camus' essay to further discuss the idea of self-enlightenment that Liang proposed.

2.3 Albert Camus: The Myth of Sisyphus

The notion of the relatively stable self in Liang's work does not imply an essentialist view that there is a fixed core in the self. Instead, it is based on the deep understanding of the predicament of life which goes beyond one's uniqueness and sees the nature of human beings that everybody shares. The French writer Camus (1955) provides a good example of this view in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. I have invited Camus into this discussion of the conception of individuality because Camus' understanding of the individual life helps me to explain Liang's idea of the strength of self-enlightenment to sustain one's self in conditions of radical social change where the individual seems powerless.

In Camus' description, Sisyphus knows that the stone in his hand will fall down when he pushes it to the peak of the mountain. What Sisyphus is doing—pushing the stone forward to the peak of the mountain—is a useless task, if he considers his goal is to push the stone to the peak. However, Sisyphus never gives up his task. This story does not tell us that Sisyphus is just a fool or the individual needs to simply accept the fate which is imposed by an external power out of the individual's control. Instead, we can understand Sisyphus as a common person—but also his own hero—who sees the predicament of life that everyone needs to face, a life that is full of uncertainties and conditions beyond one's control. However, he never gives up his life mission, which is not a goal defined by other people but the faith to engage in his own life. He does not consider his work meaningless just because the stone will fall down anyway.

The meaning of Sisyphus' life is not defined by the external conditions or consequences but by the life he leads. This simple action of pulling the stone to the peak becomes meaningful when Sisyphus sees the predicament of life everybody faces—that is, we need to face endless uncertainties, and explore all the possibilities they may create in the present life. His faith in life is not bestowed by the external conditions and the knowledge that the stone will inevitably fall down, but it is supported by his devoted effort at the present moment of his life.

Sisyphus' story is a great metaphor about reaching equilibrium of life in a seemingly hopeless situation. He sees a common human destiny: As human beings, we need to face endless failure and uncertainties. When Sisyphus sees a common situation that "I" and "others" all need to face, he reaches connection with unknown others in his journey. The continuous effort Sisyphus makes in an endless hopelessness reflects Liang's idea of the possibility of reaching a relatively stable inner self in a radically changing environment. When individuals see the predicament and actively explore possibilities to create an alternative route, they reach self-enlightenment and experience an inner authority in their own life. In Camus' (1955, p. 123) words, "This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

Again, the story of Sisyphus does not imply that everybody simply has the same fate—death. Such an idea would lead to nihilism and education would become meaningless. Instead, Camus and Liang both suggest that every unique individual needs to place herself/himself in a broad universe rather than just focus on her/his own personal destiny. Then, the individual can develop the deep sense of problems s/he needs to face. This is not solely the problem of responding to the changing external situation, but the more fundamental problem of how the individual is to live in a world where no external master exists and it is essential to connect with unknown others, as Sisyphus does.

3 A Conception of an Inclusive Individuality for Quality Education

From the discussion of Dewey, Liang, and Camus in the proceeding section, we can clearly see that a relationship between the individual and others is not necessarily exclusive. Here, the unknowns are not only including other people, but also including anything which the individual feels to be alien—knowledge, environment, emotion, as well as the unknown self. To develop a rich individuality, the individual has to open the self to others by including others into the self, as Dewey suggests. This inclusiveness does not obliterate the value of uniqueness in individuality. Uniqueness is the foundation of inclusiveness because the individual develops her/his genuine interest based on their unique life experience and unique understanding of the existent self. Moreover, the inclusiveness of the individuality enriches the meaning of one's uniqueness (Zhang, 2013). Dewey (2005) once used the word "detachment" to describe one's emotional status when engaged with a genuine interest. When the individual has a genuine interest in something, all her/his attention is on that object. S/he puts away the self and is in a selfless situation. However, this selflessness actually creates the new meaning of the self. It enriches the self by subordinating it to others.

Liang's conception of self-enlightenment suggests a new perspective on an inclusive individuality. Liang points out that the individual needs to gain the inner power of self-enlightenment in a radically changing society in order to reach the stable self. The genuine problem the individual identifies is not just from the experience of interacting with the environment. It is from one's deep reflection on the world one lives in. This reflection must go beyond the limitation of one's unique situation and see the common connection with others which may or may not be directly connected with one's immediate living. The development of self-enlightenment leads the individual to figure out her/his position and develop a mission to realize the self, no matter how difficult and how different the environment is. I suggest that it is inclusive because the development of self-enlightenment requires the individual to engage in deep reflection of the predicament of life and find meaningful connection with the broader universe the individual is in. Otherwise, self-enlightenment is impossible and the individual will fall into the trap of living in a world where everything is calculated on the basis of gain and loss according to one's self-centered goals.

Camus' metaphor of Sisyphus provides a great example of Liang's conception of self-enlightenment. Camus called Sisyphus happy because Sisyphus leads his own life which is not directed by external forces. The goal of his life is not to push the stone to the peak of the mountain. That is the goal that external authorities have set up for him. As Camus (1955, p.123) said, "Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world." Sisyphus creates the meaning of his life in his own world. But this world of his own does not mean he closes the connection with the world outside. It is only when he sees his destiny in a universe shared with everybody that he can transform the punishment imposed by external authorities into a meaningful life of his own.

Based on the discussion of Dewey's conception of genuine interest, Liang's idea of self-enlightenment and Camus' description of Sisyphus as his own hero, I am proposing the conception of inclusive individuality. I am suggesting that the individual does not only need to understand the existent self but also to open the self to unknown others for a more enriched self. By creatively including others into part of the developing self, the individual gains the uniqueness and intrinsic authority of the self (Zhang, 2013). It is a process of true learning that I see as a way of resolving the problem of the individual losing the vision of the self in the prevalent atmosphere of exclusive competitiveness. This conception of inclusive individuality also responds to the call of the quality education reform movement for the development of the individual's full potential. By understanding their own mission in life, individuals gain their own vision of learning and are motivated to try their best to expand the boundary of the existent self and reach toward a more enriched self. It is also a process of releasing one's potential in ways that are directed by one's own vision.

The conception of inclusive individuality to respond to the challenge of the quality education reform effort sets a very high expectation for both teachers and students because we cannot just passively follow external standards such as examinations, but have to reflect deeply on our own learning and teaching experience as part of our life experience. Also, we need to bring that reflection into action to challenge the fixed daily routines and sensitively respond to problems arising in the changing

environment in and outside of schools. In other words, teachers and students need to be willing to take on the challenge of an unknown landscape of learning and explore their genuine interests in this unknown landscape.

On the other side, encouraging students to learn about themselves never means letting students do whatever they want to do or giving up systematic and disciplined study. Instead, this new idea of learning requires teachers not only to gain teaching skills but also to be fully engaged in their own lives. They must see teaching as part of their daily life rather than as just a job separate from life. To discover the richness of students' individuality, teachers first need to discover the richness of their own lives. This requires a revolutionary change in teacher education since the development of rich individuality in teachers is a crucial part of quality education reform. In the following section, I propose the narration of life stories as a practice for the development of inclusive individuality.

4 Life Story-Telling as a Practice for the Development of Inclusive Individuality

The discussion above explores the possibility of developing an inclusive self by consulting three different philosophers. An inclusive individuality is not only something that is needed for quality education reform, but it is also needed to lead one's own life. To improve the quality of education, we want to improve the quality of life of both teachers and students. Therefore, it is necessary to be concerned about how we can learn from teachers' and students' life experience as an important resource for quality education. In conclusion, I would like to suggest story-telling as a practice for the development of an inclusive individuality. I suggest that it is possible to gain inner strength from the deep reflection associated with story-telling. Here, I particularly advocate the practice of telling personal life stories rather than the use of fiction.

Telling stories is an ancient tradition. At the very beginning of the emergence of human society, people used stories to describe their daily life, express their personal feelings or wishes, and imagine different life possibilities. Telling stories was a natural need in daily life in ancient times. Even though story-telling is a natural part of people's life, the role of story-telling is largely ignored in Chinese modern education. What is story-telling? How it can become meaningful for the development of unique but inclusive individuality?

First of all, life stories can provide a broader space than the reality one lives in: They can include what has already happened (the past), what is happening (the present), and what may happen (the future). They provide rich possibilities for enlivening the individual's imagination. They are also a platform which provides multiple space and time for the individual to reflect on the past, present, and future. The effect of telling life stories is to challenge the taken-for-granted living situation. Life does not only have one perspective of explanation, one image, or one way of

living. Instead, we can live and interpret life in different ways and in different time and space. By reflecting, questioning, and imagining one's life experience in multiple spaces, the individual learns to seek significant moments which are meaningful for personal development. These significant moments are the moments when the individual questions, challenges, doubts, or confirms things which have already been known before. Teachers can use story-telling as a method to encourage students to discover these significant moments. It is only when students discover these moments that they feel the necessity to reflect on things which they might take for granted in their lives. Students can find their own problems from this reflection on their life experience. When reflection becomes necessary, dialog and learning becomes important for them. Teachers need to play a role in guiding the dialog and encouraging students to learn about their own life experience. Teachers need to help students build connections with others when problems are identified and help students to find more problems which are important for their individual development.

What teachers may keep in mind is that telling stories is a natural need of the individual and should not become a required task for students. Otherwise, students will lose the opportunity of seeking intrinsic authority if they do this mainly in response to external authority. In the process of story-telling, the most trivial feelings of students need to be respected by peers and teachers. Meanwhile, teachers need to try their best to protect and respect the private space of the individual student. Students can choose to share or not share their stories. Sharing should not be a requirement or responsibility for students. When students find more connection with the world they did not know, sharing will become more comfortable for them. Moreover, when the individual learns to open the mind, s/he may find sharing is a need for personal development. In this process, teachers need to learn not only about actively participating in students' lives but also about not participating in students' lives. Not interrupting students' personal space does not mean a passive attitude of teachers. Instead, it reflects teachers' care and respect to students and gives students their own space for reflection. It is only when students have their own space, where they feel safe and free, that they can find the value of their unique individuality. On the other hand, the efforts to find new and enriched meaning in the life experience help students to build broader connection with others and thus make their individuality more inclusive.

Story-telling suggests a possible method to help students develop unique but inclusive individuality. The sense of the self is not a matter of self-centered exclusiveness. Rather, the development of the sense of the self helps the individual to build more meaningful connection with the world which was unfamiliar. This effort makes individuals more responsible when they understand other people's lives and include other people's lives as part of their own lives. The challenge of developing a unique but inclusive individuality as a serious purpose of education is a difficult one for teachers. We need to explore various ways in which this purpose can be realized and telling life stories may be one method worth trying.

Story-telling as a method of educational research has already been practiced by education researchers and teachers in the West and in China. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) used "portraiture" as a metaphor in her observation and description of cultures in schools and the experience of educators. Hayhoe (2006) applied

this method in her introduction of influential contemporary Chinese educators to Western academia. Egan (1988) and Eades (2006) proposed the possibility and potential power of stories in the practice of primary school classrooms. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research provides a comprehensive introduction to narrative as a method for educational research. In Clandinin and Connelly's approach to narrative inquiry, Dewey's conception of experience plays an important role. They wrote:

"Following Dewey, the study of education is the study of life—for example, the study of epiphanies, rituals, routines, metaphors, and everyday actions. We learn about education from thinking about life, and we learn about life from thinking about education. This attention to experience and thinking about education as experience is part of what educators do in schools" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxiv).

In Chinese education circles, Ding's (2008) work introduced the method of narrative inquiry by connecting the major Western social theories with Chinese ways of thinking. His work provides some methodological insights into using narrative inquiry for educational study. Particularly noteworthy in his work is the distinction he draws between the Chinese way of narrative description and that of the West. In Chinese narrative, metaphors are often used for describing an event or one's experience. Also, the narrator shifts her/his perspectives in the process of narration. He suggests that the Chinese way of doing narrative relates to the Chinese way of understanding the world and he calls for further exploration of the Chinese way of narrative in educational studies.

My proposal of telling life stories as a method to develop students' inclusive individuality does not focus on educational research but rather on innovative practice in Chinese education. However, educational research and practice cannot be separated. Story-telling as a way of teaching and learning has not been sufficiently practiced or studied in Chinese primary and secondary schools. The exploration of the imaginative space life story-telling can create and may give us some insights into understanding inclusiveness in relation to individuality and help us to cultivate an inclusive culture in educational settings. Even though the policy change has a significant impact on educational practice, micro-level educational innovation is the key for the development of students' individuality. Life story-telling can be a practice at the micro-level for teachers and students to experience the beauty of inclusiveness, as they develop individuality.

5 Conclusion

Developing an inclusive individuality to meet the challenge of the quality education reform is a call to go back to the basic purpose of education, that of releasing the potential of the individual directed by each person's genuine interest and vision for life. This call also echoes with the Confucian tradition of self-cultivation: learning for the self. It is a call to develop one's inner strength to lead one's life rather than follow the track designated by external authorities, no matter whether it is traditional

culture or social convention. The current quality education reform, however, tends to ignore the importance of cultivating students' inner capacity for self-enlightenment as a way of building students' intrinsic authority for their lives. Learning becomes meaningful only when the student knows "who I am" and "who I want to be." By discussing the work of Dewey, Liang, and Camus, the paper suggests that the inner capacity for self-enlightenment can reconcile the tension between the self and others. When the individual cares about the self, s/he is willing to open the self to others and develop an enriched self. This openness provides endless possibilities for the individual to build connection with others and include others into the self. Moral principles are not derived from an external authority but from this experience of building connection with others. On the practical level, the paper proposes telling life stories as a method of developing students' unique but inclusive individuality. More empirical work needs to be done to confirm the potential power of story-telling as a daily practice in schools.

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Three Characteristics and Advantages of Confucian Moral Education

Chuanbao Tan

Abstract The Confucian moral education thought in ancient China is one of the most important parts of the world moral education thought. It is also a vast treasure trove that we can forge ahead into the future and meet the challenges of the new century by learning from it. From a macroscopic point of view, the characteristics and advantages of Confucian moral education thoughts in ancient China are at least reflected in three major aspects. First, "the learning goal of being a sage": the pursuit of highest standard of moral education goals; Second, "the touch of the blood and soul" (profoundly cultivating human nature in an aesthetical way): the aesthetic-oriented moral education model; Third, "the unity of Inner knowledge and actual action": the self-cultivation method of putting knowledge into practice.

1 "The Learning Goal of Being a Sage": The Pursuit of High Standard Moral Education Goals

The word "sage"[1] in ancient China originally refers to the characteristics of human beings who have all wisdom about the world. However, due to the strong ethical color of ancient Chinese culture, the connotation of "sage" gradually transformed into an ideal personality based on moral character. One of wisdom in Confucian moral education thought was mainly manifested in the argumentation and design of the learning goal of being a sage and the pursuit of it. The Confucian thought on the learning goal of being a sage is mainly carried out from three following aspects: the

[1] Sheng Xian, in Chinese Pinyin.

This article in Chinese was originally published in the journal of educational research (Beijing), issue 8, 2002. The author has made some modifications before the English publication this time. Thanks to Ms. Jie Ren and Mr. Jieming Jiang for their helps with the first version of translation of this article.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_10

superiority of the sage personality, the possibility of being a sage by learning, and the confirmation and stratification of the learning goal of being a sage.

The so-called superiority of the sage's personality mainly shows that the sage personality ("the best") is worth pursuing.

First of all, the sage personality is the moral personality most in line with the essence of human nature. Mencius said, "The sages stand out from their fellows, and rise above the level."[2] (*Chapter Gong Sun Chou Part I, The Works Of Mencius.*) Shao Yongyan, a famous Confucian scholar in Northern Song Dynasty, said, "Human beings are the best among all beings; and Sages are the best of all human beings."[3] (*Observing the Objects, Chapter 42, Imperial Classic Book of the World*.) Another Confucian scholars in the Ming Dynasty said, "The sages among mankind are also the ordinary persons. But what distinguishes it from others is that they know the truth of all." (Lv Kun: *Vol. 4, Sage, ShenYinYu*). This logic not only foreshadows the possibility of "the learning goal of being a sage," but also demonstrates the possibility of the existence of "sages".

Secondly, the reason why sages can become "the best of all human beings" is the unity of sages and the Tao, or truth of Heaven.[4] Confucius said, "Let the will be set on the path of Tao" (*Chapter Shu Er, Confucius Analects.*) Xunzi also said: "Saints are the masters of Tao." (*Chapter Ru Xiao, Xunzi Analects*). Zhu Xi, a famous Confucian in Song Dynasty, even put it in a simpler way, "Tao is a sage without a body, and the sage is Tao with a body." (*Vol. 130, Analects of Zhu Xi*). The unity of sages and Tao not only strengthens the authority of sages, but also strengthens the necessity "Keeping the natural law" and "Extension of Intuitive Knowledge" (Act on conscience).

Third, because the sages understood the natural laws, the sages became the best of human beings, and the ancients endowed the sages with the ultimate personality and even the mystery. Mencius said, "He whose goodness has been filled up is what is called a beautiful man. He whose goodness is brightly displayed is what is called a great man. When this great man exercises a transforming influence, he is what is called a sage." (*Tsin Sin Part II, The Works of Mencius*) Zhu Xi explained "the sage who is so great and so influential, his education is conducted in moisten silently, using the golden mean without too much though. His greatness is not what an ordinary person can achieve with hard work." (*Tsin Sin Part II, Mencius' Notes to the Words*) Wang Yangming, another famous Confucian in Ming Dynasty, also explained the meaning of this sentence: the reason why a sage is a sage is that: "his heart has pure nature, and no dirty desire of human miscellaneous nature, just like pure gold is gold, absolutely genuine, without mixing with copper and lead." (Part I, *Chuan Xi Lu*).

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[2] The English version of *The Works of Mencius and Confucius Analects* quoted in this paper was translated mainly by James Legge, but in order to ensure that the translation is consistent with the original meaning of text in Chinese, part of the translation is modified by author of this article.

[3] We cannot find an English translation of these two books *Huang Ji Jing shi* and *Shen Yin Yu.* So the author of this article translated the sentences according to the original meaning of books. Other Ancient Chinese documents cited in this paper are also treated in accordance with this principle.

[4] James Legge translated "Tao" into "the way of Heaven," but I think "Tao" is closer to the original sound than his translation.

The interpretation of "sage" in *The Doctrine of the Mean*[5] is as follows: "It is only he, who possessed all sagely qualities, that can exist under heaven, who shows himself quick in apprehension, clear in discernment, of far-reaching intelligence, and all-embracing knowledge, fitted to exercise rule; magnanimous, generous, benign, and mild, fitted to exercise forbearance' impulsive, energetic, firm, and enduring, fitted to maintain a firm hold; self-adjusted, grave, never swerving from the Mean, and correct, fitted to command reverence; accomplished, distinctive, concentrative, and searching, fitted to exercise discrimination. Deep and active as a fountain, sending forth in their due season his virtues, all-embracing and vast, he is like heaven. Deep and active as a fountain, he is like the abyss. When he appears, the people all respect him; when he speaks, the people all believe him; when he acts, the people all are pleased with him. Therefore his fame overspreads the Middle Kingdom, and extends to all barbarous tribes all those who have blood and breath honor and love him." It is because of this kind of talented and fascinating ideal personality that there is enough lasting motivation to attract billions of people to follow.

Confucianism not only endows the sage personality with extraordinary wisdom and virtues, make it attractive to imitate and pursue, but also fully demonstrates the possibility of moral education by saying "The sages and we are the same in kind" and "I can become a sage by learning."

"Chiao of Tsao asked Mencius, saying, it is said, all men may be sages like Yao and Shun, is it so? Mencius replied, it is." (*Gaozi Part II, The Works of Mencius*) This question and answer represent a lasting humanity assumption and educational logic in China with a history of more than two thousand years. Why can everyone be sages like Yao and Shun? One of the important reasons is that sages and mortals are the same kind of people. There is a saying in *GaoZi* Part I*, The Works Of Mencius*: "The sage and we are the same in kind." Xun Zi also said, "Ordinary people can become sages, when they are morally perfect." (*Xiao Ru, Xun Zi.*) So "ordinary people can become sages" (Xing E*, Xun Zi*). And Wang Yangming and his students even remarked, "the whole street is full of saints" (*Volume 2, Chuan Xi Lu*).

Confucianism, while sanctifying the sages' personality, emphasizes the qualities that sages and mortals are the same kind of people. Therefore, the Confucian sage personality has the characteristics that can be approached. Educators in the Confucian school have always had confidence in this.

After figuring out that we can become a sage, there is another question: How to become a sage? The Confucian answer is: By learning. Xunzi said: "Sages Yao and Yu were not born sages. They just received education in social life, naturally became sages because of self-cultivating themselves to utmost" (*Chapter Rong Ru, Xun Zi*). Zhu Xi also said, "What matters now is to see what the sages are like, what the ordinary people are like. To become a sage, you must have a thorough understanding of why you are not like a sage, but just ordinary people. It's very helpful to understand this truth, for you becoming a sage." (*Volume 8, Zhu Zi Yu Lei*).

[5] The English version of *The Doctrine of the Mean* quoted in this paper was translated by James Legge.

On the one hand, Confucianism logically describes the incomparable superiority of the sages and strengthens people's yearnings. On the other hand, it demonstrates the realistic possibility that the sage personality can be achieved by learning, and blocks all kinds of excuses that "can't do it."

Therefore, "the learning goal of being a sage" has become a distinctive cultural impulse in Ancient China for more than 2000 years. In the interpretation of the specific objectives of "The learning goal of being a sage," Chinese Confucianism has had many thoughts, mainly in the following two aspects.

First, "learning to be a sage" has become the overall goal of moral education. In ancient China, the existence of sages had two main functions: One was to educate the people; and the other was to promote self-cultivation. The former focuses on educating the people, while the latter focuses on improving self-cultivation, both of which are mutually premised. Without the existence of sages and their indoctrination of human beings, self-cultivators lose their pursuit of goals, realms, and conversions; also, without the efforts of self-education, it is impossible to educate others. Therefore, for scholars, the overall goal of self-cultivation or education can only be to be a sage. Mencius said, "What I wish to do is to learn to be like Confucius." (*Gong Sun Chou, Part I, The Works Of Mencius.*)

Xun Zi said, scholars should "begin as scholars, and end as sages" (*On Learning, Xun Zi*). Chen Yi, a famous Song Dynasty Confucian scholar, said: "Everyone can become a sage, and the final goal of gentleman's learning should be as sage. Those who cannot become sages and give up halfway, they abandon themselves." *(Volume 25, He Nan Chen Shi Shu*) Zhu Xi said, "A scholar should have great ambition. The so-called aspirant, not to compare height with others, but directly to learn sages Yao and Shun" (*Volume 8, Zhu Zi Yu Lei*) "Like every arrow should strive to hit the bull's eye, people must take sages Yao and Shun as their example. If an archer misses, it must be because his archery is not good enough, not because there is something wrong with the bull's eye." (*Volume 55, Zhu Zi Yu Lei*).

Secondly, the specific stratification of the goal of being a sage.

With the sage personality as the ultimate goal, there is no end to learning as well as to self-cultivation. This is the superiority of the ultimate goal. Once sages have no connection with mortals, we can only worship but not imitate. Therefore, if the general goal is not stratified, the span will be too large, which will make the overall goal become abstract, empty, and finally it will lose the effectiveness in improving personal cultivation and educating others. So from the Pre-Qin period to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Confucianism constantly designed and perfected the stratification target system of being a sage.

It is generally believed that the specific level of moral education goals of Confucian is: an scholar or officials (士, Shi), a gentleman or superior man (君子, Junzi), and a sage (圣人, Shengren). Confucius first made this division of personality. He told his students, "As for the sage and the man of perfect virtue, how dare I rank myself with them?" and "A sage is not a person that I have the ability to see, and I can see a gentleman who has real talent and virtue, which would satisfy me." (*Chapter Shu Er*, *Confucian Analects*).

In general, the sage is the ultimate ideal personality standard, the superior man is the highest personality standard of reality, and the officer is the general standard of ancient moral education. Those who do not reach the level of sages and superior men may begin with the lower goal of "officer." Xun Zi said, "Where should learning begin? Where should it end? According to the essence of learning, you should begin as scholars, and end as sages" (*On Learning, Xun Zi*). "People are divided into five levels: a mediocre person (庸人, Yongren), scholar (士,Shi), gentleman (君子, Junzi), virtuous man (贤人, Xianren), and sage or king (圣王, Sengwang)." "To be a sage as the highest standard of life, to become a gentleman as the basic pursuit" (Ru Xiao, *Xun Zi*). Jia Yi, a Han Dynasty Confucian, said: "Those who keep the Tao are called scholars, and those who enjoy the way are called gentlemen. Those who know Tao are wise; those who practice Tao are virtuous. And we call those who both are wise and virtuous, the sage." (*Tao Shu, Xin Shu*) and so on. Therefore, on the whole, sages are the ultimate ideal personality standard, gentlemen are the highest personality standard in reality, and scholars are starting points of learning. People who cannot reach the level of the sage and gentleman temporarily may as well start from the lower goal of learning to be a scholar.

In a sense, the historical existence of sage personality and the existence of its learning and education in Chinese history are historical facts that need not be proved. As a kind of historical fact, it not only embodies the wisdom of Chinese culture, but also reflects the defects of its theory and practice. Although in the educational practice of ancient China, there are some shortcomings in the moral education goal, such as too high requirement and divorce from reality, but we can see that according to Confucianism, it is not important whether we can truly become sages. It is more important that "learning to be a sage" can improve moral personality in various degrees. This is a strategy full of wisdom. In society of market economy today, the values and goals of society and education are guided in the direction of vulgarity more and more. The ancient Chinese Confucianism's idea of "learning to be a sage" and "the pursuit of high standard moral education goals" has a particularly strong reference value.

2 "The Touch of the Blood and Soul" (Profoundly Cultivating Human Nature in an Aesthetical Way): The Aesthetic-Oriented Moral Education Model

"The touch of blood and soul" is Lu Jiuyuan's statement. Lu Jiuyuan, a famous philosopher in Song Dynasty, said, "If I speak to others, I will touch him in blood and soul." (*Volume 34, Works by Lu Jiuyuan,* Zhonghua Book Company). In fact, the emotional and aesthetic moral education mode represented by "the touch of blood and soul" is the consensus of many Confucian scholars on moral education. In fact, the so-called music education and poetry education from Confucius era, which actually means "education through music" and "education through poetry", in traditional

education are mainly moral education with aesthetic orientation. We can say it is consistent from the Pre-Qin Dynasty to the Song and Ming Dynasties.

Confucius is one of the pioneers of the aesthetic or emotional moral education model. This point can be verified in the classics at least in the following aspects.

First, there is a clear understanding of the importance of aesthetic or emotional factors.

Confucian said, "It is by the Poetry that the mind is aroused. It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music that the success is achieved." (*Chapter Tai Bo, Confucius Analects*) He also said, "A gentleman should aspire to the truth (Tao), live according to morality (De), pursue benevolence (Ren), and gain spiritual freedom in arts (Yi)."[6] (*Shu Er, Confucius Analects*) Besides, Confucius said, "My children, why do you not study the Book of Poetry? The Poetry serve to stimulate the mind. They can be used for purposes of self-contemplation. They can teach the art of sociability. They can show how to regulate feelings of resentment. From them, you can learn the more immediate duty of serving one's father here, and serving one's prince there." (*Yang Huo, Confucius Analects*).

Secondly, there is an aesthetic description of moral personality.

"Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single bamboo bowl of rice, a single gourd ladle of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected by it." (*Chapter Yong Ye, Confucius Analects*) "With coarse rice to eat, a little water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow; I still have joy in spite of this. Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud." (*Shu Er, Confucius Analects*) "In the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash myself in the Yi river, enjoy the breeze among the altars Wu Yu, and return home singing. The master heaved a sigh and said, I give my approval to Tien (Zeng Tien, one of his students)." (*Xian Jin, Confucius Analects*).

Zhu Xi explained in his *Four Books* the reason why Confucius gave approval to Tien like this: "Zeng Tien's point of view makes people feel that the secular desire is gone, and the heavenly principles (Tao) are popular everywhere between heaven and earth, without any flaw. Therefore, it is so easy when Tien said. As for his ambition, it is no more than the position he occupies, enjoy his daily life, and have his original intention of sacrificing oneself for others naturally. And his mind is as free and easy as the order of nature, and the beauty of his expression about ambition is hidden in words."

What many people in Chinese culture call "Kong Yan Le Chu" (For people like Confucius and his student Yan Hui, happiness lies not in material enjoyment, but in the pursuit of spiritual sentiment) is actually an aesthetic realm of life and personality.

Thirdly, it emphasizes the moral standards of art evaluation.

"The master said of the Shao that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the Wu that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good." (*Chapter BaYi*, *Confucius Analects*).

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[6] This sentence is one part of the translation modified by author of this article—Chuanbao.

Confucius's admiration for Shao Music stems from its superior "perfection" characteristic to WU Music. On the other hand, this statement reflects Confucius' emphasis on the importance of moral education function of art.

We can find these sentences in *On Music (Yue Ji), in Book of Rites* (*Li Ji*, One of famous Confucian classics in Han Dynasty): "Enjoying music can help a person to have more virtue. It can also make people's eyes and ears brighter, blood and spirit more harmonious, customs easier to transform, the world more peaceful. Therefore, music is a kind of happiness, the gentleman is happy with its Tao, and the villain is happy with its desire." "Morality is the starting point of human nature, music is the beautiful flower of virtue, and the metals, stone, strings, and bamboo are just musical instruments. The lyrics express people's ambitions, the singing expresses people's aspirations, the dancing makes people moving. All three elements are based on the heart, and then expressed in Musical Instruments." As a matter of fact, this is the affirmation of Confucius' thought that good writing is to express the Tao, and idea of an article and rhetoric are inseparable.

After Confucius, Mencius emphasized the education that "there are some on whom his influence descends like seasonable rain." (*Jin Xin Part I, The Works Of Mencius*), and we should cultivate such spirit as the great man: "Neither riches nor honors can corrupt him; neither poverty nor humbleness can make him swerve from principle; and neither threats nor forces can subdue him. These characteristics constitute the great man." (*Teng Wen Gong Part II, The Works Of Mencius*), and the thought that "I am skillful in nourishing my vast, flowing passion-nature." (*Gong Sun Chou Part I, The Works of Mencius*).

Xun Zi further developed the idea of "music education", he said, "Music is an instrument of the world unity, the essentials of moderation and peace, the necessary element of human nature. Music can move people deeply, and educate people efficiently as well. This is why the ancient King decorated it very carefully." (*Yue Lun, Xun Zi*).

In the Song and Ming Dynasties, Confucian thinkers emphasized the importance of aesthetic or emotional factors in moral education in many aspects, combined with the criticism of educational model of rote memorization.

Chen Yi and Chen Hao, the famous brother philosophers in the Song Dynasty, propose, "If teaching does not give people spiritual pleasure, students will certainly not enjoy their learning." (*Volume 2, Yi Shu*) "If education or conservation is pleasant, spiritual cultivation will reach a higher level" (*Volume 6, Yi Shu*). In his *Letter to Mr. Liu Bosong for Education Outline*, Wang Yangming talked about "the ways of moral cultivation conservation" in this way: "Children, by and large, prefer play to restraint. Just as when plants begin to sprout, if they are left free to grow, their branches will flourish; if they are destroyed and hindered from growing, they will wither and wither. To teach a child today if we encourage him, delight him, students themselves will not stop progress. Just like the gentle rain and breeze in spring, nurturing flowers and trees, all germinate more, plants will naturally grow every day. And when confronted with cold frost, these plants will gradually lose their vitality and die quickly." Therefore, "We should use songs and poems to induce students' aspirations, use etiquette to make them dignified, and use reading methods to broaden

their horizon. Today people often think that education through songs, poems and rites are out of date. These are vulgar opinions. How could such a person know the real nature of our ancients' education?" His three-step teaching method of songs and poems, rites and reading, got the quintessence of Confucius' educational thought "It is by the Poetry that the mind is aroused. It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music that the success is achieved." (*Chapter Tai Bo, Confucius Analects*).

From the perspective of historical facts, "the touch of the blood and soul" the aesthetic-oriented moral education model has achieved a good educational effect in history.

Like Yan Yuan said that Confucius is a great educator: "The Master, by orderly method, skillfully leads men on" (*Chapter Zi Han*, *Confucius Analects*). When Confucius died, students paid their respects to him as the funeral of their parents. They lived around the cemetery for three or six years before leaving. "In memory of Confucius, there are more than one hundred families of disciples and other Lu people living in the vicinity of Confucius' tomb." (*Confucius Family*, *Historical Records*:) Yang jian, a student of Lu Jiuyuan, when recalling his teacher's educational efficacy, said, "My teacher knows the most subtle part of the heart of his students, so when talking can hit the nail, often move students to sweat." (*The Biography of Mr. Xiangshan*) This shows that Lu Jiu Yuan's teaching effect is very touching.

Therefore, in general, it is not true that the ancient Chinese moral education just emphasizes moral cognition and does not pay attention to moral emotions.

Our contemporary society is a society that emphasizes rationality and cognition a lot. The development of science and technology is still strengthening this value orientation. Therefore, in the past hundred years, there has been a problem of "modernity" in the post-modern criticism, which lacks emotional care. In today's China, where quality education is implemented, we need to learn from "the touch of blood and soul" and the aesthetic-oriented moral education model of Chinese Confucianism to overcome the disadvantages caused by cognitionism in moral education.

3 "The Unity of Inner Knowledge and Actual Action": The Self-cultivation Method of Putting Knowledge into Practice

The ancient Chinese moral education thought emphasized moral cultivation, which is an obvious characteristic. In a sense, the emphasis of Confucianism on education is not as strong as that on learning and self-cultivation. The Confucian moral education thought is a kind of moral thought of "learning" and knowledge of self-cultivation. The so-called learning here is actually the unity of inner knowledge and actual action.

Confucius said, "By nature, men are almost alike; by practice, they tend to be wide apart." (*Chapter Yang Huo, Confucian Analects*) The so-called practice is not only acquired cognitive learning, but also the learning of behavior habits. According

to Confucius' thought of moral education, knowledge and action have always been unified.

On the one hand, Confucius emphasized the importance of "learning". He claimed, "Those who learn, and so, readily, get possession of knowledge…" (*Chapter* Ji Shi, *Confucian Analects*), and "He was of an active nature and yet fond of learning, and he was not ashamed to ask and learn of his inferiors." (*Gong Ye Chang, Confucian Analects*) "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous."(*Wei Zheng, Confucian Analects*) "I once spent the whole day without eating, and the whole night without sleeping, so absorbed in thinking that it was of no use. It is better to learn obviously."(*Wei Ling Gong, Confucian Analects*).

On the other hand, Confucius emphasized the importance of "practice". Confucius said, "The superior man wishes to be slow in his speech and earnest in his conduct." (*Chapter Li Ren,* Confucian Analects) "They are determined to be sincere in what they say, and to carry out what they do." (*Zi Lu, Confucian Analects*) "Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue." (*Xue Er, Confucian Analects*) In particular, he said, "Although a man may be able to recite three hundred odes, yet if, when entrusted with a governmental charge, he does not know how to act, or if, when sent to any quarter on a mission, he cannot give his replies unassisted, notwithstanding the extent of his learning, what's practical use in it?" (*Zi Lu, Confucian Analects*) In the cultivation of family ethics, Confucius emphasized many specific behavioral requirements: "Filial piety and fraternal submission are the root of all benevolent (Ren) actions!" and "A youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders." (*Xue Er, Confucian Analects*) When his parents are alive, the son may not go to a distant land. "If he does go far away, he must have a fixed place to which he goes." (*Li Ren, Confucian Analects*).

In the traditional Chinese cultural system, Confucianism is famous for its secular orientation. Therefore, the problem of "unity of knowledge and practice" and "learning to apply" has always been one of the themes that Confucianism tried to elaborate seriously. This is very evident in Confucianism of Song and Ming Dynasties.

Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism and Wang Yangming's theory of "mind" are obviously in opposition to each other on the relation between knowledge and action.

Zhu Xi advocated that "knowledge and action are interdependent". "It's like the eyes can't see far without the help of your feet, and you can't see anything no matter how far you go without your eyes. In order of precedence, knowledge comes first. In terms of importance, action is more critical." (*The Outline of Zhu Zi Yu Lei*) But Zhu Xi seemed to stress the importance of action a little more: "It is better to master the essence than to know a lot. It is better to take action than to know the essence." (*The Outline of Zhu Zi Yu Lei*) "Your knowledge is shallow when you only know and do not put it to the test. If your knowledge is tested in real life, you will know better and not be so shallow as you were before." (*Volume 8, Xing Li Jing Yi*) "If there is no need to act, then learning is just saying. If there is no need to act, then the seventy famous students of Confucius only needed to talk with Confucius for a few days. Why should they follow Confucius for so many years without leaving?" (*Volume 13, Zhu Zi Yu Lei*). In his *Preliminary Learning Essentials*, Zhu Xi clearly pointed

out, “The study of the ancients was always from the initial learning and further to obtain a great academic. In daily activities such as cleaning, talking to others and making choices, people can stick to principles and have a high level of self-restraint, which has been a long tradition. We can acquire higher knowledge because we have accumulated a lot of small knowledge in preliminary stage of learning.”

Wang Yangming’s viewpoint is “the unity of knowledge and action” and “the pursuit of conscience”. He also emphasized the training of moral behavior, for example, in his educational theory and practice, there has been the theory of “Kao De” (A teaching session through questions and answers about moral behavior everyday). Kao De means, let the students check their daily words and deeds one by one every morning, “Correct mistakes if you have made any, and guard against them if you have not”. However, relatively speaking, Wang Yangming put more emphasis on moral knowledge or conscience.

Wang Yangming believed that “knowing and acting are two words which mean one work” (*Answer to A Friend*) “Knowing is the idea of acting, and acting is the effort of knowing; knowledge is the beginning of action, while action is the result of knowledge.” “Seeing good color belongs to knowledge, liking good color belongs to behavior. When you see that good color, you have already begun to like it, not after you saw a good color for a while, you got to like that color. Smelling stench belongs to knowledge, disliking stench belongs to behavior. Only when you smell the stench, you have been disgusted, not after you first smell the stench, you then go back to disgust.” (*Part one, Chuan Xi Lu*) In fact, Wang Yangming’s proposition is that as long as the awareness is activated, human behavior has begun. This is the reason why Professor Qijia Guo said that Wang Yangming’s viewpoint is that “knowledge is taken as behavior, knowledge determines behavior, and knowledge dissolves behavior.”[7]

However, as Confucian masters, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming had much more unity in their understanding of the relationship between knowledge and action than their differences.

In my opinion, Zhu Xi’s emphasis on practice is not to deny the importance of moral cognition or knowledge. On the contrary, Zhu Xi said, “Learning, of course, is not the same as reading, but without reading you have no way to thoroughly understand the moral principles… If you do not read this book, you lack this truth.” (*Volume 120, Zhu Zi Yu Lei*) In fact, one of Zhu Xi’s contributions to moral education was his “Zhu Zi Method of Reading.” Therefore, we can also find many other people in China think that Zhu Xi’s theory is the theory of knowledge taking precedence over action.

Similarly, Wang Yangming’s emphasis on moral knowledge is not to deny the importance of moral action. He said, “True knowledge is knowledge of action, and without action you cannot claim to know.” (*Part two, Chuan Xi Lu*) In fact, the reason why Wang Yangming held the view that “knowledge is taken as behavior, knowledge

[7] GUO Qijia: History of Chinese educational thoughts,Education, Beijing: Science Press, 1987, p. 302.

determines behavior, and knowledge dissolves behavior," is to thoroughly guarantee the appropriate moral action as the moral subject.

At the period of end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, famous philosopher Wang Fuzhi thinks that the essence of view that "knowledge comes before action" is "to define knowledge without action"; and the essence of view that "the unity of knowledge and action" is "knowledge dissolves behavior". He said, "Knowledge, to rely on action to test reliability. Action, but not necessarily need to rely on knowledge to test. Through action we can know the validity of knowledge, we can not necessarily test the effectiveness of action through knowledge." Therefore, "behavior may contain knowledge, but knowledge cannot replace behavior" "You can't say knowledge comes first, you can't say behavior comes after. We should say, after the action, if there is still power you can go on to learn." (*Shuo Ming, Shang Shu Yin Yi*) So Wang Fuzhi's insists that "knowledge and action are simultaneous." In a sense, his opinion expresses the unity of moral cognition and practice more dialectically than that of Zhu Xi's and Wang Yangming's,

In my opinion, the commonalities of the theories (like Zhu Xi's "Knowledge and action are interdependent," Wang Yangming's "knowledge and action are in unity," Wang Fuzhi's "Knowledge and action are simultaneous") discussed above far outweigh the differences. Their emphasis on the unity of moral knowledge and practice (or actual action) is also thought-provoking.

"Morality" is more about practice than cognition. In both theory and practice, Chinese and Western moral education has always swayed in moral cognition and moral practice. As for how to treat the relationship between knowledge and action dialectically and implement complete and effective moral education, the exploration of the ancient Chinese Confucianism on the "the unity of inner knowledge and actual action," the self-cultivation method of putting knowledge into practice is an important ideological foundation for further exploration.

The collation of Confucian moral education in ancient China is an important subject that moral education academic circle should treat seriously. According to the current situation in China of sorting out ancient Confucian moral education thoughts, there are two main defects. First, there are many researches on "morality" or "ethical thoughts," but not enough on "education" or "educational thoughts." Secondly, there are more general analyses of moral education thoughts and not enough sorting out the specific advantages or characteristics of moral education thoughts systematically. This paper is just an attempt to fill in the gaps, hoping to be a useful introduction to the progress of relevant theories and practices.

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Self-Cultivation and the Concept of German *Bildung*

Michaela Vogt and Till Neuhaus

Abstract *Bildung* is one of Germany's oldest concepts and unites insights from the fields of philosophy, ethics, pedagogy, religion, and education. However, over time the term *Bildung* has changed and, as such, the different conceptualizations, connotations, and meanings of *Bildung* reflect temporal as well as cultural idiosyncrasies. This article attempts to illustrate *Bildung's* history by following the term through the ages and places. By zooming in on the educational philosophies of selected German thinkers (Immanuel Kant, George W. F. Hegel, Alexander von Humboldt, and Theodor W. Adorno), this article tries to reconstruct key turns, events, and thoughts regarding *Bildung*. The educational philosophies of the aforementioned thinkers will be contextualized historically, politically, as well as from an intellectual history perspective. With reference to the idea of the "god-term", this article presents an explanation how and why *Bildung* as a theoretical concept could undergo these changes without being replaced and/or obsoleted by other terms. In the final section of the article, *Bildung's* relationship to modern concepts (i.e., competence-based learning) will be discussed critically. Further, *Bildung's* compatibility with the international discourse of education will be reflected upon.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_11

1 Introduction

German is a language with many peculiarities which often cause confusion and sometimes even mockery. One concepts which bears the potential for confusion is the term *Bildung*.[1] Simultaneously, there is an incredibly rich philosophical discourse surrounding *Bildung* intersecting at the domains of self-cultivation, education, schooling, (self-)formation, moral education, and, more generally, philosophy of life. Throughout the ages, *Bildung* underwent dramatic semantic changes and turns. These semantic turns reflect implied concepts of the individual as well as the world. Thereby, no ultimate concept of *Bildung* exists and all existing concepts have to be contextualized historically (cf. Böhm, 2005: 90)—most definitely one reason why *Bildung* is often considered one of German pedagogy's least clarified terms (cf. Dohmen, 1964: 15).

Niklas Luhmann and Karl Eberhard Schorr argue that *Bildung* is pedagogy's "god-term" (1988: 464), a concept vague enough that it enables discourse throughout different times while remaining stable enough that the area of discourse is limited. Similar to God, nobody can claim with certainty whether *Bildung* really exists or define its form, yet rich discourse, discussions, and educational planning is conducted with regard to *Bildung*. According to Luhmann and Schorr, it is less important what *Bildung* actually is but how it is discussed over time. Therefore, this contribution tries to reconstruct Germany's key discourses of the past centuries.

After having discussed *Bildung's* most relevant thinkers and notions, *Bildung's* implicitly uttered contributions to moral education and self-cultivation will be outlined and conceptualized by differentiating between *Bildung's* substrate and superstrate level. This division of the term can partially explain the workings of god-terms in general and *Bildung* in particular. The article will end on a provocative note by arguing that education as we define and act it out in the twenty-first century is not just the archenemy of *Bildung* but also inhibits self-cultivation and societal progress on a larger scale.

2 A History of *Bildung*

In the European context, one of the first comprehensive discussions regarding self-formation and transformation was presented by Plato. In his Cave Allegory, Plato describes mankind's painful transition from limited beings—blinded by illusions and commonsense assurances—to seekers of knowledge, truth, beauty, and the good

[1] As this article will show, the term Bildung has no real equivalent in the English language as all possible translations (education, formation, schooling, upbringing, etc.) never fully grasp the genuine concept of Bildung. Even though *Bildung* is, in a struggle for words, sometimes translated as self-cultivation (cf. Oelkers, 1998: 50), the authors want to underline the uniqueness of the concept. Therefore, the authors will use the German word throughout the article.

in general (cf. Hall, 1980: 74). This process is tightly knit to and generally associated with pain and sacrifice. According to Plato, thriving for truth, knowledge, the good, and the beautiful permeates all areas of life from personal relationships to the organization of the state and is powered by *Eros*, the inner drive for the aforementioned qualities. It is thereby assumed that deep within human beings, we hold those qualities and they must only be triggered and/or cultivated. Plato argues that through thinking, philosophy, and self-reflection, mankind can leave the sphere of illusion and find these truths. Thereby mankind can reach a higher state of being, a state Aristotle later called *Eudaimonia* (cf. Deci & Ryan, 2008: 2). According to Plato, truth should translate itself into action and all actions should be guided by the principles of truth and the good. Through action, "good is beyond being" (McGuirk, 2008: 170) as it transcends the individual through steady transformation of the community, the state, and mankind. A plethora of eighteenth and nineteenth century educational philosophers and educational planners idealized Ancient Greek society and the works of the Greek philosophers, especially with regard to self-cultivation and what should later be known as *Bildung*. However, in the territory which should later become Germany, these thoughts did not have the impact they have had elsewhere until the concepts of self-formation and transformation were spread in the Middle Ages through Christian belief and teachings.

At an etymological level of analysis, the term *Bildung* is derived from and tightly linked to the concept of the image as one of the earliest translations of the Latin word *imaginatio*—conducted by Monk Notker III of St. Gallen—results in the term *bildunga*[2] (cf. Dörpinghaus & Uphoff, 2011: 63). From its earliest beginnings, *Bildung* had a religious connotation (cf. Hellmeier, 2016: 73) as God created mankind in his own image (*Ebenbild*). The semantic twist added by Meister Eckart (1260—1328) in the Middle Ages was that *Bildung* not only represents the bodily image after which human beings were created but primarily the process human beings have to go through in order to complete themselves in the from God intended way (cf. ibid.)—*Bildung* developed from a descriptor of a state (i.e. an image) to an action or event (cf. Schneider, 2012: 304). Meister Eckart's concept of *Bildung*, even though it solely focuses on Christian teachings, already incorporates aspects which later definitions should refer to, such as an egalitarian notion—Eckart wrote and preached in German instead of Latin to reach lay people as well as the formally educated (cf. Sturlese, 2008: 19)—, the idea of mankind's completion through interaction with (Christian) teachings, and the provocative potential of *Bildung* (cf. Rieger-Ladich, 2019: 35) as the interpretation of theological matters has always involved a political perspective and has had the potential to undermine existing power structures. Lastly, it should be noted that Meister Eckart's re-interpretation of *Bildung* also caused a second major shift: *Bildung* as the on-going process of unifying the human soul with God (cf. Bechthold-Hengelhaupt, 1990: 482) focuses exclusively on the divine

[2] "In Early New High German, the substantive 'Bildunga' means 'creation', 'making', 'hardening'" (Schneider, 2012: 303), describing primarily the God-given form of an object. From the sixteenth century onwards, *Bildung* was used as a way to describe the process of shaping as well as the natural shape of living objects (cf. Kluge, 1989)—a semantic widening from the description of a finalized state to a more processual descriptor.

individual, his/her dignity, and potential—an idea which shall be one of the core proclamations of the Renaissance and beyond (cf. Rieger-Ladich, 2019: 35/36).

Even though the teachings of Meister Eckart were well ahead of their times, the concept of *Bildung* failed to transition to the educational context—the German poet F. G. Klopstock (1724–1803) was the first thinker to use *Bildung* with regard to education (cf. Nordenbo, 2002: 342)—and remained exclusively in the theological realm. As a result, *Bildung* was not explicitly addressed[3] until the eighteenth and nineteenth century (cf. Dörpinghausen & Uphoff 2011: 62) when Immanuel Kant and the philosophers of German Idealism started tinkering with the concept of *Bildung.*

2.1 German Idealism in the Eighteenth Century

Germany as a nation state did not exist in the eighteenth century. Instead, more than 300 kingdoms and principalities—Prussia and Habsburg (Austria) being the most influential ones—were in its place. Even though the more than 300 entities shared some loose connections, they lacked a political and cultural center. The emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations had limited influence and was mainly occupied with deescalating conflicts. This endeavor failed in 1618 with the outbreak of the Thirty-Years War (1618–1648); a war which shaped the zeitgeist and intellectual history for the next century. The eighteenth century was also the time of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment is widely conceptualized as the transition from Middle Age's thinking (i.e., religious superstitions) to the introduction of rationality and empiricism as the preferred and accepted mode of operation (cf. Fischer, 1975: 432). The Enlightenment gained momentum all across Europe, either overthrowing or transforming states, and found its way into German law by the policies of Frederick the Great of Prussia, a representative of enlightened absolutism (cf. Birtsch, 1987: 9). Prussia and Habsburg struggled for domination over the German territory and fought multiple wars for marginal territorial gain and strategic advantages (cf. Dotzauer, 1988: 412). Simultaneously, estate-based society gradually transformed itself into a civil society as "[t]his new thinking [Enlightenment] reflected changing economic realities: the rise of private property, market competition, and the bourgeois" (Carothers & Barndt, 1999: 18).

The intellectual history of the eighteenth century mainly consists of two dominant intellectual streams: Pietism and Enlightenment. Pietism (cf. Horlacher, 2011: 16–18) originated from the clash of Christian ideals with the observations during the Thirty-Years War and warned against a lack of belief and spiritual devotion. According to Pietist teachings, this lack could only be overcome through individual spiritual reincarnation/atonement. This reincarnation could only be achieved

[3] The German philosopher Moses Mendelsohn states in 1765: "The words Aufklärung (Enlightenment), Kultur (culture), Bildung (formation) are new arrivals in German. They are heard only in the literary language; commoners are unlikely to understand them" (Mendelssohn, 1784/2006: 3; cf. Nordenbo, 2002: 342).

through bible study and the development of an independent religious identity (cf. Horlacher, 2011: 16)—the resurgence of the individualistic perspective in the theological domain. This individualistic perspective was further encouraged by Enlightenment which aimed at the emancipation of the individual from external forces (cf. Weitz, 2015: 470) as well as the maximization of individual freedom, i.e. in thinking and action (cf. Dörpinghaus et al., 2012: 54). In eighteenth century Prussia, torture was abandoned, free exercise of religion was ensured, and mandatory schooling as well as freedom of the press were introduced. All of these can be read as manifestations of the Enlightenment's spirit and the strengthening of individual freedom.

Due to the focus on the individual as well as the emancipatory tendencies of the Enlightenment, *Bildung* gained intellectual momentum and was discussed extensively by philosophers and artist such as Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller, Joachim Heinrich Campe, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann G. Herder, Leopold Mozart, Heinrich von Kleist, Peter Villaume, Gotthold E. Lessing, and George W. F. Hegel. Kant and Hegel are widely regarded as the starting and ending point of the intellectually highly potent phase often referred to as German Idealism. Therefore, their educational philosophies will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

For Kant, the ideal of Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred *Unmündigkeit*[4] by the means of rationality (cf. Kant, 1784/1983: 53). Kant's emphasis on freedom and *Mündigkeit* can best be explained by considering societal structures at the time. Man's lack of courage to use his own reason, intellect, and wisdom, combined with institutions attempting to exercise power over people, resulted in lives governed by others (cf. Dörpinghaus & Uphoff, 2011: 38/39). *Bildung* should enable people to free themselves from such mental barriers/ineptitude and ultimately societal structures. External force and internal desire for freedom should define Kant's discourse as he turned *Bildung* into an oxymoron—external force as a means to cultivate freedom and *Mündigkeit* (cf. Baumgart, 2007: 33). Kant splits the process of *Bildung* into three parts: Disciplination, cultivation, and civilization. The first aiming at controlling the animalistic traits of human beings, the second describes the cultivation and fostering of abilities and skills (i.e., writing, reading, or music), while the latter hints at the necessary ability to fit into society and its sub-groups (cf. Kant, 1803: 706). All three can only be accomplished by the application of external force, submission under a guiding scheme, and/or instruction.[5] In Kant's educational philosophy, these three steps serve as a means for the

[4] *Mündigkeit* (sometimes translated as maturity) originates from the Old German word "Munt" which is derived from the Latin word manus (hand). In its earliest version Munt stands for control but also protection, usually exercised and granted by God. In the eighteenth century, God was replaced by the real-life father figure who was considered the Vor-Munt and Mündigkeit was reached when economic emancipation from the patriarchal household took place. In the nineteenth century, Mündigkeit was extended to the political realm as *Mund* (engl. mouth) already hints at the emancipatory political potential of free, verbal articulation (cf. Bernet, 2008: 48–50).

[5] It can be argued that Kant used the mechanics of Pietism and combined them with the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment.

highest purpose of *Bildung*: Moralization.[6] Contrary to the aforementioned three stages, moralization is supposed to take place within the human being and is an on-going, never-concluded process consisting of interaction with the world, self-consultation, reflection, and reaction to externalities. Kant is a strong proponent of freedom and *Mündigkeit* but stresses the point that freedom requires a concept of morality. Morality in turn can only be fostered through *Bildung*. Kant follows the Ancient Greek's line of thinking by proposing that individually acted out morality will eventually improve the community as well as the state.

German Idealism was a phase of contradicting ideas. While Kant suggests to employ external disciplination in order to arrive at *Mündigkeit* and moralization, Georg W. F. Hegel's key contradictions circled around the dualisms of alienation/unification, individual/societal, and particular/general. According to Hegel, the introduction of rationality as an ideal of human conduct, led to a split of mankind's perception of the world. As a result, there is rationality and (superstitious) beliefs/traditions which govern thought and action (cf. Siemek, 2001: 214). Hegel sees similar splits in the dualisms outlined above and proposes that *Bildung* has a two-fold task: Cause alienation and, in a second step, enable (re-) unification (cf. Sandkaulen, 2014: 430). Hegel proposes this recursive approach to *Bildung* as the individual voluntarily alienates itself from the natural state (i.e., the culture one lives in) (cf. Odenstedt, 2008: 560), exposes itself to another state, and—after some time—rediscovers itself in that state. Through the combination of the already known and the unknown, a new natural state is created and the process starts anew. This on-going process of constant alienation and re-unification is supposed to create a more reflective and cultivated person. In order to achieve Hegel's ideal of *Bildung*—taking manifold cultures and perspectives into account[7] (cf. ibid.)—the individual is required to temporarily give up its individualistic traits and particularities and is supposed to immerse with other cultural and/or historical milieus. Hegel suggests to expose oneself to ancient Greek culture as it provides the necessary irritation, confusion, and distance to one's own culture while simultaneously having common traits (cf. Odenstedt, 2008: 560). In the Hegelian approach, self-cultivation, culture, and the individual intersect, cause, and influence one another. Thereby, the Hegelian approach to *Bildung* is in accordance with Ancient Greek philosophy as the "Greeks thought of culture as character" (Gaddis, 2018: 44) but also vice versa. The process of alienation and (re-)unification of contradicting perspectives repeats itself throughout life and does not have a pre-defined aim. Kant, Hegel, and the other philosophers of the era raised awareness for a plethora of paradoxical relationships and tried to unite them in their approaches; an endeavor which shaped the term *Bildung* significantly.

[6] Moralization could be described as the guiding mechanism of mankind. According to Kant, a moralized person chooses *good* aims and occupations, while the notion of good is closely related to Kant's categorical imperative (cf. Kant, 1803: 701).

[7] Hegel characterizes this process as "sich allgemein machen" (making oneself universal) by incorporating as many different cultures and times in one self as possible (cf. Hastedt, 2012: 24).

2.2 The Nineteenth Century and the Rise of (Neo-)Humanism

While the thinkers of the eighteenth century tried to emancipate the individual from external as well as intellectual restrictions, the nineteenth century started with a triplet of real-life, high impact events which changed the ways philosophers of the time perceived the state as well as the individual. These events, which tremendously changed the course of Europe, were the French Revolution and the succeeding reorganization of the state, the end of the Holy Roman Empire of German States, and the defeat of Napoleon including the reorganization of Europe at the Vienna Conference (cf. Kissinger, 2014). All three events emphasized the importance of the nation state. Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, it was attempted to unify Germany. First as a loose association called *Deutscher Bund* (1815), followed by failed attempts in 1848/1849, and later in 1871—due to necessity caused by ongoing war with France—as an empire under Prussian leadership. Germany became a nation state comparatively late (cf. Plessner, 1959). Yet, once Germany was unified, it tried to narrate and define its unique historical, cultural, and political patterns, sometimes, referred to as the German *Sonderweg* (cf. Kocka, 1988: 3/4).

Simultaneously, Germany needed to form a national cultural identity and demarcate itself from other states. *Bildung* became Germany's way to demarcate itself from the courtly and—from the German perspective at the time—highly suspicious French structures (cf. Horlacher, 2011: 40/41). Further, emerging nation states required civil servants for their administrations and institutions, which created opportunities for citizens to rise through the ranks of public administrations through the acquisition of formal education, performance, effort, and persistency. This presented an opportunity unheard of in prior times of inherited status and social position and marks the rise of meritocracy (cf. Vogt & Neuhaus, 2021: 119). Through the reorganization of the state and the newly emerging class of citizens and civil servants, *Bildung* not just gained in importance but also became a marker of social distinction as certain educational paths were required for particular positions (cf. ibid.). In the nineteenth century, *Bildung* served Germany as a marker of cultural and historical identity as well as an internal social distinction mechanism. This distinction also contributed to already existing tensions as the *Kaiserreich* "appeared to be a strange mixture of highly successful capitalist industrialization and socio-economic modernization, on the one hand, and of surviving pre-industrial institutions, power relations, and cultures on the other" (Kocka, 1988: 5; cf. Wehler, 1973).

Influential thinkers and philosophers of the nineteenth century were Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, Johann Wilhelm Süvern, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Karl Marx. Humboldt changed Germany's educational landscape like no other thinker as he established Germany's unique school system, which reflects his approach toward *Bildung.* Due to Humboldt's crucial contributions, his educational philosophy will be outlined in the following section.

Wilhelm von Humboldt "studied at Göttingen, the intellectual center of political science favored by aristocrats headed for government careers" (Sorkin, 1983: 57). As such, Humboldt embodied the newly emerging, intellectual upper-class of the nineteenth century. Contrary to most of his peers, he was also influenced by in-depth readings of Kant and Romantic scholars as well as by conversations with countless intellectuals of the time. Especially the study of Romanticism caused an inward turn (cf. ibid.) and Humboldt started to question core beliefs of the Enlightenment and the state itself—an ironic turn as his formal education qualified him primarily for public positions. Humboldt—later in charge of Prussia's educational sector—assumes that every person possesses certain forces or powers. These forces can be cultivated by confronting different artifacts of the world (i.e., natural sciences, languages etc.). By studying and engaging with these artifacts, the individual transforms his/her potential into a growing force (cf. Böhm, 2013: 91). Simultaneously, through the exercise of one's forces, the individual changes the world. Conceptualizing *Bildung* as such, it becomes a dialogical concept in which the world changes the person and vice versa (cf. Rieger-Ladich, 2019: 50/51). Contrary to the idea of early specialization, Humboldt proposes that all of human being's potential forces should be cultivated and co-exist in harmony. Harmony[8] is a recurrent theme in Humboldt's works and permeates all levels of analysis as "the individual and the public must be in harmony. Personal morality and politics are two sides of the same coin" (Nordenbo, 2002: 348). While the thinkers of the Enlightenment have argued for the betterment of society through *Bildung*, Humboldt solely focuses on the individual as his approach toward *Bildung* aims at self-cultivation not vocational training, the ability to think scientifically not the accumulation of knowledge, and intellectual self-activity (*Selbsttätigkeit*) and not the reproduction of already existing thoughts (cf. Zehnpfenning, 2010: 124). According to Humboldt, the highest aim of *Bildung* and the meaning of life are the cultivation and balancing of each individual's forces (cf. Humboldt, 1792/2002: 64), a process without a pre-defined aim.

In order to realize Humboldt's idea of *Bildung* certain preconditions must be provided and Humboldt, as a high-ranking Prussian government official, was able to implement some of these conditions. For Humboldt, the two core conditions for successful *Bildung* are freedom and the chance for social interaction/the exchange of ideas. Apart from that, "Humboldt proposed the reduction of state power to the barest minimum in order to insure freedom for individual self-cultivation […]" (Sorkin, 1983: 55). Following Humboldt's concept, the individual educates and forms itself as independently as possible while the state is only supposed to enable this endeavor. Enabling of these processes happens through the acquisition of fundamentals (i.e. reading and writing) in corresponding schools and should be made available to all

[8] Similar to Hegel, Humboldt suspects pre-existing harmony, an idea he borrowed from natural science, in Ancient Greek society. To some extent, the idealization of Ancient Greek society can be explained by the zeitgeist as German New Humanism oriented itself at the Renaissance. Thereby, it developed a fascination for antiquity (cf. Horlacher, 2011: 37/38). While being in constant search for a model of perfection to thrive towards Humboldt assumed perfection in Ancient Greece times/philosophy (cf. Oelkers, 1999: 28).

children, independent of their social rank (cf. Tenorth, 2013). The institutions imagined, designed, and implemented by Humboldt can be found in Germany until the very day. Humboldt implemented a variety of new institutions and approaches and, at least initially, democratized *Bildung*, introduced the idea of general knowledge, and redefined the relationship between the state and the individual.

2.3 The 20th Century Pending Between Nihilism and Reformation

By the end of the nineteenth century, the newly emerging class of citizen, which legitimized their position by the acquisition of *Bildung*—often referred to as *Bildungsbürgertum*—, fossilized. Branded as an elitist project, *Bildungsbürgertum* was criticized by all political fronts. Further, *Bildungsbürgertum* was equated with a lack of morals, enhanced materialism, and a lack of belief. The corresponding institutions of formal education were considered antiquated and often portraited as lethargic (cf. Horlacher, 2011: 63/64).

Friedrich Nietzsche, who foresaw many of the twentieth century's horrors, observed these *fin-de-siècle* resentments and "believed modern society changes rapidly, but in the wrong direction" (Washburn, 2019: 171). Also, Nietzsche considered the "triumph of the middle class" and the "crisis of values" as "the seeds of the destruction of European civilization" (Washburn, 2019: 173). Further, Nietzsche (among others) criticized the corruption of *Bildung* as it was reduced to a tool for economic and/or political gain (cf. Horlacher, 2011: 63). The rise of Adolf Hitler, 12 years of national-socialist dictatorship, the horrors of the concentration camps, and two World Wars, proved Nietzsche's prophecies to be correct and scholars who conceptualized *Bildung* primarily as a means for betterment of the individual, community, and state saw themselves confronted with an immense paradox as a generation formally educated under the paradigm of humanism committed mass murder (cf. Bulthaup, 2007: 60).

The reaction toward these atrocities split the community of philosophers and educational scientists into two camps. Educators and philosophers of *Reformpädagogik*[9] argued that the suppression and thereby absence of humanistic *Bildung* during the times of fascism enabled the above-mentioned abhorrence. They proposed a revitalization of *Bildung*—referencing Johann A. Comenius, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, or John Dewey—with a particular focus on

[9] *Reformpädagogik* (Progressive Education, Nouvelle Education) already existed before the Second World War. In fact, the most fruitful intellectual contributions were made between 1890 and 1932 (cf. Skiera, 2010: 2/3). However, its real-life implementation into Germany's educational landscape was marginal and it was banned/actively avoided during the national socialist's dictatorship. After 1945, *Reformpädagogik* experienced a wider public appeal. In the course of the twentieth century, variations of *Reformpädagogik*, such as Montessori or Waldorf pedagogy, established themselves. In East Germany, formerly the GDR, *Reformpädagogik* was also banned during the socialist dictatorship until the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989/1990 (cf. Scheuerl, 1997: 186).

democratic values, emancipation, and the child as an individual. For representatives of *Reformpädagogik,* it was rather a matter of how to cultivate *Bildung.* Well-known spokes-people of this school of thought are Heinz Joachim Heydorn, Rudolf Steiner, Hartmut von Hentig, Herman Nohl, and Berthold Otto. In the following section, *Reformpädagogik's* general propositions will be presented.

Contrary to the representatives of *Reformpädagogik*, the other camp of philosophers was less optimistic about the future of *Bildung* and rather (fore-)saw a deformation of *Bildung* in the twentieth century and beyond. This camp of scholars does not criticize the *how* but rather asks *if* the concept of *Bildung* can be realized—a more fundamental criticism of *Bildung*. The fiercest critics on the conceptional level of *Bildung* (and its commodification) can be considered Theodor W. Adorno, Konrad Paul Liessmann, and Jochen Krautz. Arguably, Adorno presented the most profound criticism of *Bildung* as he "abandoned the hope that education for humanity […] could retain its normative power in our time" (Lovlie & Standish, 2002: 317) and whose key criticisms will be outlined after the illustration of *Reformpädagogik's* central propositions.

From 1933 to 1945—for East Germany (GDR) this period has to be extend until 1989/1990—Germany and its educational sector were governed by totalitarian structures which abandoned the idea of *Bildung* and replaced it with drill, obedience, and a none questioning attitude toward the system and leaders in power. After 1945/1990, *Reformpädagogik* was, at least by educational planners, considered the counter-approach to totalitarian education (cf. Tenorth, 1994: 585) as *Reformpädagogik* tried to cultivate reflection, introspection, and a critical attitude toward the social and cultural status quo (cf. Ullrich, 1990: 895). *Reformpädaogik* focuses on the child as an individual and tries to provide opportunities to learn from (for the learner) meaningful real-life artifacts. The aim of *Reformpädagogik's* holistic pedagogy is to cultivate theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, as well as introspection (cf. Ullrich, 1990: 893/894). Thereby, *Reformpädagogik* opened pedagogy's perspective and added a plethora of methods, artifacts, and modes of learning to schools' repertoire, such as project learning, cooperative arrangements, experiments, field trips, and the alike (cf. Schulze, 2011: 764). The attentive reader recognizes many of *Reformpädagogik's* aspects as components of aforementioned thinkers. This observation led critics (i.e., Oelkers, 1989) to claim that *Reformpädagogik* is not a distinct and original phenomenon but only the logical continuation of humanistic *Bildung* of the last 200 years—a dispute which will never be resolved.

Advocates of *Reformpädagogik* suspected pedagogy's problem primarily in the mode of how *Bildung* should be cultivated. Theodor W. Adorno on the contrary criticizes *Bildung* on a conceptional level and grounds his criticism on the promise of the nineteenth century to create an equal, meritocratic, and free society through *Bildung*. While some individuals rose through the ranks of science, business, or administration, the general dynamic of a privileged against a less privileged class largely remained intact (cf. Rieger-Ladich, 2019: 97). *Bildung* just created the illusion of convergence (cf. Tischer, 1989: 7). This illusion is caused by Adorno's philosophical understanding of *Bildung*. He frames it as a double-edged concept describing the inner processes of understanding the world as well as the real-life application of

Bildung (cf. Adorno, 1959/2003: 95). Basically, a re-run of the sophists' dilemma of ethical utilitarianism and epistemological relativism. According to Adorno, it is of utter importance that *Bildung* oscillates between these two poles because as soon as *Bildung* serves only one purpose—either introspection or real-life application—it is corrupted. If *Bildung* only focuses on the inner workings, it is blind for the real-life injustices and thereby silently legitimizes these, whereas if it only focuses on the real-life application, *Bildung* adapts itself to the system in power and also legitimizes it (cf. Adorno, 1959/2003: 104). The contradiction of autonomy and freedom on the one side and the strict societal orders and structures, in which *Bildung* can take place, on the other side, denies *Bildung's* existence because as soon as *Bildung* is defined as a societal aim, it already contradicts itself (cf. ibid.).

For the twentieth century, Adorno primarily criticizes the commodification of *Bildung*, which is fueled by mass media and solely allows the mode of consumption (cf. Liessmann, 2006: 9). Consumption of *Bildung* has to be seen as the process of going through the motions (i.e., reading a book, visiting a museum or theater, etc.) without the in-depth experience of the action. The experience of the less privileged can only be shallow due to their lack of economic and cultural resources necessary for an in-depth study of the works being part of *Bildung* (cf. Rieger-Ladich, 2019: 97). Due to the given economic mode of operation, in which *Bildung* opens doors for citizens and the middle class alike, *Bildung* is reduced to its mere economic value. Under such circumstances *Bildung* is commodified and follows the logic of trade and business. The perception of artifacts in this economically shaped mode is considered *Halbbildung* (semi-*Bildung*) (cf. Tischer, 1989: 7). Thereby, *Halbbildung* is not the half of the original concept but its fiercest enemy (cf. Gruschka, 2001: 30) as the recipient of *Halbbildung* consumes culture with the sole intention of delineating him-/herself from the (perceived to be) uneducated, yet she/he only knows few bits and pieces and uses those only to arrogantly show-off and signal belonging to an assumed to be prestigious group (cf. Adorno, 1959/2003: 115; cf. Gruschka, 2001: 18). The corrupt status quo is reinforced by amusement provided by mass media aiming at conformity of citizen as well as producers of culture alike (cf. Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2008: 153).

3 The Different Layers of *Bildung*

As shown in the prior sections, *Bildung* is a multifaceted term which underwent tremendous historical change. Some aspects of the god-term *Bildung* can be found in almost all realizations/concepts of *Bildung*, others are only temporarily present. In order to conceptualize the workings of the god-term *Bildung*, we differentiate between stratums of *Bildung's*, a superstrate and a substrate. The superstrate is *Bildung's* time-stable core while the substrate underwent change. It is argued that due to the unique entanglement of *Bildung's* super- and substrate-layer, it became Germany's solution to one of the most crucial philosophical problems relating to self-cultivation.

3.1 The Superstrate

At the superstrate level, it can be argued that all concepts of *Bildung* directly or indirectly refer to the idea of *arête*, the imagined state of personal excellence and virtuousness (cf. Böhm, 2010: 12). Excellence and virtuousness are not limited to a chosen few but are stages at which every person, who is willing to make the proper sacrifices, can arrive at. This egalitarian notion is emphasized even in the earliest concepts of *Bildung* (cf. Rieger-Ladich, 2019: 35/36). *Bildung*, just as *arête*, permeates all spheres of human interaction starting at the individual and reaching all the way up to the state level. Due to its egalitarian notion and impact on the individual, the polis, and the state, *Bildung*, as a way to approximate *arête*, is closely related to the concept of *paideia.* Further, *Bildung* has always understood itself as the combination of introspectively arriving at values but also acting these virtues out as "one cannot just be virtuous, one must become virtuosity by performing and hence embodying virtuous actions in public" (Hawhee, 2002: 187)—a combination of theoretical wisdom (*arête*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*).[10] Another time-stable trait of *Bildung* is that it—in accordance with its Ancient Greek tradition—focuses first and foremost on the individual as the unit of analysis as "moral value is centered within a person" (Birmingham, 2004: 316) and from there on alters the community and/or state. *Bildung* and thereby the development, rejuvenation, and renewal of the individual and ultimately all following social arrangements needs to be understood as a bottom-up process. Lastly, all concepts of *Bildung* share Socrates' notion that they are framed as on-going and never-ending processes (cf. Böhm, 2010: 20).

3.2 Bildung's *Substrate and the Problems It Has Solved*

However, the sophists already hinted at the potential dangers of verbalized and acted out virtues. The dilemma the sophists illustrate is the tension between ethical utilitarianism and epistemological relativism. This tension can be considered the pending between truth and impact of the performed and/or uttered virtues. The ever-changing understanding of *Bildung* in Germany mirrors the negotiation of *Bildung's* pending status between the search for truth and *Bildung* as a means for an "individual's desired end" (Noel, 1999: 276). From a historical perspective, *Bildung* oscillates between these two poles. Every time introspection (as the search for truth) was overemphasized, *Bildung* became worldlier and vice versa.[11] Germany and its territorial predecessors established this mechanism by (unconsciously) incorporating Socrates' idea

[10] Using Aristotle's lingua, it could be said that *Bildung* tries to unite the search for *episteme* (truth), the cultivation of *techne* (creational skills), and the creation of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) (cf. Nonaka & Toyama, 2007: 377/378).

[11] This observation can be supported by the references used in the discourses on *Bildung*. Every era of worldly change and challenge is followed by a time of intellectual reformation—read in its

of dialogue/maieutic. Through consultation and intellectual exchange with varying people, thinkers, times/epochs, and artifacts, an approximation of truth and virtuousness should be reached (cf. Böhm, 2010: 20)—an idea which can be found in the accounts of the aforementioned scholars and thinkers as "knowledge creation requires […] practice and dialogue" (Nonaka & Toyama, 2007: 377).

At the superstrate level, the process of *Bildung* unites the Ancient Greek ideals of *arête* and *phronesis*. However, German *Bildung* is more than that. The substrate level of *Bildung*—the concepts which underwent change and were illustrated in the prior section—helped these superstrate ideals to remain relevant and prominent over time. One problem of secular approaches toward morals is the lack of imperative force compared to religious doctrines (cf. Anscombe, 1958). As outlined in the prior section, Germany received the teachings of the Ancient Greek thinkers through the translations provided by the Christian churches. At the beginning, the Christian church used the idea of self-cultivation, self-formation, and *Bildung* as a blueprint for its teachings, later the thinkers of the Enlightenment emancipated themselves from the fossilized church doctrine. However, the underlying teachings on self-formation and cultivation remained intact and found their application in new approaches. Through that unique mode of reception, *Bildung* and thereby the ideals of the Ancient Greek philosophers have a quasi-religious imperative force and anchoring in society[12] while having developed into secular concepts.

In the introduction, we stated that Luhmann and Schorr argue for *Bildung* as pedagogies god-term. God-terms are specific enough that a conversation about them can take place while exhibiting a certain degree of flexibility. The superstrate aspects outlined above are the temporally stable, while the substrate consists of the fluid, elements in the god-term *Bildung*. Linking the Ancient Greek's teachings about self-cultivation to the god-term *Bildung* also solved the problem of relevance and presence in the public discourse. Due to *Bildung's* omnipresence, relevance, and its connectivity to public as well as academic discourse, Germany found a subtle way to incorporate discussions about self-formation, moral education, and self-cultivation into all areas of life.

4 Education's Attempted Murder of Immortal *Bildung*

Historically, *Bildung* oscillated between truth/introspection and worldliness/extrospection. Its potential to adapt to varying times and places made it an extremely potent and long-lasting concept. However, from the second half the

original meaning as return to its original and purest form (cf. Liessmann, 2006: 161)—with (often times) strong references to Ancient Greek philosophy (cf. Lamm, 2005: 93).

[12] This could be seen as an analogy to Max Weber's hypothesis that Protestant teachings lay the foundational work for the development of modern capitalism. After time, the religious shell dissolved but the underlying structure (in his case the Protestant work ethic) remained intact (cf. Weber, 1920/2010) just as Christian teachings used Ancient Greek ideas to inspire self-formation. The religious connotation disappeared but the process was deeply ingrained into society.

twentieth century onwards, an increasing number of scholars has tried to replace *Bildung*. The reasons for these efforts are manifold: *Bildung* has undergone too much historical change and is no longer clear-cut in its aims (cf. Gieseke, 1970), *Bildung* is untranslatable and does not allow connection to international discourse, *Bildung*, due to its definitional vagueness, invites misuse of the term (cf. Thomä, 2012), just to name a few. The substitute of choice in the twentieth and twenty-first century is the concept of competences, which refuses to refer to *Bildung* and its history at all. Instead competences focus solely on functional knowledge and skills to be used in every-day situations (cf. Höhne, 2007). Competences, contrary to *Bildung*, split interest and passion from the artifact and reduce the occupation with an object or artifact to the mere act of gaining transferable skills. The degree of desirability of these skills is dictated by the market (cf. Grigat, 2012: 76). On the contrary, *Bildung* aims at self-cultivation, igniting interest, becoming a more complete human being, and the mastering of life and oneself on multiple level of analysis. This is a deeply personal process which carefully positions the individual on the line between the known and unknown, order and chaos, the self and the world. Competences on the other side—embedded into the broader discourse of education—are universal, neglect individual differences, and are defined from the outside. This is also reflected on the linguistic level: One 'gets educated', 'receives an education', or 'was educated' while '*sich bilden*' requires a reflective pronoun and is an active verb, just as *Bildung* is a reflective and active endeavor. Due to the standard setting from the outside, education and competences can be tested, measured, and compared—an impossible attempt with *Bildung* as it does not produce standardized outcomes. Therefore, *Bildung* and its outcomes are infinite in its potential. *Bildung* enables progress, game-changing discoveries, and paradigm-shifting thoughts while education and competences are capped as they aim at reproduction of already established thoughts and procedures. Thereby, education and competence hinder intellectual disruption and ultimately progress.

Due to the global standard setting of institutions, such as the OECD and the corresponding PISA studies, competences became the gold standard in global educational rankings and comparisons. These approaches are incompatible with *Bildung*. However, due to the global incentive structure from markets, employers, companies, and ultimately the OECD, *Bildung* has been abandoned in German schools. As argued earlier, *Bildung* does not require schools; however, for most citizens, schools have been at least one station in their *Bildungsbiographie.* Momentarily, *Bildung* seems to be at its weakest point, yet human beings seem to require and thrive for a concept more holistically oriented than mere competences. Based on the general framework of Greek philosophy as well as *Bildung*, contemporary philosopher Wilhelm Schmid maps out an approach he named "the art of living" (cf. Schmid, 2005) which aims at living "a beautiful life" (cf. D'Olimpio & Teschers, 2017: 4) and thereby contrasts current educational trends and fashions. Schmid's philosophy represents the gentle resurgence of holistic ideals concerning self-cultivation, *Mündigkeit*, aestheticism, and self-reflection in the twenty-first century.

For the moment, it seems to be the case that the global rise of education and competences slowly but surely kills the concept of *Bildung*. However, if history has

taught us one thing, then that *Bildung* has an enormous transformative potential, is deeply rooted in Germany's history as well as its culture, and has risen from the ashes of prior systems multiple times before. It is extremely likely that we will see *Bildung* resurrect yet another time.

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Experience, Growth, Habit, and Community: The Keys to Understanding Self-cultivation in the Works of John Dewey

Chengbing Wang and Ming Dong

Self-cultivation is a term with broad meanings, and there is as yet no standard academic definition for the range of meanings that it conveys. However, in the context of Chinese language, self-cultivation refers to one's individual cultivation largely pertaining to quality of character, morality, self-control, and spiritual attainments. In Buddhism and Daoism (Daojiao), it mainly refers to personal attainments achieved after practice.

Dewey (1859–1952) is an important representative of American classical pragmatism. He wrote a large number of works, many of which examine wide-ranging spheres of human experience; as a philosopher and educator, he devoted his lifelong efforts to understanding self-cultivation in many of the forms that it takes.

Dewey, however, did not produce many theoretical expositions specifically focused on the issue of self-cultivation, and even the term "self-cultivation" is not to be found in any of the 37 volumes of the *Collected Works of John Dewey*. His relevant opinions on the topic are mainly dispersed in his works that discuss philosophy and pedagogy. This paper does not attempt to sort out, analyze or summarize Dewey's thoughts about self-cultivation in any comprehensive manner; rather, it offers a brief examination of several aspects of his ideas on self-cultivation as found in several of his writings relevant to the topic. We believe that Dewey expressed his unique views on self-cultivation in the context of pragmatic philosophy, and their main characteristics are concentrated in his rejection of binary oppositions between subjects and objects, his advancement of an innovative concept of experience, and his emphasis on the organic connection between human beings and their environment.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_12

Dewey maintained generative and holistic views on self-cultivation. His concept of experience attaches great importance to behaviors and believes that humans constantly modify and develop. However, he also held that, in dealing with the changing world, individuals must cultivate the good habits of intellectual thinking. For this reason, Dewey's views on self-cultivation prioritize the cultivation of intellectual behaviors and intellectual habits. For Dewey, since humans are fundamentally social animals, the core content of their notions of self-cultivation center on the search for personal identity in community, where people learn to be human through social interactions. Dewey's understanding of self-cultivation shares several points in common with some traditional Chinese philosophical views on the topic. For example, both emphasize the organic connections between humans and their environment, the human sense of social responsibility, and the high value of admirable moral qualities. The relationship between Dewey's views on self-cultivation and those of traditional Chinese philosophy represents an important possibility for future research on Chinese and Western comparative philosophy.

1 I

The concept of experience resides at the core of Dewey's philosophy, and his views on self-cultivation are closely related to his concept of experience. Certainly, his concept of experience represents an important key to understanding his thought about self-cultivation, and it emphasizes that humans and the environment have a mutual impact on each other, and understanding their interrelationship is a necessary prerequisite for understanding Dewey's views on self-cultivation.

Dewey held that human beings and the external world do not exist in binary opposition as subject and object, nor did he maintain that the stimulation between the environment and human beings in unidirectional from the former to the latter; that is, human beings are not simply passive recipients of environmental stimulation. On the contrary, human beings constantly produce, reorganize, and transform experiences in their interactions with the environment. In Dewey's thinking, experience is a continuously developing whole, and it occurs and continues by means of the interactions between humans and their environment, "Where there is life, there are already eager and impassioned activities" (MW9: 47). Considerations concerning the relationship between experience and environment in Dewey's philosophy lead us to affirm the following points.

First, in the orthodox view on experience, experience is regarded primarily as a knowledge affair; it is merely a thing at the level of cognizance and merely cognizance with probability. Experience is thus also a product of the activities of a one-way subject. Dewey (1917) argued that according to the pragmatism's understanding of experience, it is primarily an affair closely related to the mutual integration, influence, and creation of subject and object, and he writes that "it assuredly appears as an affair of the intercourse of a living being with its physical and social environment" (p. 7).

Second, according to the traditional view of Western philosophy on experience, experience is primarily a psychic phenomenon involving a subject's sense perception and sense activities, and it is deeply influenced by individual subjectivity. Dewey's notion of experience pays relatively more attention to the subject's object orientation and the objectivity of cognizance, and it emphatically stresses subjective participation and the variability of subjectivity in experience as actions. "What experience suggests about itself is a genuinely objective world which enters into the actions and sufferings of men and undergoes modifications through their responses" (Dewey, 1917, p. 7).

Third, as with the relation between universality and generality, the traditional view of Western philosophy on experience stresses particularism, while in terms of the continuity of universality and the pursuit of certainty, the traditional theory of experience raises serious theoretical dilemmas. Some philosophers even consider necessity and universality to be irrelevant to experience, where experience is merely a by-product of cognitive activities with their own uncertainties and whose very legitimacy is itself questionable, too. Dewey, however, maintains that pragmatism's new notion of experience suggests that experience itself just takes on various connections and internal particularities that are the very requisites for necessity and universality. These connections are abundant rather than meager, multiple rather than single, and reasonable and logical, and the activities of experience are just the manifestation of its legitimacy; Dewey (1917) writes, "An experience that is an undergoing of an environment and a striving for its control in new directions is pregnant with connexions" (pp. 7–8).

Fourth, according to the traditional notion of experience, experience and thought are antithetical, because thought is external to experience, while experience is a springboard leading to thought. In addition, people often abandon experience because it is deemed inferior by merely featuring probability, especially when they start to acquire advanced thought which is based on necessity; but that is to kick down the ladder. Dewey's pragmatic notion of experience maintains that experience itself simply contains thought, and that there is no conscious experience without any thought, since both thought and experience are important parts of reflective activities, given the profound continuity and integrity between thought and experience, noting that reflection "is native and constant" (Dewey, 1917, p. 8). This leads Roth (1962) to write, "The dominant theme of John Dewey's philosophy was human self-realization achieved through interaction with nature" (p. 4).

2 II

Dewey's views on self-cultivation are closely related to his pragmatist understanding of experience. Still, there does not currently exist any broad consensus on the specific meanings of self-cultivation, even though it supposedly implies the constant growth and development of an individual no matter how it is interpreted (see Uffelman, 2011, p. 323). In Dewey's opinion, individual growth and development are two of the core

ideas suggested by his concept of experience, which are closely related to self-cultivation. For Dewey, the growth of an individual often refers to the reorganization and transformation of experience, a continuous process of growth whose intended end is simply more continuous growth (see MW9: 54–57). "Growth, or growing as developing, not only physically but intellectually and morally, is one exemplification of the principle of continuity" (LW13: 19).

As shown by this description of growth, Dewey valued a kind of meliorism and thus believed that we do not need to acquire once and for all any particular final and fixed end (such as the good) in confirmation that it is just the goal that we want to achieve. On the contrary, his view advocates reform and the belief that things will gradually develop in the direction of good through prudent actions, instead of being accomplished overnight. In Dewey's opinion, the former view still does not get out of the mire of dualism because it is, actually, just another instantiation of the binary opposition between subject and object with the function of separating the purpose from the means. That, however, results in making the purpose something given outside the process, while the means becomes the slave of the end, thereby losing its intrinsic value.

By valuing experience in itself, meliorism holds that there is no need to seek an end outside of its processes, and that these processes of experience contain both ends and means. Dewey believed that "the process of growth, of improvement and progress, rather than the static outcome and result, becomes the significant thing" (MW12: 181). Therefore, we should consider how to constantly discover the connection between one piece of experience and another within the processes of experience and strive to improve it step by step. Dewey thus writes, "Growth itself is the only moral 'end'" (MW12: 181), and for this reason, human self-cultivation itself becomes a process of continuous improvement and growth whereby an individual's self-cultivation lasts as long as he lives. In other words, one is never too old to practice self-cultivation!

On the other hand, according to Dewey, the processes of self-cultivation are not clearly separable from the cultivation of behavioral habits; he writes, "The basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes" (LW13: 18). Concretely speaking, the chief traits of a habitual activity include: (a) uniformity and regularity, (b) ease and facility, and (c) active tendency or propensity (see LW17: 205). Intellectual thinking is itself another aspect of habit.

Dewey divided experience into two levels, "primary experience" (direct experience) and "reflective experience" (secondary experience). He characterized the former as gross, macroscopic, and crude, but saw it as the starting point and foothold of empirical naturalism. Primary experience does not include self-reflection and typically refers to customary actions. In contrast, reflective experience is refined and derives from a distillation of crude experience. Dewey emphasized that reflective experience draws its content from primary experience, to which it refers itself again and again (see LW1: 15–17).

According to Dewey's understanding of the concept of experience, the actions of a human being are connected with the environment by feedback mechanisms,

thus resulting in experience. Such active doing or trying to do differs from passively undergoing experiences, and this difference determines the variety of experience. As actors, it is the expected end of humans to acquire more control over their acts, thereby producing predictable and controllable experience. From Dewey's point of view, the means of an actor to control his experiential activities is intellectual thinking, which is a kind of empirical thinking not only because it comes from experience but also because it is at the same time reflection on the processes of experience. Through rational thinking, the actor thinks about connections within experience and tries to make calculations based on them, thereby leading to prudent actions in the end.

Dewey was less interested in how intelligence can be applied to acts than to understand how we subject our acts to the guidance of intelligence. For any actor, in Dewey's view, self-cultivation is just a process that employs intelligence in order to constantly improve one's acts. Intelligence, however, is different from reason, and it does not refer to cognitive ability in an epistemology sense but to a kind of ability that develops continuously in the process of interaction with the surrounding environment.

Dewey further believed that impulse itself is the most primary human activity, as can be seen in the activity of a newborn baby. It is an instinctive impulse, a release of energy that in itself remains crude; Kanne (1988) notes that "It is undetermined and uninformed" (p. 1214), but it also has its positive side, for it is "more plastic, more pliable" (p. 1215). It is precisely because of the plasticity of impulse that a human can increase the significance of experience and successfully organize and transform it. In Dewey's view, the most significant result of the plasticity of impulse is the acquisition of various habits; he writes that "a habit is a form of executive skill, of efficiency in doing. A habit means an ability to use natural conditions as means to ends. It is an active control of the environment through control of the organs of action" (MW9: 51).

Habits demonstrate the most basic form of interaction between a human and the environment. Rather than a passive adaptation to the environment, they represent an active doing that has certain impacts on the environment. Considering this, Kanne (1988) concludes: "Without the structure provided by habits, human behavior would be random and chaotic. Habits not only provide order in an individual person's life, they also enable human beings to interact with their natural and social environments in a relatively regular, predictable manner" (p. 1215).

In some new situations, however, habits sometimes fail to play their due role, as Dewey recognized; he wrote, "The most skillful aptitude bumps at times into the unexpected, and so gets into trouble from which only observation and invention extricate it" (MW14: 121–122). This marks the moment when the impulse to solve a problem occurs, thus leading to intelligence as a process that undergoes deliberate deduction that then puts itself into practice, after which it receives environmental feedback in a process of constant adjustment.

Acquiring workable solutions to various problems arising in various situations, intelligence itself gradually becomes a new habit, a fixed behavioral mode that prepares for similar problems in the future. One could therefore say that the complete behavioral modes of humankind consist of habit, impulse, and intelligence, none

of which can be absent. Habits supply the deep background of human behaviors, and without them, any human acts are simply random; impulse is the catalyst for improving intelligence by arousing enthusiasm for active exploration; and intelligence represents the ultimate embodiment of "human nature," the essential capability that ensures the distillation and extension of human experience.

3 III

In Dewey's philosophy, self-cultivation ideally manages the relationship between individual and community. In this respect, Dewey acknowledged the status of the individual as he attempted to find the proper combination between the individual and the community. This is to say that Dewey clearly recognized the unshakable status of individual and individuality in his thinking on the concept of self-cultivation, which is undoubtedly of great significance in Western society.

At the same time, Dewey hesitated to oppose society and individuals because he did not believe in the notion of an atomized individual; therefore, in his view, there could be no growth or cultivation of an absolutely isolated individual. To Dewey's thinking, society itself is not a congenital entity, and it has to rely on gathered individuals to exist in the first place; for these reasons, we must situate human cultivation within a particular social context in our efforts to understand it. Campbell (1998) writes, "For Dewey, human individuals are inherently social—creatures for whom association, community, is essential … we need groups to *become* human" (p. 30). In other words, self-cultivation is inseparable from the community in which it is pursued. Uffelman (2011) writes, "The potential appearance of contradiction inherent to an alleged pragmatic theme of self- cultivation can be circumvented by acknowledging the continuity between growing and expanding individuals and a flourishing society" (p. 328).

We can roughly break down the relationship between self and community in Dewey's terms into the following main aspects.

First, individual human beings do not simply exist in a community but also develop a kind of self-identity through the community in which they live. Dewey believed that human individuals are congenital social animals, and for such social animals, the community is both natural and necessary because humans can only rely on the community to become human beings by developing their natures and personalities; to "learn to be human" (LW2: 332) is an endless process, and the community is always needed. Similarly, modern society itself consists of complex processes of continuous reconstruction, which partly depends on the improvement of the notions and concepts of those who live in that society and partly depends on the refinement and improvement of its basic systems. The former encourages people to think more clearly about the nature of their inherited concept of "community" and about how to improve it, while the latter is conducive to developing a better community and thus to achieving full self-actualization.

Second, the community in which the cultivation occurs ought to tolerate diversity and heterogeneity. Dewey believed that the community should be homogeneous, and a community that is not fully shared is not a community. On the other hand, the homogeneity of a community should not weaken, negate, or cover up its own diversity and heterogeneity, because, as Dewey writes, "it would be a poor kind of society whose members were personally undeveloped" (LW7: 345). At the same time, the community should display the abundance, diversity, and complexity of perspectives, since only in this way can its members have more diversified and extensive experience. Dewey writes that, in the living context of a social community, "unity cannot be a homogeneous thing" (MW10: 204) and therefore people should concentrate their efforts to augment it, and "it must be a unity, created by drawing out and composing into a harmonious whole the best, the most characteristic which each contributing race and people has to offer" (MW10: 204).

Third, the community provides the necessary space for self-cultivation. The community constantly undergoes processes of gradual generation, so it can never become too rigid or unchangeable; Dewey notes, "It is characterized by *histories*, that is, by continuity of change proceeding from beginnings to endings" (LW1: 6). More specifically, a prerequisite step in the makeup of the community involves simple combination or interaction: "Everything that exists in as far as it is known and knowable is in interaction with other things" (LW1: 138). No amount of aggregated collective action of itself is sufficient to constitute a community (see LW2: 330), but it is at the level of integration that people's need for a full community increases in the modern world with its shared activities and common values. This makes it possible for transactions in a community to become a kind of shared social act similar to "taking part in a game, in conversation, in a drama, in family life" (LW7: 345).

Through cooperation, people eliminate the common defects in their daily lives to achieve their perceived common goals; as Dewey writes:

> Wherever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it. And where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it is a good shared by all, there is in so far a community. (MW2: 328)

In the end, shared values become possible, thus creating the possibility of a fuller community. Due to their shared goals, beliefs, aspirations, and knowledge, abetted by multiple forms of communication, people gradually come to have common concerns and thereby begin to live in shared communities. For those individuals who live in this way, "we" is as inevitable as "I" (see LW2: 330) and they must have a set of core values that operate as the important values of the community. In this way, each individual in a dynamic community feels success or failure together with the community, and for such a community, "Shared experience is the greatest of human goods" (LW1: 157).

Fourth, the success of a community depends on whether the common good is pursued in a democratic way. Dewey believed that self-cultivation is not a simple self-fulfillment, and it does not encourage an attitude of retreat from life. On the contrary, people in modern society may and must join together to solve common problems.

However, it is this kind of gathering itself rather than any particular solution to a problem that becomes the beneficial result of community activities. The process of building and promoting the community is just the process of performing this shared activity and creating shared values; it is the process of having dialogues and long-term cooperation through special issues. Even if people encounter occasional or even very serious obstacles and temporary setbacks, they should continue to have confidence in the life of the community because democracy is "a moral ideal" (LW14: 228), "the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained" (LW14: 229).

Fifth, the clear awareness of all the implications of a community life constitutes the concept of democracy. In Dewey's view, the core of the concept of community is the trust in democracy and the belief that sharing life itself is the goal of human life. Democracy is not a substitute for other principles in community life; it is the community life itself. The conception and the very ideal of the community provide the actual measures of group life because they subordinate individual limitations in order to reach the height of development. Therefore, whenever there are common actions, and so long as the consequence of the actions is appreciated as a kind of good by all the individuals involved in those actions, the fulfillment of that good will have a great impact on assisting an individual to maintain positive desire and effort. Therefore, we can achieve a democratic idea (not to be confused with "utopia") when we start with the de facto community and grasp it ideologically, in which "the conceptions and shibboleths which are traditionally associated with the idea of democracy take on a veridical and directive meaning only when they are construed as marks and traits of an association which realizes the defining characteristics of a community" (LW2: 329).

4 IV

From the above discussion, we can see that Dewey clearly expressed his understanding of self-cultivation in his philosophy, even though he never produced any works specifically dedicated to the topic, much less a systematic theoretical analysis of it. Dewey's understanding of self-cultivation reflects his consistent philosophical style and discourse style. From the above, we can see that Dewey's discussions of self-cultivation display his signature approach to public philosophy and the discourse mode of narrative philosophy. His discussions of self-cultivation are not empty sermonizing, not meaningless academic philosophy, and not speculation based on abstract principles. They rather represent his attempt to think about issues of being human and thus investigate the particular issue of self-cultivation by going beyond abstract philosophical speculation to establish itself on the living conditions of humans in modern society.

Whether discussing the experiential premise of the occurrence of human cultivation or the forming of habits, Dewey was always concerned about the growth of

concrete, realistic, and living human beings. His discussions on the organic relationship between humans and the environment are where we can find his thoughts on self-cultivation that, composed more than 100 years ago, remain of high philosophical value today. One point brought home by Dewey that has lasting significance is that we can acquire an in-depth understanding and experience of human self-cultivation only when we are fully aware of the intimate, organic, and internal relationship between humans and the environment. Likewise, Dewey's discussion on human intelligence and human habits reveals the concern of a famous educationist about the character that a high-quality human ought to have. In Dewey's mind, that is, high-quality individuals should have good habits, which are reflected in both intellectual thinking and human behaviors.

Dewey's concept of self-cultivation engages the individual in ways that see him/her as anything but a purely atomic individual. For Dewey, human self-cultivation does not typically aim at a self-esteem or a self-development radically distanced from the community; instead, it encourages the individual to learn to become human and seek for self-identity through social interaction with both the community and other individuals. Therefore, human self-cultivation is inseparable from human sociality.

Specialists in Dewey's philosophy sometimes affirm the appropriateness of the word "responsibility" to describe his concern with human cultivation (see Hickman, 1990, p. 196). Such an emphasis on the balance between individuals and the whole makes Dewey an important academic source of the post-1980s communitarian philosophy. Similarly, from the perspective of self-cultivation, we also can have a deeper understanding of Dewey's proposition that schools (mainly primary and secondary) are the most important vehicle for young adults to properly take their place in society.

There are clear differences in the understanding of self-cultivation in the works of Dewey and James (1842–1910), another major representative of pragmatism. James reveals a strong interest in religion, as reflected in his opus, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, in which he explored themes such as the mental states of meditation (see James, 1985). Dewey, however, considered ways to foster self-cultivation without discussing the role of personal mystical and transcendental experiences, and he seldom considered the function of religious rites and ceremonies.

In addition, Dewey's views on self-cultivation share many commonalities with traditional Chinese philosophy. For example, Dewey's discussion about the due relationship between humans and the environment, about the development of human habits, and about the relationship between the individual and the community coincides with many Confucian ideas (such as the unity of man and nature, diversity within harmony, and social responsibility).

In fact, the ongoing dialogue between American pragmatism and Chinese philosophy was originally begun when pragmatism was first introduced into China. As early as in the 1920s, Hu Shi (1891–1962) and Jiang Menglin (1886–1964) were among the pioneers in bringing Dewey's pragmatic philosophy into comparative dialogue with traditional Chinese philosophy. Due to various reasons, such work stagnated for quite a long time after the 1930s. Since the 1980s, thanks to widened and thus smoother channels of academic exchanges, and thanks also to the increased

attention that Western scholars have been paying to Chinese culture and philosophy due to the great increase of China's collective strength, continued dialogue between pragmatism and Chinese philosophy seems to have been inevitable.

Currently, the most impressive advances in the comparative study of classical Western pragmatism and traditional Chinese philosophy lie in the area of comparative research on John Dewey and traditional Chinese philosophy. However, from the written sources that both Chinese and foreign scholars have relied on in their comparative research on Dewey and Chinese philosophy, it can be seen that the comparative study of self-cultivation in academic circles has not yet been fully explored. Therefore, a comparative study of Dewey's views on self-cultivation and those of traditional Chinese philosophy offers great promise and presents an important research topic in the field of comparative philosophy (Wang, 2017).

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Democratic Self-cultivation

Leonard J. Waks

1 Introduction

Democratic values are under siege. In the West, far-right populist regimes with anti-democratic tendencies—nationalist hostility to immigrants and those with religious and ethnic differences, attacks on the free press—have recently led governments in Brazil, Colombia, India, Turkey, Hungary, Poland and the USA among other countries. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)'s annual 2018 report on the state of democracy in 167 nations, "deep disillusionment with establishment politics means that the quality of democratic societies is eroding." The report "considers the U.S. under President Donald Trump, a "flawed democracy," having been downgraded from a "full democracy" when he was elected" (Rapoza, 2019).

Meanwhile, China's quest for democracy has, according to philosopher Tan (2007), "been a frustrating tale of broken promises and unfulfilled hope" (2007, 142). Since the May Fourth Movement, Chinese intellectuals and youth leaders have called for liberal, Western style democracy in China, but their democratic goals have been thwarted.

Despite many setbacks, democratic values remain attractive to many Chinese intellectuals, civil society leaders, and even members of the Chinese Communist Party. Scholars have recently been searching for forms of democracy suitable in light of Chinese cultural history. Fewer today think that democracy must assume the liberal Western form. Many look instead to Confucianism—as more in keeping with Chinese traditional values and a firmer ground for Asian democracy. As one influential scholar puts it, "In East Asian societies democracy would be most politically effective and culturally relevant if it were rooted in and operates on the 'Confucian habits and mores' with which East Asians are still deeply saturated… if democracy were a *Confucian democracy*" (Kim, 2014, 4, emphasis original).

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_13

Some leading theorists of such a Confucian Democracy have drawn on the philosophy of John Dewey (Hall & Ames, 1999; Tan, 2004), emphasizing both similarities between Deweyan and Confucian conceptions of the self as inherently social, and Dewey's notion of democracy itself as primarily social rather than political. This move opens a space for democratic reform efforts in civil society and education rather than in the state, and indeed, many of these democratic efforts have been encouraged by the current Chinese government.

1.1 Confucian Education for the West

This paper reverses the direction. Instead of turning to the West—and John Dewey in particular—to interpret Confucian democracy for China, I turn to the East—and specifically to Confucianism—to address the democratic crisis in the West, drawing on Confucian self-cultivation education to strengthen John Dewey's democratic education project.

For Dewey democracy is primarily a form of associated living, marked by the broad sharing of interests and rich communication among social groups. These defining democratic values are particularly relevant in countering today's far-right populism, which trades on antagonisms among ethnic and religious groups, and denies the authority of both scientific inquiry and investigative journalism.

In appealing to Confucian philosophy to bolster Dewey's educational project I adopt the framework of global Intercultural philosophy (Bai et al., 2014; Brooks, 2013), placing philosophical approaches from different cultural traditions together to augment intellectual resources and advance philosophical understanding. This approach initially dictates a comparative method: "setting into dialogue sources from across cultural, linguistic, and philosophical streams" (Littlejohn, n.d.). I draw particularly upon the *Analects* of Confucius (Eno, 2015), the collected works of Dewey (see references for details), standard interpretive works, and secondary literature found through structured searches associating both philosophers with terms such as "classical study" and "ritual" and "music". But I go beyond mere comparison, to argue for an enriched form of democratic education, bolstered by Confucian insights, and suitable for contemporary Western democracies.

My argument proceeds by first outlining the central aims and methods of Confucian self-cultivation education, emphasizing its two key elements—reverent study of literary classics as texts isolated for special study, and performance of customary ritual; and second, providing a similar outline of Dewey's democratic education for comparison, noting Dewey's rejection of both of these elements of Confucian self-cultivation education. I then argue that both classical study and ritual can nonetheless be incorporated in democratic education in the Deweyan spirit to strengthen democratic values.

2 Confucian Self-cultivation Education

2.1 Background

Confucius (551–479 BCE) belonged to the *shi*—originally the class of chariot-riding warriors and archers governed by a strict, ritualized ethical code. As rulers turned to a professional military after the Chinese iron age (officially dated as starting in approximately 600 BCE), the *shi were* transformed into an administrative and scholar class known for their proficiency at ritual ceremonies and stringent code of conduct.

Confucius came of age during the Spring and Autumn period, (771–476 BCE), a time of great turbulence and disorder. Here some background is in order. The Zhou dynasty began when King Wu, son of King Wen of Zhou (the "cultivated King"), defeated the Shang dynasty rulers in 1046 BCE. When King Wu died, his young son Cheng became king and his brother Dan, the Duke of Zhou, became regent. Dan is widely regarded as both a capable ruler and culture hero—the legendary creator of the *I Ching*, the *Book of Poetry*, and the basic texts of Chinese classical music, as well as the founder of the *Rites of Zhou.*

In a long decline after 970 BCE, the Zhou kings eventually became figureheads. In 771, after the death of You, the twelfth Zhou King, and the near destruction of his capital at Haojing, the Zhou court, devoid of power, relocated eastward to Luoyang. This date marks the beginning of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the first stage of which is known as the Spring and Autumn period (771–476). During this period the nobles fought among themselves for power, and the traditional Zhou culture languished.

Confucius's father belonged to the lower aristocracy of the state of Lu, which prided itself on counting among its founders Dan, the Duke of Zhou. After the decline of the Zhou court, Lu became the repository of Zhou aristocratic culture (Eno, 2015, ii). It was thus natural that Confucius would look back to the presumed golden age when Zhou culture thrived, when Zhou sage kings ruled, ritual codes were observed, and society was well-ordered and harmonious.

Like others in his family, Confucius was deeply impressed by the Zhou ritual practices as representations of proper relations among people with different social statuses. The neglect of ritual practice, he felt, had undermined the normative social order, and Confucius set out to preserve and re-establish Zhou knowledge and ritual behavior among leaders and their ministers (Ivanhoe, 2000). The *Analects* provide Confucius's vision of legitimate Zhou culture, and his account of why it's pattern contained the basis for a new utopia (Eno, 1989). He said of the Zhou "How splendid was its pattern! And I follow the Zhou" (III. 14); "The virtue of the Zhou may be said to be the utmost of virtue" (VIII. 20).

2.2 *The Ideal of the* Junzi

Confucius's moral ideal was the *junzi*—literally "ruler's sons" or "princes", but in common usage, superior persons or noblemen—as opposed to *xiaoren*—petty, servile commoners. Confucius *ethicized* the term *junzi;* he reconceived *junzi* not as men of noble *pedigree*, but of noble *character* (Pines, 2017). He urged his students to aim at the highest virtue—to become junzi and rise above pettiness (VI.13). *Junzi* possessed humaneness or benevolence (*ren*), an over-arching virtuous character incorporating such component virtues as ritual propriety (*li*), filial piety (*xiao*), wisdom (*zhi*), sympathy (*shu*), cultural refinement (*wen*) and charisma (*de*) among other virtues suited for leadership (Olberding, 2013, 21). Confucius in the *Analects* tells us that *Junzi* are concerned with lifelong learning and self-improvement; not about obtaining full bellies or comfortable homes (I. 14). They are always inclusive and never partisan (II. 14). Their virtue is truly radical: "The junzi works on the root—once the root is planted, the *dao* is born" (I. 2) "They are moral through and through: they insist on nothing and refuse nothing, but simply align themselves with the right" (IV. 10). Once learners grasp Zhou patterns and constrain their behavior by ritual practice, they can never turn back—their moral transformation is permanent (VI. 27).

Confucius noted that despite his unstinting efforts even he did not fully exemplify it (VII. 33). The junzi is thus a moral *ideal,* but one that served as a guide light in fostering *ren* in his students. By dedication to the ideal, they in turn could exert moral authority as teachers and ministers, spread Zhou learning and practice, and restore peace and harmony to "all under heaven".

2.3 *The Confucian Curriculum*

Confucius sought to transform young men into *junzi* through a curriculum of reverential learning of literary classics (*xue*) and ritual observance (*li*). According to legend, Confucius was the editor of the six Zhou classics: *The Classic of Poetry, The Book of History, The Book of Changes* (*I Ching*), *The Book of Rites, The Classic of Music* (now lost) and *The Spring and Autumn Annals.* Students in self-cultivation education read these texts closely and reflected on them with teachers and peers to disclose their deeper meanings. The educational ideal expressed in this tradition has recently been synthesized by Tan (2017) as follows:

> The aim of education is to inculcate *ren* (humanity) through *li* (normative behaviours) so that learners could realise and broaden *dao* (Way). To achieve this aim, the curriculum should be holistic, broad-based and integrated where students constantly practise what they have learnt through self-cultivation and social interaction.

In Confucian self-cultivation education, the Zhou classics were the initial focus of learning, and students were expected to master them. But the aim of study was not merely to memorize them or grasp their literal meaning, but rather to absorb, through discussions and reflection about them, the ancient wisdom they depict. As

Allen (2017) puts this point, in Confucian education, "classical learning is a school of experience… The Classics are the works of ancient sages and a record of their experience. The study of this material is a method for establishing an intuitive continuity between that experience and our own." Through reading and reflection the students were to attain a larger view of the world and greater flexibility and responsiveness of behavior (Ivanhoe, 2000, p. 2).

The knowledge gained through close study of the classical texts is thus inherently *moral*. Confucian thought makes no sharp distinction between thinking and doing. Elliot and Tsai (2008) note:

> For Confucius, 'pursuing knowledge' or 'knowing' refers to a dynamic process of becoming intelligent, of 'realizing' new possibilities for action within a specific set of circumstances of which he is a participant...Knowledge is not determined independently of action in the circumstances of everyday life; the relationship between knowledge and action is a non-instrumental one. Knowledge is only fully achieved in action.

The aim of classical learning is effectiveness in action. As Confucius in the Analects explains,

> You can recite the 300 poems from the *Book of Odes*, but when you try to use them in administration, they are not effective, and in handling the outlying regions, you cannot apply them, then even though you know a lot, what good is it? (XIII.5).

Confucius expected students to do the heavy lifting: "Where there is no agitated attempt at thinking, I do not provide a clue; where there is no stammered attempt at expression, I do provide a prompt. If I raise one corner and do not receive the other three in response, I teach no further" (VII. 8). Self-cultivation education was in this way learner-centered—the learners cultivated *themselves*—within a group of peers bound by filial bonds of mutual regard and support.

Classical study was also aimed at inculcating a deep love of learning—the development of lifelong study and practice as a source of edification and joy (*le*): Confucius says of textual learning, "Knowing it is not so good as loving it; loving it is not so good as taking joy in it (VI. 6)." The opening statement in the Analects sounds this keynote: "to study and at appropriate times, to practice what one has studied, is this not a pleasure?" (I. 1). (For more on the role of joy in Confucian self-cultivation, see Shun, 2017).

Classical study was united with ritual practice in self-cultivation education. Confucian rituals represented normative human relations—between ruler and ruled, father and son, elder brother to younger brothers, husband to wife, teacher to student and friend to friend—in symbolic form. In the hierarchical relations subordinates showed obedience to their superiors, who in turn showed benevolent regard for their subordinates; thus everyone had respected and satisfying roles, symbolizing a harmonious society. These rituals were supplemented with music and dance—augmenting the beauty and joy to be found in ritual performances (Ji, 2008; Liu, 2014; Yi, 2017).

Some Confucian rituals had profound educational significance. One example will suffice. In the crown prince's school entrance ceremony—consisting of a "request for lessons" and "offering simple presents" and "bowing to teachers", in Tang dynasty China, the crown prince bows twice to the teacher, who bows once to the crown

prince. The crown prince represents all children, and the ritual symbolizes respect for teachers (Park, 2019). Even today school children in China bow at the beginning of each class and say "good morning (afternoon), teacher," and bow at the end of class and say "thank you, teacher."

3 Dewey and Democratic Education

3.1 Background

Dewey first took up democratic education in the American socially stratified multi-ethnic industrial city of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As he states in *The School and Society* (MW1: 1–92),[1] many peoples had been drawn from all corners of the earth to work as laborers in huge capitalist enterprises in the industrial cities, transforming the USA from a frontier society of roughly equal, enterprising, (white!) individuals to a vastly unequal society of elites and ethnically and socially diverse workers struggling for basic democratic rights. This was also a time of great turbulence and disorder. Dewey's concerns were shared by other intellectuals and activists of the American Progressive Era (1890–1920) such as Upton Sinclair, Jane Addams, Lester Ward, Florence Kelley, Grace Abbott and Richard T. Ely: poverty, class warfare, racial discrimination, child welfare, women's rights, free speech and press, and world peace. Dewey was active in the fight for equal justice in all of these interconnected areas, for example, as a founding trustee in 1899 of Jane Addams' Hull House (a social settlement house for immigrants), founding member in 1909 of the National Association for Colored People (NAACP), a prominent early member of the American Civil Liberties Union (founded in 1920) and other movements for peace and social harmony for all.

3.2 Dewey's Ideal Democracy and Democratic Personality

Dewey conceived democracy ideally as a "form of associated living" with shared interests within and rich communication between social groups and classes (MW9: 94f.) In such a society, while conflicts were inevitable, they could be resolved peacefully, through discussion and negotiation, rather than violence. Dewey's most detailed

[1] All citations to the works of Dewey in the text and bibliography are from *The Collected Works of John Dewey,* 1882–1953, ed. by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967–1991), published in three series as *The Early Works* (EW), *The Middle Works* (MW) and *The Later Works* (LW). These designations are followed by volume and page number. In the bibliography I also include the original year of publication.

discussion of democracy as a form of associated living is found in Chap. 7 Of *Democracy and Education* (MW9: 88f). In this chapter he both analyzes the concept of democracy and explains the moral value of the democratic way of life.

Dewey begins by explaining that any modern society, democratic or otherwise, is in concrete reality a collection of many interrelated groups, and thus a society is a kind of complex super group, with individuals belonging to various subgroups—economic, political, religious and cultural. He asks: what is the standard of value for any group, and answers that in any group we will find some common interests—for otherwise what would hold the group together—and interactions with other groups (MW9: 88–89). We then can thus evaluate any group along two dimensions: how numerous and varied are the interests shared by members; and how full and free are the interactions of the group with other groups.

He then provides two examples and evaluates them to demonstrate his point. In a criminal band, the members share only a single interest—in plunder. This narrow interest in turn limits its free exchange with other groups—they cannot let their potential victims know about the one thing that holds them together. The criminal band is thus an impoverished form of group life. A healthy family, on the other hand, shares many mutual interests—in health, economic and cultural development and more. And the progress of any member in advancing these interests is felt as valuable by all of the others. Their lives bring them into contact with many other groups and organizations—economic, cultural, educational and political; they actively support these groups which, in turn, support them in achieving their shared aims.

Dewey then moves from these examples of well-contained groups to modern societies. In a non-democratic society some groups have inordinate power and use it to dominate other groups for their own narrow aims. The ruling class sends directives to those in subordinate groups but has no interest in taking their thoughts and feelings into account, so there is no communication. The lack of equitable intercourse limits the growth of both classes, because diversity of stimulation creates novelty and provokes thinking. Both groups remain stagnant, ignorant, fearful and antagonistic.

What, then, is a *democratic* society. Dewey says that the two criteria of social value, taken together, "point to democracy." They do not, however, sufficiently *define* it, a fact which has sometimes been neglected. I will shortly turn to the significance of this neglect.

Democratic society is precisely characterized by two features: First, in a democratic society, not only are there numerous and varied shared interests, but also greater reliance on the *recognition of these shared interests as a factor in social control.* That is, the shared *experiences* of mutual interest and cooperative activity by themselves are not sufficient; members also have consciously to *recognise* mutuality as a factor in sustaining and enhancing group life; they must *consciously* engage in both self-direction and social influence by explicit reference to the ends of others beyond their immediate circle of family and friends, and must have *self-consciousness* of doing so.

Second, not only do groups interact freely and fully, but there must also be a consequent *change in social habit*—the *continuous readjustment* of both individuals and groups as they meet new situations produced by their ever-increasing variety of social

contacts. This requires a self-conscious, even loving, *embrace* of new challenges and the behavioral changes required to meet them (LW11, 549–561).

Democracy thus understood requires specific educational arrangements. The interests of members are mutually interpenetrating, and all share an interest in continual re-adjustment under changing conditions. As they seek to be self-governing, and reject external authority, they must find a substitute in voluntary disposition—self-government through communication and mutual concern. These dispositions are not "natural" even though they have roots in deep human instincts. They need to be developed through an education of a specific sort—one based on *shared activities* requiring *communication and cooperative action.* Even more important, as in a modern society citizens have to communicate over large distances and across many differences to refer their own actions to those of others, they must actively cooperate in breaking down all barriers and obstacles of race, class, ethnicity and gender that keep individuals or groups from perceiving the full impact of the aims and actions of others.

The goal of democratic education at the individual level is to foster the democratic personality (Dewey's *junzi*)—marked by such virtues as intelligent sympathy for those from all social groups and active concern to break down social barriers (MW9: 128); flexibility of re-adjustment to new situations (LW11: 550); and "attitudes of open- mindedness, intellectual integrity, observation and interest in testing opinions and beliefs that are characteristic of the scientific attitude" (LW9: 100).

3.3 Dewey's Curriculum

For Dewey, every course in every subject should have as its chief end the cultivation of democratic personality (LW9: 100). Knowledge in all fields—from history, literature and science to mathematics—originated in human efforts to solve problems and enhance life. Each field makes a unique contribution to moral development (MW4: 206–214). The arts, for example, provide vivid, intense models of consummatory value. History and geography provide records of human attempts to meet ends in concrete natural and social circumstances and hence are rich with lessons for effective action.

All intellectual learning, at all levels, should thus begin in cooperative endeavors with shared ends that call out for knowledge inputs. As Dewey puts this in his most concentrated summary:

> (a) "Every educative process should begin with *doing something*… something inherently significant, and of such a nature that the pupil appreciates for himself its importance enough to take a vital interest in it" (MW4: 186). In a surprisingly dogmatic tone, he adds that "All intellectual instruction would grow—*all of it*—out of the needs and opportunities of activities engaged in by the students themselves. This principle would be *universal*" (MW4: 188, my emphasis).

(b) These activities in turn inevitably call out for *communicated knowledge inputs*, which must: cluster about the development of activities. Some information is immediately required in order to do anything successfully; a child cannot garden intelligently without learning about soils, seeds, measures, plants and their growth, the facts of rain, sunshine, etc. Interest in the continuous carrying on of such an activity would, however, generate curiosity and openness of mind about many things not directly related to the immediate needs (MW4: 189).
When teachers share information or direct students to written materials, it is only educative to the extent that it grows naturally out of questions the students are raising, and fits into their own frames of experience to increase their practical efficacy in, and deepen their grasp of, practical situations out of which it grows (MW9: 195).
(c) The communicative exchanges should culminate in presentation of organized, systematic knowledge, of the sort drawn upon by adult professionals in their occupations. This knowledge should be *scientific—that is,* grounded in experience and held as tentative and subject to further test and modification. Because it has a firm rational basis grounded in prior experience, it can be used to enrich subsequent cooperative activities. It is taken on board for use. "What is known, in a given case, is what is sure, certain, settled, disposed of; that which we think *with* rather than that which we think about" (MW9: 197). This organized subject matter knowledge then serves as the intellectual ground in further practical activities. It is settled, but not certain—it is thus always, at least indirectly, subject to test in subsequent experience.

For Dewey, subject matters should never be isolated in separate disciplines (science, mathematics, literature) but always coordinated around human problems and their cooperative resolution (MW7: 114–128; MW9: 259). This is especially true for literary study, which marks Dewey's approach in stark contrast with Confucian self-cultivation education. Indeed, a central plank of Dewey's "Pedagogic Creed" is that literary study must follow upon, not precede, human problems in curricular learning (EW5: 90). This reverses the order in the Confucian curriculum.[2]

A striking example is Dewey's discussion of the uses of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in primary education. Because, he says, American colonial history and Defoe's novel address the same problem—the man who, having first "achieved civilization" is "suddenly thrown back upon his own resources"—the work should not be studied in isolation as literature, but used "as an imaginative idealization" of a type of problem

[2] An exception is found in the educational theory of Wang Yangming (1472–1529). Wang, the leading Ming dynasty philosopher and leader of the 'school of heart' (also called the 'school of mind') opposed the view of both Confucius and the Song dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200), founder of the 'school of principle', or 'rationalist school.' For Zhu Xi, as for Confucius, investigating the classic works was the *preliminary stepping stone* to action as a wise person. Wang, like Dewey, conceived on the contrary that thought and knowledge grew directly out of action situations, and that thought and action were always discrete facets of one complex action-thought-action complex. As Wang put this, "If you want to know bitterness, you have to eat a bitter melon yourself" (Kim, n.d.).

(MW1: 107) in coordination with other subject matters. Works of imaginative literature should not be studied as such, and in isolation, but should always be brought into the curriculum alongside of, and in interaction with, the literatures of other scientific, artistic, commercial and industrial fields bearing upon human problems (MW9: 259).

4 Democratic Self-cultivation

At first glance, Deweyan democratic education excludes both special study of literary classics and repetitive rituals. Self-cultivation through classical study, for Dewey, has "usually been futile, with something rotten about it" (MW9: 130), producing "only a feebly pretentious snobbishness of culture" (MW10:182). Customary rituals, by the same token, are, he says, akin to irrational magic spells and charms. Rather than breathing meaning into natural human relations, such rituals obscure the values inherent in human relations and block inquiries to enhance these values (LW9: 48–9).

Dewey would further reject Confucian rituals as anti-democratic, not only because they assign unequal roles to those in subordinate positions, but because these roles—which symbolize the roles obtaining in actual social life—are not self-chosen and self-shaped through personal initiative and effort of their occupants, but imposed upon them (EW1: 244).

Nonetheless, as I will now argue, both reverential study of classics and repetitive rituals—akin to those in Confucian self-cultivation—can enhance the Deweyan democratic education project.

4.1 Study of Democratic Classics

The present crisis of democracy in the West demonstrates that our established educational practices have failed broadly to inculcate democratic values. Today we see citizens in the liberal democracies of the West fall prey to populist demagogues preaching division. Leaders attack the free press that exposes their corruption and anti-democratic conduct as "fake news," and their devotees enthusiastically embrace propaganda. Writing in *Freedom and Culture* (1939) during the rise of fascism in the West, Dewey warned that we see "supposedly free institutions in many countries not so much overthrown as abandoned willingly, apparently with enthusiasm" (LW7: 67). He forewarned that the conventional schooling practices in modern democracies could not protect us, because while political and educational leaders *preach* rational discussion and scientific method, they in fact rely upon arbitrary dictate:

> In homes and in schools, the places where the essentials of character are supposed to be formed, the usual procedure is settlement of issues, intellectual and moral, by appeal to the "authority" of parent, teacher, or textbook. Dispositions formed under such conditions are so inconsistent with the democratic method that in a crisis they may be aroused to act in positively anti-democratic ways for anti-democratic ends (LW13:155).

Dewey's democratic alternative—starting with habitual participation in cooperative activities at school—might be expected to engender a larger range of mutual interests, greater exchange among groups. Democratic values would on his approach develop gradually, incidental to experiences of shared interests and inter-group cooperation in activities increasingly enriched by discipline-based knowledge.

All of this is fine as far as it goes. But what about the conscious recognition of mutuality as a factor in social control? What about the conscious recognition of continual readjustment in the face of changing circumstances, and the conscious adoption of scientific reason to generate and test the value of proposed changes? These are necessary conditions for democratic living. Democratic values are *paramount for Dewey*. We must, he says, "use education to promote our national idea—which is the idea of democracy," (MW 10: 210–11); "The necessity for a frame of reference (for education) must be admitted. There exists in this country such a unified frame. It is called democracy. (LW11:416)." Or as he states "Upon one thing we take our stand. We frankly accept the democratic tradition in its moral and human import. That is our premise…" (LW8: 77).

Dewey, nonetheless, does not make specific space in his normative curriculum sequence (see, e.g., MW4: 179–192; MW9: 189–202) for *conscious reflection on* the democratic tradition and democratic values, grounded in the canonical democratic texts. When the knowledge inputs called forth in practical activities are eventually presented in organized scientific form, it is the science content, not knowledge of democratic classics, that is organized for further use. For example, after a cooperative garden project, soil chemistry—not cooperation—is studied systematically.

So the question remains: Why not illuminate the democratic frame of reference itself? Why not give democratic values pride of place in the curriculum? A special site for reading and reflection on democratic classics with peers—adjusted for different nations and regions—can bring democratic values to the fore and thus deepen democratic learning. Like Confucian self-cultivation, democratic self-cultivation can thus be a school of experience; it can establish continuity between the leaders who forged these values, in the crucible of democratic struggle, and today's youth. It can provide a larger view and promote greater flexibility and responsiveness in behavior—hallmarks of democratic personality. Even if we wished, we could never achieve such results through indoctrination. In democratic self-cultivation, as in Confucian self-cultivation, the students will have to do the heavy lifting, taking the lessons on board and making them their own. That is what makes it "*self*-cultivation." Democratic self-cultivation is simply, in Dewey's words, the opportunity for "deeper loyalty to intelligence, pure and undefiled, and to the intrinsic connection between it and free communication: the method of conference, consultation, discussion" pooling the net results of experience (LW14: 277).

In the USA, such classics might include—Washington's farewell address, Madison's Federalist #10, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Seneca Falls Declaration, Frederick Douglas' "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?," selections from Whitman's poetry and Democratic Vistas, Emma Lazarus's "The New Colossus," Dewey's "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us," Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land,"—all selected and edited for students at different levels.

In this light, we should note that Dewey himself urged (essay on Jefferson) that we should be "amazed, as well as grateful, at the spectacle of the intellectual and moral calibre of the men who took a hand in shaping the American political tradition." He calls out Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Franklin, John Adams and Monroe as "giants." Nothing, he says, should "create indifference to what they contributed to American institutions and to what we still may learn from them" (LW14, 204). And given his other portraits, we know he would add Emerson, Horace Mann, Whitman, Jane Addams and others to this list of giants.

This leaves open the question of just how school students should be introduced to them. Here it is necessary to recall and reconsider Dewey's concerns about studying literary documents in isolation from concrete human problems. He insists that communicated subject matters must be "organized into the existing experiences of the learners" (MW9: 196–7). Fair enough. But in considering the core democratic canonical texts I would argue that we have no need to *combine* the texts with *new* activities. School students are surrounded daily by experiences which resonate with such texts: Are students from early ages not familiar with factions (Federalist 10)? Or Immigrant experiences (Lazarus)? Or unequal treatment of minorities or females (Douglas, Seneca Falls)? Even from the earliest grade levels, students—especially those in multi-class, multi-ethnic schools—encounter barriers to the formation of shared interests and inter-group communication and cooperation. It is an important plank in the democratic education tradition that such experiences be taken up as school subject matters and augmented with further reading and reflection, and a well-selected democratic canon provides the key reference points.

Despite Dewey's frequent insistence that intellectual learning should *always* begin with cooperative activities, in a noteworthy passage in "The Way out of Educational Confusion," he offers (somewhat begrudgingly) an alternative approach in line with the program of democratic self-cultivation.

Dewey begins the passage with a sharp defense of project-based and problem-based learning and the activity curriculum, making it clear that the educational values of cooperative problem-solving activities are found not only in primary education, but also in the high school and college (MW6, 86–89).

But then, contradicting his earlier statement that all intellectual learning must *always* begin with cooperative activity (MW4: 188f), he says that he "does not urge" the project based or problem based activity "as the sole way out of educational confusion, not even in the elementary school." Rather, he says, it is possible (if second best) to include great works in a multi-disciplinary curriculum which merely "takes account of interdependencies of knowledge and connection of knowledge with use and application." Using as an example the works of H.G. Wells on the sciences of life, he says that these great works "cut across all conventional divisions in the field: yet not at the expense of scientific accuracy but in a way which increases both intellectual curiosity and understanding, while disclosing the world about us as a perennial source of esthetic delight" (LW6:88–89).

To be clear, it is the works themselves that increase understanding, intellectual curiosity and delight. Cooperative problem and project-based activities, while for

Dewey arguably the *best* pathways into subject matter knowledge, are, by 1931, no longer *necessary* even for Dewey himself.

4.2 Democratic Rituals

Schooling is filled with customary rituals. Lining up outside the building, filing in under tight control and taking an assigned seat—what is this but a ritual that establishes a specific place in a social order? Or consider school football, where alpha-males struggle for the glory of the school while females—selected for beauty and sexual allure—cheer them on, broadcasting toxic messages about gender roles and ideals (Fortin, 2019; Jane, 2017; Macur, 2018).

Not all rituals, however, are customary; new rituals can be invented. While customary rituals like football cheerleading look backward to values we now on reflection might reject, new rituals can look forward to a world of democratic social relationships we hope to build. Originating in the Ivy League around 1880, football cheerleading was an exclusively male activity until 1920, with female squads dominating only after 1950. The cheerleading ritual can be modified in a democratic direction—e.g., male cheerleaders for female teams—or replaced by new rituals better symbolizing democratic values. Or consider the ritual established by fifth grade teacher Barry White Jr. of Ashley Park Elementary School in Charlotte, North Carolina; rather than lining his students up outside the building, he greets each by name with a convivial handshake every day as they enter class while they are cheered on by all the students already present (Good Morning America, 2017).

Dewey was an unapologetic critic of customary rituals. Nonetheless, he strongly endorsed the establishment of religious and quasi-religious rituals representing and reinforcing the values actually to be found in natural human relations through social inquiry (LW9: 55). And his followers should welcome them in schools. This point is argued in detail by Nikkanen and Westerlund (2017). Drawing on the work of Wulf et al. (2010), they argue that "it is through rituals that a school reveals its core values… (including) how the school sees the student." Ultimately:

> school rituals are expressions of emotions and relationships that tend to create a community by using playful elements … through rituals children and young adults learn which values and modes of behavior are important for both the school and society.

The authors consider a Finland middle school that changed the selection process for roles in the annual Christmas play. Instead of selecting on the basis of physical appearance and talent, they adopted ritual inclusion of all students, including those with disabilities, in valued roles (here, remember the cheerleading example above).

Acknowledging that such individual ritual performances can at first glance be downplayed as insignificant, the authors argue that, on the contrary, they require careful planning and practice over time, and thus can impact the entire structure and content of the music and arts curriculum. Thus targeted rituals can eventuate in

intentional change in the values consciously and demonstratively embraced by the school (Nikkanen & Westerlund, 2017, 122).

Educators working in the spirit of Dewey should be following such examples and devising new democratic rituals exemplifying respected, satisfying, equal and self-determined roles for all students. Combined with music, dance, drama and other creative and performing arts, these ritual performances can be joyful occasions fostering democratic values.

5 Concluding Comment

This paper challenges the supposition that democratic education along Deweyan lines leaves no place for either reverential study of literary classics or ritual performance. It also proposes two further projects for democratic education: (i) the preparation of *Classics of Democracy* in forms suitable for school learners at various grade levels and (ii) the investigation, modification or replacement of anti-democratic school rituals and the invention of new, consciously conceived democratic school rituals that can be tested and modified through inquiry and carried on with great joy by students.

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Pluralism and the "Happiness" of the Present: On Strangers and the Ideal of Education for Life

Babette Babich

Abstract This chapter raises the question of pluralism, an educational desideratum of the highest kind, and the alien contours of familiar things. To be discussed are themes to be found in Nietzsche, particularly matters concerning cultural concepts of spirit and deity, the relevance of Buddha's shadow, the proclamation: "God is dead," quite where Nietzsche suggests that monotheism is "the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity." With references to Pindar (and Ixion's embrace of vaporous illusion) and the cautionary context for Nietzsche's cultivational ideal—*become the one you are*—the text also draws on Günther Anders and Kakuzō Okakura, the iconicity of copies and the contrast between the colors of bronze antiquity and the bleached ideal of white marble to end with a reflection on Anders' influence on electronic musical compositions in the atomic era, East and West.

Keywords Death and decay · Remix · Mastery · Contemporary art · Translation · Radio music

1 Prelude

This essay proceeds from the shadow of the Buddha and a discussion of Nietzsche's most famous declaration concerning the death of God to tea and tales of gardens swept clean, as well as *wabi sabi* in the second half. Foregrounding the ancient Greek art of "fruitful borrowing" or copying from others, key when it comes to culture, I also emphasize that we do not "know" the ancient Greeks and that grasping this alien character may help us to reflect on East–West cultural traditions.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_14

2 The Shadow of the Buddha and the Death of God

Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* was originally written as a bookend for Zarathustra, thus the entirety of the first edition served as prelude to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, with the final aphorism of GS IV: "*Incipit tragoedia*" (GS §342), repeating, word for word, the first aphorism of Zarathustra. Following the publication of Zarathustra, *seriatim* (1883–1884),[1] and after publishing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra Books 1–3* bound together in 1886, *The Gay Science* was published in a new second edition in 1887, featuring a fifth book, *We Fearless Ones*.[2] The motto appended to the new final book of *The Gay Science*—taken from Turenne, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, that begins with a question: *Carcasse tu trembles?*—is striking and possibly odder than anything that has perplexed researchers, distracted as researchers tend to be with other concerns.

To be fair, *The Gay Science* bristles with aphorisms as one of the first books that properly showcase the same as I elsewhere discuss this stylistic nuance, including backward and forward hermeneutics. The second, 1887 edition, also substitutes a new epigraph in which Nietzsche insists that he has taken inspiration from no one—*nobody, never, nothing knicked*[3]—disappointingly (for most American readers) dislodging the transcendentalist motto from Emerson (which Nietzsche cites in German) used for the first edition in 1882, concluding with the beautiful line that consecrates all days holy, all humanity divine [g*öttlich*]. These days, it may be that that curious motto taken from Turenne, epigraph to the fifth book as it answers its own question: "*Tu tremblerais bien davantage, si tu savais, où je te mène*"[4] may begin to make more sense to us in the age of a new era, 'safe and effective,' the psychological, social media 'art of war.'

We are awash in masks: on our faces, on the sidewalks, blown among the leaves in the gutters, on the beaches, in our seas. And in our garbage heaps, we have never had more plastic, used test swabs, vials, tubes, and sharps too and one-way little bottles still holding traces of the tiny amount that always remains as part of any injected matter. The anthropocene middens of hard core pharmaceutical addiction, deployed and mandated, with a promised regimen of repetition, the new eternal return of boosters and the like, as a 'new normal,' on a global scale.

Never mind about breath or the chemical composition of the ambient atmospheric air you inhale when you breathe (0.04% CO_2) and the consequent concentration of carbon dioxide in each and every human exhalation (4% CO_2), a 100-fold increase, what Peter Sloterdijk rightly calls with his journalistic brio, our human, *all*

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[1] Published as individual books, the first book of Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One), appeared in 1883, with the second and third books published in 1884. Nietzsche published the three books together (he did not include the fourth) in 1886.

[2] Nietzsche (1974). Cited in the text as GS followed by the section number.

[3] Nietzsche rides the alliteration in his original German verselet: *Niemandem nie nichts nachgemacht*.

[4] *You'd tremble still more if you knew where I am taking you.*

too human "expectorations" in a book that begins with a chapter on "atmoterroism."[5] Expectoration as a term spans the splattering on the mask on your face, along with the detritus of PCR tests, covid vaccines, and chemtrails: just another day at the human zoo. Everybody tracked and traced, not unlike companion animals, dogs and cats listed for adoption: neutered, all shots up to date.

The detritus of the everyday, day by day, pales before the immense accumulation of nanoparticles dwarfing even the immense amounts of plastic in our oceans—not that anyone with a ban on travel for more than a year can tell you anything about anything, not first hand—and increasingly, as we inhale the stuff of the masks on our faces, in our lungs, we take in this detritus via direct delivery, fibers, mold, reinhaled sputum. Add this to factive geo-engineering, changing the climate, changing the weather and for years officially denied despite official position papers, conferences, publications, and of course practice or as one says, in plain sight, like plain air, in the skies above us.

Mostly, it is the academics who do the job of denial and denunciation. We have standard stories we spin and those who spin them best get the jobs and the attention. It is only when one finds that one has somehow stumbled over the line, and most of us spend years being careful not to, that we notice that the rules we otherwise take for granted and repeat as if a mantra from on high, once again: 'safe and effective,' might be problematic. Like cancer, it is different when a relative is afflicted. It is another thing when it is you. Illness is still a metaphor.

Today, we can hardly imagine the ceremonies we will *now* have to invent, need to invent, as Nietzsche says, to be equal to the deed we have done, all of us, complicit in what has been done. The deed is just another instauration of "the death of God," just as Hegel relates this, just as the Church has been telling this tale for "two thousand years," and all of it, as Nietzsche adds in *The Antichrist*, without "a single *new* God."[6] The pluralism of deity is what is problematic: all the while, generically, 'pluralism,' 'diversity,' is what we seek in so many departments of philosophy as of education as of literature, ethnography and sociology and cultural studies, political theory and so on. But deity seems to be different, even for academics who study religions, social anthropologies, history: we write these gods of history as of other peoples with a decidedly lower case 'g'. Deity is determinate, existent or not: deity is the metaphysical singularity, the Supreme Being. Hence, when Nietzsche, in a series of aphorisms beginning with one entitled: *Too Oriental* (GS 141), remarks on the Goethean phrase, "If I love you, is that your concern?" he means to undermine less the Jew apostrophized in the antecedent aphorism, *Too Jewish* (GS 140) than the religion (Christian) of Peter and Paul. And the similarly phrased reflection on flattering one's benefactors entitled *Frankincense*: "Buddha says: 'Do not flatter your benefactors,'" needs a reference to the Ixion mentioned by Pindar in his second Pythian Ode, here to quote Frank Nishetish's rendering: *Repay your benefactor honor's kind return!*[7]

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[5] Sloterdijk (2009).

[6] For discussion, see Babich (2014).

[7] See Pindar (1980, 163). Cf. William Race's translation, here to cite more comprehensively: "They say that by the gods' commands Ixion speaks/these words to mortals as he turns/in every direction

We can look for 'new' gods, as the HBO sensation *Game of Thrones* danced on the notion here and there before it fell into a gamed conclusion, both misogynistic and unimaginative. Game over is its own imperative. Or there could be Neil Gaiman's sleek (beautifully financed), *American Gods* or, if not, the Canadian fantasy author, R. Scott Bakker. But, given Ixion, given the complexities of Greek myth and its lessons for the art of living, Bakker might need to brush up on his Pindar.

The beauty of metonymy—and that is why one needs the reference to Ixion (for Bakker) or Pindar (*become the one you are*), in order to understand Nietzsche's imperative for self-cultivation—is that Nietzsche can be imagined to have forgotten how Pindar's line concluded just as he can be supposed to have coined or invented the death of God, pulled it off on his ownsome. But Nietzsche begins with a nineteenth-century scientific ideal: "Pursue your best and your worst desires, and above all perish!" (GS §1) It is the exclamation mark that makes it scientific and Nietzsche expands the argument: "In both cases, you are probably still in some way a promoter and benefactor of humanity and therefore entitled to your eulogists—but also to your detractors." (GS §1).

Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God, set, dramatically enough in the mouth of a madman, those manic conduits of the gods from immemorial times, appears in the third book of the first edition of *The Gay Science*, beginning with the death of Buddha and the report that after Buddha's death "his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave—a tremendous, gruesome shadow." (GS §108).

The language is uncanny, shades being what they are and given Nietzsche's knowledge of ancient Greek religion and divine service and technical practice, as he knew this as few do, in his day or still.[8] The same language is taken up by Günther Anders some thirty years after Nietzsche's death to talk of what can have seemed ventriloquism on a mass scale, that is radio. Certainly, the uncanny is unchanged with the technology of our screens and there is nothing we today, as the past year amply demonstrates, would not believe.

I hope to be able to return to the trembling body at the end, following my second section on *wabi sabi*, but to get there I need to return to the question of Buddha's shadow and the dead God. Nietzsche's madman has something to tell us beyond the report he comes to make, a report we, like the towns people in the marketplace around him, do not believe, and thus, it is worth beginning as Nietzsche does by referring, East–West, to the story of the shadow of the Buddha. That he means the story as a parable is clear as he continues to talk theoretical cosmology and to teach scientists and philosophical theorists of science a lesson on metaphors and their

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on his winged wheel:/go and repay your benefactor." Pindar (1997, 233). The Greek understanding of their myths is contained in Pindar's account of Ixion's temerity, seducing, this is the dishonor done, his benefactor's wife, Hera, he embraced a phantom instead and the progeny of that twice-bastard union would be "Reared by his mother, who called him Kentauros," (Pindar 1980, 164), and would then, after mating, as Pindar says, with "Magnesian mares," engender "a monstrous brood," the centaurs. See for an online video discussion, Babich on Pindar's Pythian II: https://youtu.be/I4DN7kUaGFw.

[8] See for references the first chapter: Babich (2020a) as well as Strong (1992), 28–32 and Iwawaki-Riebel (2004), 92f.

pitfalls, especially those that result from our habit of putting ourselves into everything we see, in a series of aphorisms, beginning with the following dense aphorism, as clearly as he can, he writes: "The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos." On the face of it, given Nietzsche's formation as a philologist, this might seem a retelling of Hesiod, but Nietzsche speaks to and uses the language of his scientific age, defining "chaos": "in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms." (GS §109).

The reference to the Buddha's death and to his shadow matters not only because we are still dealing with such shadows but owing to decomposition, decay, and spectral, cosmic time, stars above all. Thus Nietzsche's madman speaks:

> "...Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. ..." (GS §125)

This is what Nietzsche's madman says (that is why we need to add Nietzsche's own quotation marks in quoting his text), and it is what he proceeds to reflect that warrants not our horror, sacrilege being sacrilege, but the question of festival, divine service.

> "...What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off of us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? ..." (GS §125)

We know the tale, Nietzsche permits his madman to tell it: he comes too soon.

> "...Lightning and thunder require time: the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars — *and yet they have done it themselves...*" (GS §125)

The one philosopher in our time who *concerns* himself, he does not merely write about, the East and the West, as he reads between the violence of the second world war as this takes place not only in Europe but also in the Pacific and particularly Japan: Nagasaki and Hiroshima, is Günther Anders.[9]

I have recently completed a book on Anders and technology (and music and literature all in the context of phenomenology and critical theory) in order to begin to unpack the complex contours of Anders' thought, a thinking largely unreceived in the Western tradition in which he wrote. Here, however, it may help to consider Anders' own concern with a phenomenological sociology of music, as he sought to articulate this as a matter of affinity and not less of privilege, permission, recognition, acknowledgment, elements central to what we today call for with respect to diversity and pluralism. Benjamin Steege, contributing to a volume on listening and "tests" for hearing, unpacks Anders' specific contribution to/engagement with a musical

[9] See for an intriguing discussion of sound but also poetic musical culture, Steege (2020). In general, see too Babich (2022) in addition to my essay on Anders on violence, Babich (2017a).

work. As Steege explains: "*Epitaph für Aikichi Kuboyama* (1962) is a tape work by Herbert Eimert, composer, critic, and founder of the electronic music studio at West German Radio in Cologne," (2020, 355).[10] I will come back to this reference in the conclusion below but here it is important to add that the piece itself is worth hearing as it can teach us to listen, through echoes and repetitions, as it is also layered and composed, again and again.[11]

The above reference is to Anders' own footnote citing his poem, *Du kleiner Fischermann*, written "after," so Anders tells us in his note, the "'Sydney Chronicle', 3 March 1955." (Anders, 1956, 146–147). At this juncture, it may help to bring in, again, a connection with Nietzsche as I began above with the death of God and as Anders also writes on Beckett and the complex play *Waiting for Godot* that is for many commentators in his day and ever since, a play about God. This is the starting point and Anders reflects on the difference it makes to have proceeded in the decades after Nietzsche's death to think the same question as a keen student of phenomenologically informed, hermeneutically informed social anthropology:

> Whether it is Rilke, or Kafka, or Beckett — *their religious experience springs, paradoxically, always from religious frustration, from the fact that they do not experience God, and thus paradoxically from an experience they share with unbelief*. In Rilke this experience springs from the inaccessibility of God (the first Duino elegy); in Kafka from inaccessibility in a search (*The Castle*); in Beckett from inaccessibility in the act of waiting. For all of them the demonstrations of God's existence can be formulated as: "*He does not come, therefore He is.*" "*Parousia does not occur, therefore He exists.*" Here the negativity we know from "negative theology" seems to have affected the religious experience itself — thereby intensifying it immensely: while in negative theology, it was merely the *absence of attributes* that was being used to define God, here *God's absence itself* is made into a proof of His being. That this is true of Rilke and Kafka is undeniable; likewise that Heidegger's dictum which he borrows from Hölderlin — "for where danger is growing, rescue is growing, too:" — belongs to the same type of "*proof ex absentia.*"[12]

The reflection is a reflection on the shadows of the divine, this is *negative* theology. And of course because this is Günther Anders' reflection, it is a critical theoretical reflection on technology, on history, and on dominion as Anders goes on to parse Hegel's vision of the "motor of history" by way of the Kojévian context whereby the individual transitioned from Abrahamic *walking with* and *being before* one's God, not incomparable to the titanic ideal of Prometheus, as Anders notes this here, defeated as Anders claims by Hegel's agonistic symbolism whereby and henceforward:

> "Man" is now seen as a pair of men; that the individual (who, as a metaphysical self-made man, had fought a Promethean struggle against the Gods) has now been replaced by men

[10] For an 1963 explication from Eimert himself, see/hear the 1:28 min track "About the techniques used in 'Epitaph for Aikichi Kuboyama": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SNaDWXDjDY.

[11] Eimert's three-part electronic musical piece, 1957–1962, retraining Anders' inventive transcription of the grave inscription for Aikichi Kuboyama, can be heard on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=RDENlzdZ5Hl2c&v=ENlzdZ5Hl2c&feature=emb_rel_end 1/3, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jnZpAO1tFA&feature=emb_logo 2/3, and the third part: http://seatedovation.blogspot.com/2011/03/for-japan.html.

[12] Anders (1965), in English. This text appears as the center of Anders' (1956) *Die Antiquirtheit des Menschen.*

> who fight each other. It is *they* who are now regarded as *reality*; for "to be" now means "to dominate" and to struggle for domination; and they alone are seen as the "motor of time": for time is history; and history, in the eyes of dialectical philosophy, owes its movement exclusively to antagonism (between man and man or class and class); so exclusively, that at the moment when these antagonisms came to an end, history itself would cease, too. (Anders, 1965, 149–150)

The reflection is an illuminated reflex, a recursive shadow with features and physiognomy, and to explore this I recall some reflections of teaism, Japan, via China and ultimately via the Western recognition of itself,[13] and Leonard Koren and Andrew Juniper and the various aesthetic and sometimes, with Yuriko Saito, analytic philosophic accounts of *wabi sabi*.[14] In several essays, I use the notion of *wabi sabi*, in one instance with reference to the Chinese artist, Wang Guangyi, but also to unpack some of the more problematic dimensions of Heideggerian letting be with respect to technology as Heidegger himself repeats this observation on letting be, which ought not be rendered as 'serenity.' Thus, in a reflection on the human being expressed in his 1955 lecture *Gelassenheit*, delivered ten years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Heidegger mentions not simply the fact of atomic weapons but the threat to the human condition (the language is quasi-Anders-style, quasi-Arendt style), to thematize human engineering via nothing other than genetic modification via vaccination as that was, even then, already then, a theme.[15]

Thus, in the lecture *Gelassenheit*, Heidegger claimed that by comparison with this human engineering enterprise the most radical weapons, the atomic bombs to the banning of which Anders dedicated his life, would pale by comparison. Citing an "international meeting of Nobel Prize winners" and quoting the biochemist and virologist, Wendell Stanley, who famously crystallized the first virus in 1935, Heidegger repeated Stanley's predictive claim concerning the ability "to synthesise, split, and change living substance at will."[16] Stanley, winner in 1946 of the Nobel Prize for chemistry, would, at the same 1955 Lindau conference, recount the competition to develop a vaccine that had changed science from an open affair participating in the life of ideas and open exchange between scientists to competition between scientists. This change in the scientific ethos Stanley undertook to relate "through the story of the poliomyelitis virus and the attempts to find a safe vaccine." (Bárány, 2014).[17]

Already then the language concerned the 'safe' as well it might, given the history of vaccination known since Jenner and Pasteur. Thus I began by citing today's mantra

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[13] See Zwart (2020) for a range of one paragraph citations of scholars cited in the course of the author's reflections on ways to read Heidegger and technology in an East–West context, including Parkes and van Norden.

[14] Koren (1994), Juniper (2003) and see for one discussion, the author: 2015 and 2019c. See too, largely in the analytic tradition, Saito (2008).

[15] See for one discussion, Babich (2022).

[16] Heidegger (1966, 52). Translation slightly altered.

[17] Competition meant that peer review was truncated and even excluded altogether. "As Stanley puts it, during the race for a polio vaccine, the results of the research were only judged by committees behind closed doors. As a consequence, there were some serious mistakes made and for some time a vaccine was used, in particular on children, which actually resulted in paralysis." (Bárány, 2014).

for today's viral based or vector vaccines, as 'safe and effective,' quite in advance of collecting data on adverse effects. Advertising, as Baudrillard and Adorno do not fail to remind us, as Anders also emphasizes, is a device employed to sell the system itself as much as it sells the product advertised. This holds true as Jacques Ellul, the French theorist of technology (1964), also argued, for any propaganda whatever (1973), and by Edward Bernays, as Curtis' (2005) BBC documentary, *The Century of the Self* demonstrates.

As today's ongoing epidemic and lockdown era illustrates, we take our cues from the media. In earlier times, religion would do the same, a point that Marx and Nietzsche had already made, and we are reminded by Ivan Illich that even school, and by extension, the museum does the same. In a discussion of Wang Guangyi, (Babich, 2019c), I argue that quite as they echo Andy Warhol's print works, Wang Guangyi's works teach us to pay attention to Baudrillard's "simulacrum":

> Outside of medicine and the army, favored terrains of simulation, the affair goes back to religion and the simulacrum of divinity: "I forbade any simulacrum in the temples because the divinity that breathes life into nature cannot be represented." Indeed it can. But what becomes of the divinity when it reveals itself in icons, when it is multiplied in simulacra? Does it remain the supreme authority, simply incarnated in images as a visible theology? Or is it volatilized into simulacra which alone deploy their pomp and power of fascination — the visible machinery of icons being substituted for the pure and intelligible Idea of God? (2002, 169)

3 Teaism and Pluralism in Philosophy or *Wabi Sabi* and Commercialism

Part of the point in this section concerns the elusiveness of terms, words, translations and the discontents that can result from this in philosophy. Thus a few years ago, writing on Heidegger who has long been associated with Asian thought,[18] I recall asking an expert who is also a family member to tell me what she knew about *wabi sabi*, Sarah Strong, a noted American expert in Japanese literature who answered, this is a beautiful testament to pedagogy and conformity, that it was complicated and she could not say.

But the message of *wabi sabi*—nothing remains, everything is imperfect, unfinished—is nonetheless accessible, quite to the point of desk calendars and the like.[19] It is also, which is one of the ways one can trace its influence, a mainstay for artists or has been ever since Leonard Koren (already mentioned above) first found himself in Japan and making a name and career for himself in art, a project which is sometimes indistinguishable (think, again, of Andy Warhol) from advertising which is why advertising remains one of the go-to places for applied artists or designers aiming to work for a living (jobs for artists to "be" artists being in short supply), wrote *wabi sabi: For Artists, Designers and Philosophers*. Thus, Koren underscores just what

[18] May (1989), Parkes (1987), Ma (2009) and others.

[19] See Sen and Sen (1979)

Sarah Strong told me, given her expertise in Japanese oral poetic traditions, as Koren reports his own experience of the same hesitancy: "When asked what *wabi sabi* is, most Japanese will shake their head, hesitate, and offer a few apologetic words about how difficult it is to explain." (Koren 1997, 15) This is not a hindrance for Koren, who offers his own interpretation of the reasons for this reticence and he goes on to speak, almost anticipating today's materialism with its focus on objects, of "the zen of things." (Ibid. 16) Koren thus, this is a handbook of design, summarizes in talking points, glossed as he proceeds to gloss the three Buddhist principles: "*1. All things are impermanent*."[20] "*2. All things are imperfect*."[21] "*3. All things are incomplete*."[22]

Koren cites poetry to make his case. By contrast, Andrew Juniper, who likewise writes for the sake of design—the book jacket tells us that he runs the "*Wabi Sabi* Design Company in the South of England"—begins his own study with a citation from Alan Watts on the Tao.

> To Taoism that which is absolutely still or absolutely perfect is absolutely dead, for without the possibility of growth and change there can be no Tao. In reality there is nothing in the universe which is completely perfect or completely still: it is only in the minds of men that such concepts exist. (Watts, in Juniper, 2003, 7)

Juniper sensibly chooses his opening citation from Watts for good reasons of aesthetic consistency but Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* passage already quoted cautions us concerning aesthetic anthropomorphisms reminding us before he continues in subsequent aphorisms to talk about *The Origin of Knowledge* (GS §110), *The Origin of the Logical* (GS §111), *Cause and Effect* (GS §112) that the universe "is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble." Drily correcting the whole of Aristotelian (and medieval) natural philosophy, Nietzsche adds "nor does it wish to become any of these things." (GS §109).

In a series of essays, I have argued that one may draw on a popular parsing of *wabi sabi* as this adumbrates the Heideggerian letting be that is proper to both art and aesthetics and not less Heidegger's recommendation in his *Gelassenheit* lecture on technology (Babich 2015a; 2019c). To be sure it can be argued that Heidegger's first lecture on technology begins with his 1927 *Being and Time*, including a reflection on tools as on the technology of the built or architecturally designed environment, train platforms, sheltered and lit, the accoutrements of an academic study, with a desk populated by the classic complements of writing such as: ink, blotter,

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[20] "The inclination toward nothingness is unrelenting and universal… We may wear blinders, use ruses to forget, ignore, or pretend otherwise—but all comes to nothing in the end. Everything wears down. The planets and stars, and even intangible things like reputation, family heritage, historical memory, scientific theorems, mathematical proofs, great art and literature (even in digital form)—all eventually fade into oblivion and nonexistence." (Koren, 1994, 47–49).

[21] "Nothing that exists is without imperfections. When we look really closely at things we see the flaws. The sharp edge of a razor blade, when magnified, reveals microscopic pits, chips, and variegations. Every craftsman knows the limits of perfection: the imperfections glare back. And as things begin to break down and approach the primordial state, they become even less perfect, more irregular." Ibid.

[22] "All things, including the universe itself, are in a constant, neverending state of becoming or dissolving." Ibid.

but also lamp, window etc.). In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger observes that technology has us in its grip, this is part of what he names 'challenging forth,' most particularly as he says when we regard technology as such, as we tend to regard it, as neutral (1977, 4).

In this context, we can recollect—it is itself what I would call in the spirit of my musical reflections on cover culture, a 'remix original'—Kakuzō Okakura's *The Book of Tea: A Japanese Harmony of Art, Culture, and the Simple Life*.[23] Originally composed in English (rather than Japanese) and first published in 1906, the Yokohama born Okakura (1863–1913) would be credited with having "made," here to use the cautionary language of contemporary scholars of Japanese culture, tea-and-flower ceremonies a central feature of Japanese culture,[24] a tea-culture scholars argue to have been borrowed from and thus to have been, in just this literal sense, a "cover" of Chinese tea culture. Indeed this is no accident. It is a feature of a certain imperialism that Okakura would receive his first education in English *before* he would go on to study Japanese and Chinese. Written from the outset for English readers, Okakura's book has subsequently been translated and re-rendered, updated, and subsequently revised in style in several instaurations including a translation into Japanese itself and 30 additional languages.[25] To that extent, it is the focus for linguistic anthropology as one author uses the publication and reception history of Okakura Kakuzo's *Book of Tea* to analyze what she calls "Self-Perception and Self-Projection" specifically with respect to these same translations.[26] To be sure, the very idea that tradition has history and is "made" or invented, that it is a tradition of effects and thus a matter of some foundational dispute among scholars, is an important Marxist mainstay and it is a key hermeneutic insight in ethnography.[27]

As Nietzsche says, when it comes to copies, be it a matter of a 'copy' of a book or a 'copy' of a painting or even a 'copy' of an individual, we tend to favor or prefer the copy to the original. Put in terms of the current essay, we prefer the latest interpretation, the most 'current' version, up to date and this holds for translations and for philosophies. Thus we—and the we includes scholars as much as it includes an everyday readership—prefer the newly "updated" or "modernized" translation on offer of whatever older text, be it on the model of Ezra Pound's "translations" of Chinese poetry[28] or of Emily Martin's feminist version of Homer's *Odyssey* or analytic philosophy's rediscovery of Stoicism, or else of existentialism (after years of contempt for continental colleagues who wrote on Sartre and de Beauvoir and Camus) and so on. In general, pop versions of philosophy are typically conventional remixes. Thus the recent attention to Beauvoir and Camus hardly means that scholars

[23] See for comparison, Koren (1994) and Carriger (2009), 140–57, who draws for her performance analysis on Hirota (1995) and Sen (1979).

[24] See, again for discussion, Holca (2013).

[25] See Fuwa (2004) and Hirota (1995).

[26] Holca (2012, 2013). Note the different name order.

[27] See the contributions to Hobsbawm/Ranger (1983) in addition to Trevor-Roper (2008), Masalha (2007) and the contributions to Vlastos (1998).

[28] See Pound (1950a and 1950b). For just one discussion, see Williams (2009: 145–65).

who have long labored on these thinkers will suddenly find themselves engaged in the literature. By no means: the new literature wants to be the only or go-to authority until the oblivion ushered in by the next new phase.

But what one must instructively speak of, thus the necessity of using musical metaphors like the "culture of the cover" (Babich, 2018a), is not the reference to music per se, but the Frankfurt school reference to the culture industry, if one means to be critical. Here it is important to emphasize industry, if one actually wants a job whereby one may speak of remix culture, thereby securing the right to legal re-use (one needs to read Lessig on this issue as much as certain others)[29] and not simply a knock off, copy, or remake of the putative "original," is characteristically celebrated over earlier efforts as an "advance," once again: "new and improved," "safe and effective," like the broad claims made for new versions of old translations (technically, on the remix, or remake, model, these are *re*translations, which are then claimed to be preferable to earlier versions). Thus, to stay with the reference to ancient Greek philology, Robin Waterfield's or Allan Bloom's retranslations of Plato's *Republic* are preferred by certain cadres to Francis Macdonald Cornford and others. To this must be added the philosophical culture industry, the book market: what editions are read and received, what editions are maligned and refused? Hence if one can corner the coin of philosophic citation, think of the new translations of Nietzsche, as this was also done for Hegel in another generation, still underway to be sure, in the current era, one corners thereby, just by coining the language used, the market of ideas. In the case of music, and almost all of us think we know this, it is easy to think that there is some mechanism by which a popular taste ("popular demand") emerges by democratic assessment, which is then the source or basis for the kind of music current on the radio (and this "currency" significantly still matters despite the absolute hackability and thereby the 'fakeness' of all digital counts, from presidential votes to YouTube views). To this same degree, Theodor Adorno, who dedicated much of his life to refuting this naïve, consumerist assumption, foregrounds the advertising culture that constitutes the cultural industry. Similarly, one assumes there is a tradition of tea-and-flower ceremonies, and thus the relevance for artists (and as one enthusiastic book presents the technique, likewise *designers*, likewise *philosophers*) of a book recounting that same tradition: *The Book of Tea.*

In an era preoccupied with sources—a dissonant preoccupation given the disinclination of philosophers today to cite or "do" history in favor of what is by default assumed to be "original" work, as analytic philosophy imagines this—it has been claimed very seriously that Martin Heidegger took his ideas from the German translation of *The Book of Tea*,[30] which makes *Being and Time* the most famous "cover" of an ancient tradition that may be traced back to China. Indeed, Okakura includes explicit reference to cover elements even as he explains that greatness consists in

[29] Lessig (2008), Gunkel (2008), Guertin (2012).

[30] May (1989). One can, in addition, also show Okakura's influence on Heidegger's reflection on translation as Okakura writes, self-referentially: "Translation is always a treason, and as a Ming author observes, can at its best be only the reverse side of a brocade,—all the threads are there, but not the subtlety of colour or design. But, after all, what great doctrine is there which is easy to expound?" (Okakura, 1906, 48).

non-imitation: "It has been said that the Greeks were great because they never drew from the antique." (Okakura, 1906, 92).

Obviously, of course, as Nietzsche had already told us, this is inaccurate: the Greeks were consummate remix masters. They excelled—again to quote Nietzsche—at the very "fruitful borrowing" that is also the "culture of the cover." The recognition aspect that attends this and reinforces it is the basis of the "Hallelujah Effect." (Babich, 2016).

The point is illuminated by Heideggerian letting fall, as I elsewhere analyze *Gelassenheit* (Babich, 2017a). But there is a crucial and (this too is part of what Heidegger emphasizes) *deliberate* matter of letting fall, as Okakura relates the challenge of arrangement, order, cleanliness:

> Rikiu was watching his son Shoan as he swept and watered the garden path. "Not clean enough," said Rikiu, when Shoan had finished his task, and bade him try again. After a weary hour the son turned to Rikiu: "Father, there is nothing more to be done. The steps have been washed for the third time, the stone lanterns and the trees are well sprinkled with water, moss and lichens are shining with a fresh verdure; not a twig, not a leaf have I left on the ground." "Young fool," chided the tea-master, "that is not the way a garden path should be swept." Saying this, Rikiu stepped into the garden, shook a tree and scattered over the garden gold and crimson leaves, scraps of the brocade of autumn! What Rikiu demanded was not cleanliness alone, but the beautiful and the natural also. (Okakura, 1906, 87–8)

Carefully chosen, the random is deliberate: "scattered over the garden," leaves of "gold and crimson," the "brocade of autumn"—take note of Okakura's English style, it belongs to his era—the arrangement pushes beyond order, "the natural also," and we are unnerved. But better perhaps here to ask: what is a tea-master?[31] Some translations tell us that this Rikiu/Rikyu (利休 1522–April 21, 1591) is a monk or a warrior; others use other terms to describe him.

To understand mastery, it may be helpful, as we look for a hint of transcendentalism to remember the technological remonstrations of Robert Browning in his 1864 *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, if only for the sake of education, qua how to, in the spirit of Nietzsche's reflective recommendation that the youthful soul collect, building a memory constellation or palace thereby, all things one had ever loved, to trace emergent patterns or forms:

> Here, work enough to watch
> The Master work, and catch
> Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

The language of the master is significant in a culture and it is key to education. And in the book of tea, "arrangement" is a matter of technique but, above all, of placement and setting. Thus, it can seem relevant to Heideggerian *Ge-Stell* and *Gelassenheit*, but also the instauration of the art work as such, what is at stake is an attention to the life—and the death—of flowers, of rocks and gardens but also acts.

To return to the Beijing artist, Wang Guangyi, I note his work entitled *New Religion, Prophecy. No. 1* (2010), featuring a photograph of a urinal, covered—it is

[31] See, to exemplify in context, Sen (1979).

essential to highlight the text font qua font—in Greek *uncial* characters: (Matthew 10:36: *A man's enemies will be the members of his household*),[32] in addition to the matter of the thus imprinted print, in as much as the work itself is a photograph of a urinal. Note here, as this is crucial, that the echo, the quote, remix, "cover" is of Duchamp's 1917 *Fountain* which was itself, a photograph, depiction-wise, qua document, the physical object being lost, entitled: "THE EXHIBIT REFUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS." Thus it is important that Duchamp emphasizes that his work was refused not by authorities or art experts but "independents," these being the artists themselves who discounted his contribution after saying that pretty much anything would count and thus could be entered as an exhibition and no distinctions would be made (and that, for the same reason, no prizes would be awarded).[33]

Here, the refusal is cultural and culturally complex. As Baudrillard, already cited above, writes in a point extending Nietzsche's own insights on the "death of God":

> Underneath the idea of the apparition of God in the mirror of images, they already enacted his death and his disappearance in the epiphany of his representations (which they perhaps knew no longer represented anything, and that they were purely a game, but that this was precisely the greatest game — knowing also that it is dangerous to unmask images, since they dissimulate the fact that there is nothing behind them). (Baudrillard, 2002, 17)

The cultural difference is also relevant and should be noted as just where Duchamp's "original" ready-made fountain lies on its back (thus as Danto tells us this, not available to use for male "comfort"),[34] Wang Guangyi's comfort station would be of such a use as Danto might have found convenient, to be descried behind the inscription, quite real, a "fountain" in use.

On the level of art and practical, tactical know-how, this is the art of finding beauty not in the "ready-made" styles of found art, designated via the name of the artist in the fashion of analytic philosophy of art. What is art? When is art? These are the questions Anders poses with respect to music in his phenomenological sociology of music, who does, who may, who dare musicize?[35] And we may answer, beyond Danto and even beyond Dickie or Berger, that art is whatever we—artists, museum curators, we, the experts, we, the aestheticians—say it is, as we just as surely can say what philosophy is, *pace* Heidegger), but with the disintegration of the gesture, the action of revelation (or occlusion) that is error, we are brought before what Heidegger named errancy. This takes us back to technology: but is this an errant affair? Perhaps we can say that it would be if we fall prey to technology as we are apt to do.

Giorgio Agamben invokes the fashion industry of his own Milan, Michel de Certeau despite his time in San Diego invokes the streets of Paris to discuss the same, and the agitprop philosopher and theological activist, Ivan Illich, writing his last book about a book, *In the Vineyard of the Text* (1993) a book about design and typescript (fonts again, in this case, as copies of handwriting), drew his illustrations from the mountains around Vienna as from his youthful travels in Japan. The same,

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[32] I draw the reference from Huang (2013).

[33] See my discussion of "The Fate of Duchamp's Fountain" in Babich (2019a, 70–73).

[34] Danto (2014, 27).

[35] Anders (2017, 178).

ceteris paribus, for any city dweller, who observes as de Certeau writes in 1980 about "Walking in the City,"—the exotic value of which is perhaps best understood today, post-lockdown for all of us, wherever we are, tracing a path among favored spots, in the ambit of buses, metro stations, markets, just to the extent that the art of wandering is the art of getting lost in an ordered fashion, the artist who fashions, the eye that sees a fallen petal not in its Keatsian moment: *forever wilt thou love*, but shading grades of disarray to nothingness.

This is what Rikiu does, to show his son. And this is what Okakura quotes, to show his readers, and maybe to let them see.

The "released" art of *Verfallenheit* allows what is fallen to fall, frames or brackets enframing, allows what is apart from the frame to intrude, a shaken tree, scattered leaves. This is Rikiu's story, but it can also be the courser art of a Joseph Beuys and it is part of art's decay, especially (Danto took notice of this) in Beuys' case. Decay can be opposed (to some extent) by those concerned with conservation and restoration efforts dramatize the challenge both when well or badly executed.

Here, the point is that even the well-done restoration both replaces and destroys. The Laocoon "reset" exhibition at the Winckelmann Institute in Berlin dramatizes, without the curator's saying so other than ostensively, that the work "found" or "discovered" in the presence of Michelangelo might have been Michelangelo's own: fragments from the past then as now worth something more over the course of a lifetime than the work of a stone mason who might otherwise have looked forward to a life decorating funeral sites, marble being preferred as it is for gravestones. But the curators said no such thing. I have been writing about this for years, citing those who do say such things, and still the point needs making (Babich, 2007, in addition to 2020a, 183–224). Thus, Nietzsche told the citizens of Basel a truth about the whiteness of marble statues, white being the color as it was then assumed not simply of heaven (as Carl Jung jokes with reference to Zarathustra, see Babich, 2011, 224) but also of classical Greece. Nietzsche's point was that for decades already, it was and had been long known that these statues were colored, brightly, wildly so. Recently, the point would be made again in Munich and in Copenhagen in an important exhibition *Bunte Götter*. Given as noted above that I had written on Greek bronzes, Vinzenz Brinkmann, the Munich curator of the same exhibit, where he was then based, came to visit me at Fordham's Lincoln Center in New York if it should also be said, and this too is part of the trembling, failing body, that it is always as if one had never written. To this day, despite Nietzsche, despite everyone, we continue to see classical antiquity as white, younger classicists spinning reinvented wheels by claiming to have made this discovery for the first time.

At stake is academia as perpetual motion machine. To this extent, the "motor of history" as Anders attributes this to Hegel is all about that same reinventing of the wheel, inevitable as scholars can be less than diligent in their research. But Nietzsche, whom we cited above speaking of "fruitful borrowing," also offers what should be a mantra for cover culture in general, one needs to know, quite as the Greeks knew, "how to pick up the spear and throw it onward from the point where others had left it." (Nietzsche, 1962, 30). The issue is a challenging one. It is a matter of the stranger and it is a matter of *recognizing* the stranger, the alien, the 'other,' hard to

do as our own prejudices, Nietzsche liked to write about this, get in our way and we think we know what we are talking about and we think we know who the privileged, valued stranger is and who is simply to be written off.

The Greeks are alien to us: we do not know them. And what we have discovered, we have just as often and as quickly, unlearned. The Asian cultures to which Nietzsche refers, speaking as he does not only of the Buddha but of India and China, are complex. One cannot perhaps, as Sarah Strong told me about *wabi sabi,* say anything about it. The same holds for *feng shui*—I once wrote briefly, almost as briefly as Paul Feyerabend wrote about astrology, on the themes of acupuncture and homeopathy and Chinese medicine (2015b). This has gotten me assaults on character among my own fellow philosophers of science and others, and it is painful to have, as Nietzsche wrote of his own critics, "sheep"—Nietzsche's reference was Wilamowitz—come amunching. It is Wittgenstein's point, on that whereof we may not speak we should say nothing. And what holds for *wabi sabi*, *feng shui*, the *tao* itself, holds for *wu-wei*. What is needed to speak of such things is what is likewise essential when it comes to the Greeks: we need to learn the language, the poetry, the art, the history. And then we will learn, as we learn with illness when it affects us, that it is not what we think. And if we learn that, we can begin.

4 Postscript: The Trembling Body

I return as promised at the outset to Nietzsche's odd epigraph for his concluding book added to the second edition of *The Gay Science*, "We Fearless Ones." Turenne, quoted there is a military commander who is as harsh with himself as he would be with a subordinate, talking to his body as to an underling. The language that we read earlier in *The Gay Science* where Nietzsche worries the consequences that follow upon the demolition of belief in many and multifarious divinities reduces to what Nietzsche elsewhere names "*monotonotheism*," rephrasing, quite as the entirety of *The Gay Science* may be argued to have been a reprise of, his unreceived first book on tragedy where Nietzsche discusses the same Prometheus that captivated Günther Anders in his reflections on "Promethean shame" in his 1956 *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen.* In his book on tragedy, Nietzsche reflected on the differences between cultural kinds of transgression, different sins, and in *The Gay Science,* he summarizes the point he names "The Greatest Advantage of Polytheism":

> "It wasn't I! Not I! But *a god* through me." The wonderful art and gift of creating gods — polytheism — was the medium through which this impulse could discharge, purify, perfect, and ennoble itself. The invention of gods, heroes, and overmen of all kinds, as well as near-men and undermen, dwarves, fairies, centaurs, satyrs, demons, and devils was the inestimable preliminary exercise for the justification of the egoism and sovereignty of the individual. (GS §144)

Nietzsche's argument as already noted concerns the loss of wider and broader perspectives, here born out of "the strength to create for ourselves own new eyes." (Ibid.) It turns out, to be sure, that Nietzsche's argument remains as complicated as

religion — it is no accident that the next section is entitled: *Religious wars*, a fairly judicious reflection, noting the conceptual evolution required to consider "it possible that the 'eternal salvation of the soul' might hinge on small differences between concepts." (GS §145).

When Pierre Hadot reads Marcus Aurelius' epistles to himself, quartered as Marcus Aurelius was near Baden bei Wien, that is close to what is today Vienna, and far from Rome, Hadot's analysis can remind us that Turenne follows a Stoic advisory, a matter of perspective. Interestingly already then, the Roman emperor is already conscious, as well he could be given his position in an encampment among enemies and suffering as he would need to do the slow ebb of his own life and isolation from friends and above all, even as emperor—he complains about this and rebukes himself for the complaint—separated from his books, he invites what Hadot compares to a series of Stoic cosmological observations of nothing other than time as such. Hadot, mindful to be sure of Ilsetraut Hadot's studies, cites Seneca who could seem to be speaking to certain themes already noted with respect to *wabi sabi*:

> Everything falls into the same abyss … time passes infinitely quickly … Our existence is a point; nay even less; but nature, by dividing this puny thing, has given it the appearance of a longer duration.[36]

Hadot of course situates temporal cosmology as it appears in the ancients, such that like Seneca's references, "Marcus' river is none other than the Stoic river of being, which 'flows without ceasing'" which is to be connected in turn with an exercise, as these are all exercises, attempts to be undertaken, just as Nietzsche had advised the young soul to gather together everything it had once loved or that had once moved it (Babich, 2017b). This Hadot illuminates using Seneca's language: "*propone*—'place before your mind's eye', that is, 'represent to yourself the abyss of time.'"[37] This is what Marcus Aurelius reflects as it also includes what Nietzsche names the first ethical teaching of possession and relinquishment in Anaximander's boundless, borderless *apeiron*, including the Empedoclean world cycle of birth and rebirth refracted through the Heraclitean *logos*, the Stoic *nous*:

> The rational soul … travels through the whole universe and the void that surrounds it … it reaches out into the boundless extent of infinity, and it examines and contemplates the periodic rebirth of all things.
>
> Asia and Europe are little corners in the world; every sea is a droplet in the world; each present instant of time is a point of eternity; everything is puny, unstable, and vanishing.[38]

Our current crisis includes the reversal of many previously held beliefs, the idea that one is innocent before the law, before authority or government, until proven guilty. But this assumption, and Agamben was one of the few only to raise this question,[39] immediately and first of all, this was removed with the imposition, new in medical history, of mass testing of those not symptomatically sick, on standards

[36] Seneca, cited in Hadot (1995, 182).

[37] Hadot (1995, 182–183).

[38] Marcus Aurelius, cited in Hadot 195, 183.

[39] Agamben (2021), see for related reflection: Babich (2020b, 2021).

that could have been taken straight out of Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* apart from the crucial detail that at that time one waited for symptoms, manifest signs, relevant phenomenal indications, before subjecting the subject to such measures. Today, we are advanced, quite as Ivan Illich argued in a text he titled as "The Age of the Show" and just as Western medicine has long sought to advance its own brand of prophylactic checks and tests in place of the many ways of treating illness but to identify and so to brand on its own terms what might be detected via testing as not yet manifest illness, such as screening for cancer or Coronavirus.[40] Beyond Foucault, it is Ivan Illich who writes about this in language he is very clear about as this is an *expropriation* of health taking from the individual his own health and redefining it on the administrative terms of the medical establishment and the state. We see this better today than ever before which does not mean that we read Illich.

Above I recalled Anders' beautifully framed epitaph for the name to be committed to our collective memory, forever, such that we might, as he writes, know it "by heart": Aikichi Kuboyama, "*Du kleiner Fischermann.*" (Anders, 1956, 346) Steege reads this in a musicological reflection, offering this translation:

> You little fisherman,
> we don't know whether you had merits.
> (Where would we be if everyone had merits?)
> But you had worries like us,
> like us, somewhere the graves of your parents,
> somewhere, on the shore, a woman who waited for you,
> and at home, the children who ran to meet you.
> Despite your worries.
> you found it good to be there.
> Just like us. And you were right, Aikichi Kuboyama
> You little fisherman,
> even if your foreign name does not tell of merit,
> let us learn it by heart for our brief term
> Aikichi Kuboyama.
> As a word for our disgrace
> Aikichi Kuboyama.
> As our warning call
> Aikichi Kuboyama.
> But also,
> Aikichi Kuboyama,
> as the name of our hope: For whether you
> preceded us in your dying or only
> departed in our stead—
> that depends only on us, even today,
> only on us, your brothers,

[40] Illich (1995), see too Babich (2015b).

Aikichi Kuboyama.[41]

Later, much later, in June of 1979, Anders adds a quote to conclude his foreword to his second volume on humanity in its techno-industrial destruction, drawn from Max Weber: *naturally, the most important things are in the annotations* (Anders, 1980, 14).

As we read the verse above, typeset as a poem as such in the footnotes, we might be able to see why Herbert Eimert could have found this text compelling for his tone-speech tape composition, *Epitaph* (and listening to it, just as Steege also recommends [2020, 336–337], is certainly better). But reminding us that we are "brothers" to use Anders' rhetoric—he also names us, *all* of us, and not *some* of us, so many *sons* of Eichmann—can be difficult.

Illich reminds us of the dangers he names as part of *Medical Nemesis*, speaking of "black magic" and illusion in the midst of high science (cf. Babich, 2018b, 9–11). For Illich, what had been human dignity and freedom, on the plain of the soul's salvation, the very idea that one's health *and* one's death are one's own to live, to suffer, and to die, are inalienable rights, not to be expropriated save by violence, an expropriation never justified save at one's sovereign and voluntary option.

With reference to Marcus Aurelius, Hadot explains this same insight as consequent to "the conscious voluntary application of a method which he formulates in the following terms"—and here we note that this is the method of *epoché* and common to phenomenology, Stoicism, and, of course, indebted as he is to the ancients, of Nietzsche's own educational self-therapy, as Hadot continues to cite Marcus Aurelius himself:

> Always make a definition or description of the object that occurs in your representation, so as to be able to see what it is in its essence, both as whole and as divided into its constituent parts, and say to yourself its proper name and the names of those things out of which it is composed, and into which it will be dissolved. (Hadot 115, 187)

Overall and in any case, the Anaximandrian, the Empedoclean, the Heraclitean, the Stoic insight remains and may be paralleled to the Buddhist foundations that constitute the insights of the teaching of *wabi sabi*.

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[41] Anders (1956), via Steege (2020, 335–336).

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Ways of Performing and Regarding Practices of Silence in Classrooms: Reflections with Wittgenstein and Foucault

Jeff Stickney

Abstract Taking an approach Michael Peters referred to as 'Writing the Self' (2000), I deconstruct and reconstruct an investigation into reading silence in the classroom that I presented in Kyoto in 2008. The case I was focusing on then was how a non-Asian teacher like myself could read various performances of silence by his Asian students, who were mostly second and sometimes first-generation immigrants in Canada. Writing during the launch of a character education initiative in Ontario (2008), my concern was that in promoting the Western virtue of 'courage' (e.g., to speak in public), educators were simultaneously engaging in a process of effectively closing off space for performances of humility—often considered a virtue among Asian peoples. Harboring similar concerns twelve years later, now with assessing participation of my Teacher Candidates during discussions or seminars at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I come at this question from another angle, using the same philosophical lens of Wittgenstein and Foucault's genealogical approaches but this time with more self-scrutiny or examination of my own social-linguistic location. I return to José Medina's work (2006) to pick up a line I wish I had pursued further in 2008, of more actively bridging the hermeneutical divide I was essaying and then cultivating practices that constructively respond to silence.

Keywords Silence · Wittgenstein · Foucault · Medina · Humility · Asian students · Character education

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_15

1 Introduction

Michael Peters kindly invited me to revisit a topic I wrote on over a decade ago, now for this volume on *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self Cultivation*. Back in 2008 I presented a paper on 'Reconciling forms of Asian humility with assessment practices and character education programs in North America' at the Biennial meeting of the *International Network of Philosophers of Education* meeting in Kyoto, Japan (see Stickney, 2010). Briefly summarizing that original paper in the first section, I then offer in the second section self-critical reflection upon my earlier work. Undertaking this reinvestigation requires 'examining one's self,' as Heraclitus put it, or coming to 'know thyself' as Socrates exhorted (see Stickney, 2013). Foucault (2001, p. 107) deepened our appreciation of Socrates's dictum by adding 'care of the self' (*cura soi*, and *epimelia heauto*), which includes speaking the truth at one's own risk (*parrhesia*, p. 66). It also means taking greater responsibility for, and free-agency in, employing various 'arts of the self' to cultivate and govern oneself (see Foucault, 1994a, b). For Foucault (1985, p. 6; in Sluga, 2018), 'all moral action involves a relationship with the self.' As Sluga notes, for Foucault (1985, p. 28): 'The latter is not simply 'self-awareness' but self-formation as an 'ethical subject,' a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal.' Along similar lines, retrospection on my earlier aims and tactics is meant to be constructive of my present character as a writer and my own precepts for action, performing what Michael Peters called 'Writing the Self' (2000). The second section is therefore somewhat dialogical in the sense of having an honest conversation with myself, making this paper more confessional than the original exposition of the topic.

> Nearly all my writings are private conversations with myself. Things that I say to myself. tête-à-tête. (CV, p. 7e).[1]

2 Retrieving Lines of Thought

My primary concern in the original paper, as the title suggests, was around issues of how we adequately assess student participation in classroom discussions, where a portion of the course mark is determined by vocal engagement in this public space. I was teaching secondary school then in an affluent community in the Greater Toronto area, with a largely Chinese-Canadian student population and principal. The focus on humility arose from Chinese students (especially females) tending to give themselves lower marks in self-evaluation practices (no longer used today), despite being top students in other regards. I was concerned about the absence of 'humility' among

[1] Following convention, titles for Wittgenstein's works are abbreviated (PI = Philosophical Investigations, Z = Zettel, OC = On Certainty, CV = Culture and Value), with section (§) or page number (p.), with full citation and initials (e.g., RFGB) in the References.

the virtues promoted during my District's implementation of Ontario's Character Education initiative (2008). The problem that emerged was how non-Asian educators like myself could 'reconcile' their practices of assessing participation (which back then, but no longer include self-assessments in the determination of final marks), with a moral education program that promoted exclusively Western character attributes. The character attributes promoted reached back to Aristotle's set of virtues rather than to the teachings of Confucius (Kŏngzĭ), Lao Tzu or the Buddha. The central ethical question deliberated was whether it was fair to assess all students on the same criteria of pubic and verbal engagement in the classroom, if many of these students belonged to a cultural tradition that valued humility as a sign of good character? Was character education, for many Asian students, resulting tragically in 'cultural erasure' (Lugones & Price, 1995)?

Humility was considered by consultants in my district, but withdrawn from the final list of ten attributes due to concerns over whether humility promotes a Christian disposition: e.g., 'the meek shall inherit the earth,' as well as belonging to a Puritan tradition in early North American society of eschewing vanity. Our school did not have uniforms, and fashion-consciousness far outweighed character as a concern for our students. The consultants (my colleagues) were unfamiliar with the Chinese concept of *Hsiao*, which is connected with 'filial piety' (love of family and worship of ancestors), and also *Li*, 'respect.' I drew on my former professor Yi-Fu Tuan's (1976) chapter on 'Geopiety' to try to broaden horizons on how my school system could regard humility, but was unsuccessful in making a policy change. Even though recognizing humility would be more inclusive of the students we teach, I too had to recognize that humility is a virtue more tolerated[2] in liberal society than promoted.

Analytically considered, the words 'humble' and 'humility' share etymological connections to earthliness and lowliness (Greek *chanai*, 'to prostrate,' or move 'toward the earth; Latin *humus*, and *humilis*): the peasant's lowly station in life requires they bow before the exalted Emperor on his throne, and before the gods higher above. There is an honorific form, unrelated to humility and having more to do with expertise (i.e., a substantive base), when we speak of someone who is 'well-grounded' in their field or in their perspective on life, as opposed to flying too high (Icarus-like) or taking 'flights of fancy.' The transitive verb, 'to humble' or be 'humbled' is always negative: to be 'brought down,' sharing kinship with the derogatory 'humiliation'—a term of disparagement that conveys 'a loss of face,' embarrassment or unease. English synonyms for 'humility' also convey weakness or deficiency: 'timidity,' 'meekness,' 'bashfulness,' 'shyness,' and 'timorousness.' This set generally indicates qualities of 'servility' and genuflection: 'submissiveness,' 'lowliness,' 'mildness,' 'self-abasement,' and 'self-effacement' (Urdang, 1995, pp. 241–2; in Stickney, 2010, p. 72).

Although there are rich traditions within Asian societies that promote and value loss of the self and ego (e.g., Zen Buddhism), it is often difficult for Western thinkers to see 'loss or withdrawal of the self' as something positive (see Misco, 2010, for

[2] The liberal concept of 'tolerance' speaks of inclusivity but often masks repugnance for practices merely put up with rather than respected or valued.

a rare exception, embracing Japanese forms of self-abnegation). Western observers may misread modesty and silence as timidity when it may actually represent strength or reserve. In measuring a student's participation level, we apparently reward performance of its opposite trait: loquaciousness, and even bravado in public speaking. Teachers do not generally reward students or colleagues for speaking bombastically, or for using hyperbole in their diction, but often do request students to 'speak up (cf. Foucault, 2001, pp. 61–66, on distinguishing truth-saying from bombast). A dilemma emerges here, as 'being evidently vocal'—although not passive—could in this light be seen as a form of compliance with Western norms, or even submission to authority by playing the expected script, and silence a form of dissention (off-script).

'Unpretentiousness' is the only English 'cousin' of 'humility' (see Wittgenstein on the family resemblances of words and their meaning-through-use or context, PI §§68, 77) standing out as being salutary—a term that resonates with our ancient Greek character attributes of 'honesty' or 'integrity.' This connection led my original investigation (p. 75) into the subsidiary question: How does the teacher distinguish pretense or its lack in the facial expressions, mannerisms and articulations of students? Wittgenstein remarked:

> As I'm teaching, I can point to someone and say, 'You see, that person isn't pretending.' And a student can learn from this. But if he were to ask me 'How does one really tell that?' – then I might not have anything to answer, except, perhaps, something like this: 'Look how he's lying there, look at his face,' and things like this. (RPP II, §610)

I used this case of reading pretense as an analogy to explore more widely how educators can read different practices or language-games of silence in the classroom. There was a presumption in my original argument (an enthymeme) that some teachers could in fact make legible these different performances of silence, discerning timidity from resolve, enrapture from vacancy.

Looking at this topic again I think my conclusions then (pp. 77–78) still stand today, but perhaps, I can summarize them more succinctly. First, we informally 'learn' how to play these games of speaking and being silent over the course of our gradual acculturation and training into ways of life. There are no formal lessons in these matters, as there might be in learning some aspects of grammar or etiquette at school, for either the students performing them or the teachers judging them. It is rather like acquiring a *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 178–9) or a bodily comportment and way of reacting to music through social forms of dance (see Taylor, 1995, pp. 170–172). To try to explain how one knows when these moves are performed correctly one would have to describe an entire culture and its vast, ineluctable surroundings that lend context for meaning (cf. Z §164).

As with the use of words, there are a variety of ways in which silence can be performed, and so many language-games of silence exist simultaneously instead of some unified or essential meaning. Silences are deeply context-dependent, and so cases vary with the circumstances surrounding their performance. Teaching the skill of discerning felicitous performance is almost impossible, but one can give tips or offer examples to assist novices (as Wittgenstein puts it, PI, p. 227). Judging requires

much experience and absorption of rich cultural background that itself cannot be articulated or described.

Educators looking for the same kinds of vocal performance from everyone has the effect of assimilating minority groups into the dominant culture and language. To some extent, that is what education systems achieve as hidden if not explicit curriculum, but a by-product of this 'aim' can be the lowering of self-esteem, and diminishment of cultural pride or identification with the student's first language. Preservation of first languages could equally be a goal of education, rather than being seen as an obstacle to acquisition of the dominant language and culture. Teachers could concede, for instance, that it might be reasonable for more recently arrived immigrants to withhold on some occasions from oral participation, much as these teachers would also be hushed when visiting another country where they are not fluent in the language. In light of these realizations, it may also be reasonable on occasion to make accommodations in how students are evaluated instead of applying a single expectation to all students, allowing for differentiation in the way students are evaluated.

3 Self-criticism: Destruction and Reconstruction

Returning to these questions, my aim is not to prescribe how silences should be read or to create a guide (or ethology) on reading these performances. My aim is to generate appreciation of the nuances—the wider range of expression—in the hope that educators will bring into reconsideration their own habits or practices of interpreting classroom silence. A possible outcome is making openings for students to be otherwise in the classroom (see Foucault 1994b), by helping teachers to not automatically see silent comportments as a 'lack': the deficit model embedded in Western cultural norms and the tacit rules of our academies; this particular case being another 'picture that holds us captive' (PI §115; cf. §224 on rules being a form of agreements; see Peters & Stickney, 2018).

In taking up this topic I am again applying the philosophies of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michel Foucault, which in combination tend to 'reciprocally illuminate' one another and reveal opportunities for 'freedoms within the rules' (see Tully, 1989). The goal remains to look at various language-games of classroom silence, and to compare these with other familiar performances in order to see alternatives for how teachers regard them: neither privileging the individual or the society as the source of meaning, or favoring the view from inside or out, but searching for meaning in our interactions with these performances themselves. 'Words have meaning only in the stream of life.' (LWPP I, §913; cf. Z §173–4).

Here, I am following Michael Peters in seeing a confessional tendency in Wittgenstein's work (after Augustine, but also Kierkegaard), and am applying that internal gaze to the narrative offered in the next section.

(All that philosophy can do is to destroy idols. And that means not creating a new one – for instance as in 'absence of an idol.') (PO, Phil., p. 171)

3.1 Four Self-criticisms

3.1.1 Pretentiousness is a Weak Analogy for Investigating Silences

Admittedly, while discussing Wittgenstein's case around 'pretense' easily provided entry into Wittgenstein's later post-foundational philosophy, it was not very illuminating for this particular investigation. There is no question of someone's sincerity in our case; this thought does not arise in daily life, as one cannot pretend to be silent. Borrowing Aristotle's logic of the excluded-middle: One is, or is not, silent (whether seething in silence or not). Someone could feign misunderstanding as the reason for silence, masking disagreement or contempt behind the withdrawal of voice being a more realistic case than pretense, with application to reading some performances of silence. This time around, I need to heed Wittgenstein's advice more closely: 'Don't imagine a description which you have never heard, …an imaginary description of which you really have no idea' (CV, p. 35e; cf. PI §66, 'don't think, but look!'). Not enough attention was paid to the variety of language-games played in classrooms, and to my actual interactions with students who were for various reasons silent.

Inspecting cases of performing and reading pretense is useful only to the extent that it demonstrates the kind of gradual training and enculturation that goes into children learning language-games for performing emotions and enacting intentions, whether in showing pain or sincerity, as well as the exclusion of unfamiliar performances from members of *forms of life* that lack our shared, customary responses. As Mulhall (2001, pp. 168–171) puts it, our second-nature ways of acting and even of seeing/regarding have been grafted onto our natural reactions, and only those with 'normal learner reactions' can both learn to perform these games and adjudicate the performances of others (see PI §§143–5; PI, p. 214 on aspect-blindness and tone-deafness; see Stickney, 2020, 2022 on informal learning of judgments).

A child has much to learn before it can pretend. (A dog cannot be a hypocrite, but neither can he be sincere.) (PI, p. 229).

A child must have developed far before it can pretend, must have learned a lot before it can simulate. (LWPP, p. 42e; Cf. PI, p. 229)

In PI §250 Wittgenstein ponders: 'Could one teach a dog to simulate pain?' In asking this, he shows our ability to read pretense in facial expressions—weighing almost imponderable evidence (PI, pp. 227–8) in arriving instantaneously at largely shared 'certainty in judgments'—to be something more animally reactive than rational or deliberative. It is important to note that in observing humility, the perceiver is judging at the same time. It is not a two-stage event, with interpretation following perception. Wittgenstein talks about this first in relaying how we instantly recognize the meaning of signposts, without conducting a subsidiary act of interpretation: a

red octagon causes me to stop, and so I react, just as I respond appropriately to punctuation marks on this page or to musical and mathematical notation. There is no interpretive act in this case; Wittgenstein refers to this as 'a way of grasping a rule that is not an interpretation' (PI §201; (cf. 1967, §570). At the end of his *Investigations,* Wittgenstein discusses non-interpretive regarding- or seeing-as more fully, in connection with what he calls *continuous-seeing-of-objects* (PI, pp. 194–5). His example was that when I see a fork, for instance, I cannot help but see it as cutlery; when I see some using chop sticks, I instantly recognize this *as* another such tool, though in the absence of a blade, English 'cutlery' seems an unsuitable term. The following passage from Wittgenstein is illustrative of how we fix through training these cultural patterns of reaction or response[3]:

> If we teach a human being such-and-such a technique by means of examples – that he then proceeds like *this and not that* in a particular new case, or that in this case he gets stuck, and thus that *this and not that* is the 'natural' continuation for him: this of itself is an extremely important fact of nature. (Z §355)

One of the liberating aspects of this post-foundational approach is that it frees us from questions as to whether our judgments are absolutely correct or right, in terms of correspondence with the external world. The teacher cannot possibly verify the accuracy of his or her judgments as to whether a student is sincere or pretending to not understand a lecture or explanation. There is no way of isolating variables, a condition needed to run an experiment or make a measurement. Instead of seeing this as a matter of truth through adequate representation, or of judgment matching the real thing, we follow Rorty (1967, 1979) along the 'linguistic turn' that Heidegger and Wittgenstein heralded into philosophy by speaking instead of our solidarity with like-minded people who share similar judgments. In the case of expert judgment, where justification soon runs out (see PI §§211, 217), what we see are people from the same language community sharing, for the most part, the same 'agreements in judgment within a *form of life.*'

> "So you are saying that human agreement decides about what is true and what is false?" – It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in forms of life. (PI §241)

> If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments. (PI §242)

Foucault's 'regimes of truth' or 'games of truth' give us similar non-essentialist perspective, used by Judith Butler to discuss the concept of 'gender performativity' in terms of the public performances we give to gender roles, instead of having our nature given at birth as either a male or female disposition.[4] Upon reflection, I wish I had utilized more fully these aspects surrounding the case of reading pretense in

[3] Wittgenstein was emphatic that recognizing this basis in training did not mean he was a behaviorist (see PI §§307–309).

[4] See Butler's brief *Big Think* Series talk on gender performativity, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d-87MV05ZY.

a face, to more perspicuously reveal nuances in various language-games of silence (cf. PI §122).

3.1.2 Briefly Entertaining Questions of Epistemic and Cultural Relativism was Warranted, But Diverted Attention Away from any Genuine Attempt at Resolving Teacher–Student Divisions

Looking at the preceding discussion of solidarity, in which truth becomes something we 'hold' or 'count' as true as members of the same linguistic-cultural community, it is clear how problems of relativity were pertinent in an investigation of teachers' judgments of silence. As Wittgenstein noted, our degree of certainty in making judgments is relative to the language-game played: for instance, I am quite certain that '$25 \times 25 = 625$,' but much less certain that a facial expression or silent demeanor exhibit 'slight melancholy' (see PI, p. 224). I was also considering a form of ethical relativity in seeing different cultural value-schemes behind Greek 'courage' and Asian 'humility. Referring here to Tully's dialogical approach, of listening carefully and hearing out the other's case for why they think and act as they do, and eschewing either 'the informed insider perspective' or the 'objective/neutral outsider,' I followed Rorty (1989, 1991) and Burbules (2000, pp. 52–3) in avoiding an 'isles of language' reading of Wittgenstein: one that leaves us incapable of bridging the asymmetries of other cultures and languages (Stickney, 2010 p. 72). As Scheman noted (1996, p. 386).

> On such a reading, one is either inside or outside of a language-game, the contours of which are arbitrary, and if inside, one just does what 'we' do; if outside, one is clueless – not participant, certainly not an intelligible critic.

Scheman argues instead for 'an explicitly political reading of Wittgenstein … that starts from somewhere on the margins with an articulation of estrangement from a form of life.' This position of 'privileged marginality,' she argues, offers a way out of endless disputes over objectivism and relativism (Scheman, 1996, p. 386). Rejecting the radical skepticism that would make 'silence' unintelligible to the teacher, I followed Scheman's and Medina's political reading of Wittgenstein in seeing language-games of humility as 'normatively lucid' and open to revision from the margins (Medina, 2006, p. 154). I was holding out the possibility of a non-Asian teacher like me being capable of reading performances of silence by my Asian students, without denying risks of misinterpretation (see Said, 1978) or claiming exceptional proficiency through insider (native) perspective.

Looking back, I realize now that my discussion of relativity registers less as a contribution to moral education discourse than it signals affinities with a small circle of post-analytic Wittgenstein scholars with whom I was then beginning (and continue now) to think and work: Michael Peters, Nicholas Burbules, and Paul Smeyers (see their book, 2008; see Stickney, 2008 on Wittgenstein and relativity, which they published the same year). My discussion was marshaled in defense of

Wittgenstein and Foucault, ostensibly clearing them from unwarranted accusations of relativism (and so perhaps shadow-boxing with Siegel, 1987). Although I resisted following Medina (2006, pp. 171–190) more deeply into this aporetic quagmire of academic philosophy, in trying to aver the 'isles of language' reading of Wittgenstein, I gave my wife (brave reader) the impression that I was stranded on a tiny island of philosophical jargon only visited by a few colleagues. Writing letters in a bottle, I squandered opportunities to bridge the gap, showing alternatives for performing and regarding otherwise various forms of classroom silence.

3.1.3 The Under-Developed Ontogenetic Account of Humility Was Unnecessary

The lengthy discussion of how humility evolved over time, from prehistory through Imperial times, intended to illustrate the genealogical approach, was admittedly shallow and unnecessary. There was not enough space in a journal article to perform Foucault's genealogical method of describing and problematizing various epochs of history with an aim toward showing how a concept like humility could be performed differently, or how it could be a problem for societies at these different junctures. As nominalist historicists like Foucault note, we can only see or reconstruct these epochs today from our current moment in time and its language and culture (the necessary *presentism* of all such appropriations of the past, and of our interpretation of past customs and documents). Instead of Foucault's elaborate demonstrations of periodic counter-examples, as in the successive changes in the ways prisoners or the insane were treated (Foucault, 1965, 1977), my account appears hobbled together from various texts found conveniently on my bookshelf. At best this was a provisional gesture in the direction of providing a historically genetic account of how we arrived at our present, normalized linguistic constructs; at worst it was a way of ingratiating myself toward my hosts, genuflecting awkwardly to an Asian audience that included Japanese, Chinese, and Korean scholars. In either case, well-intended but somewhat embarrassing today for its sketchiness.

I went back to resurrect ancient Chinese texts on the concept of *Hsiao* (Stickney, 2010, pp. 75–6), drawing on Tuan's excerpts from Chai and Chai (1967):

> Tuan explains (1976, p. 14), 'The virtues it teaches were useful to the stratified society of Han times (206 BC–AD 220)—respect, docility, obedience, and subordination to elders and betters. The main idea behind *hsiao* is indisputably one-sided: it is obedience and reverence toward authority.' The Hsiao Ching (c. 350–200 BC) presents Confucius as saying:
>
> > Filiality is the first principle of heaven, the ultimate standard of the earth, the norm of conduct for the people. Men ought to follow the pattern of heaven and earth which leads them by the brightness of the heavens and the benefits of the earth to harmonize all under heaven (Tuan, 1976, p. 14, citing Makra 1961, p. 15).

Here is another excerpt, offered to demonstrate a basis for teachers reading strength as opposed to weakness in a student's (or sage's) silence:

> Lao Tsu (6th century BC), the older contemporary of Confucius, writes: 'The sage is shy and humble – to the world he seems confusing,' or childlike; and 'Surrender yourself humbly; then you can be trusted to care for all things' (Tsu 1972b, pp. 49, 13). He advises: 'Those who know do not talk. Those who talk do not know. Keep your mouth closed' (Tsu 1972a, b, p. 56). At times, he counsels yielding, inaction, and avoidance of competition (pp. 61, 64, 66). These qualities might dissimulate passivity, forgetting that pacific water can deliver tsunami. Contesting our discursive formation, Chuang Tsu recalls that the true man of old 'was humble but not servile'. (Tsu 1972a, p. 118)

It occurs to me now, however, that although it might be helpful to lay out the long progression of thoughts and practices that have taken us to where we are today, a method we see in some of Foucault's early works (1965, 1977), few if any of my students would have been familiar with this ancient thinking. I realized later how removed most of my Asian pupils were from their own ethnic history, when introducing Confucius and Lao Tzu in my Grade 12 Philosophy class. My intention there, as well, was honorable: to have a more inclusive, non-Eurocentric curriculum that reflected the make-up of my predominantly Chinese-Canadian class. But it now seems clear that none of my Chinese or Korean students were conducting themselves in accordance with these ancient sayings (nor even those of Sun Yat Sen). They were far too busy learning maths and sciences to read arcane texts, which might prove interesting but only in passing appreciation of the role they may have played in recording and re-inscribing scholarly foundations for their received culture today. Curiosities, rather than explanations for the way students today acquire through enculturation and then play various language-games of silence in schools.

From Wittgenstein's perspective, we have to read bodily comportment and communication as occurring in the 'flow of life,' bound up with an intricate web of practices and their complex background or surroundings (1967, Z §173). What matters is leveraging a clear or perspicuous view (PI §122, *Übersicht*; RFGB, in PO, p.133).[5]

> If we look at things from an ethnological point of view, does that mean that we are saying that philosophy is ethnology? No, it only means that we are taking up a position right outside so as to be able to see things more objectively. (CV 37e)

It was also, from Wittgenstein's perspective, unnecessary to trace the history of a practice in search of possible causes (see Stickney, 2017). As I had pointed out back then as well, neither the history or etymology of a custom or word is needed in order to understand present meaning.[6]

> The historical explanation, the explanation as an hypothesis of development, is only one way of assembling the data – of their synopsis. It is just as possible to see the data in their relation

[5] The concept of the perspicuous representation is of fundamental importance for us. It denotes the form of our representation, the way we see things….

The perspicuous representation brings about the understanding which consists precisely in the fact that we 'see the connections.'

Hence, the importance of finding *connecting links*. (RFGB, p. 133).

[6] For instance, the Greek concept of 'virtue,' *aretai*, derived from Ares, the god of war, but did not mean that for Socrates. The ancient Greeks used the masculine *andreia* for 'fortitude,' but we do not (necessarily) gender it the same way today.

> to one another and to embrace them in a general picture without putting it in the form of an hypothesis about temporal development. (PO: RFGB 131; cf. pp. 143, 147, 151)

Where I think I got it right was in noting that this historical reflection was quite unnecessary, but that point was likely lost in my excursus into such background.

> For our purposes, we might take Wittgenstein's audacious position that here a 'false history' would do (Wittgenstein, 1968, p. 230; cf. §§25, 415). …To understand current performances of humility within specific educational settings, the surroundings or circumstances upon which we read manifestations of humility belong to the present, localized web of practices in which they are integrated. Ontogenetic accounts of how these practices have emerged lead us to see humility simply as a vestige of subjugation, rather than arising through a plurality of causes. The potentially freeing aspect of Foucault's genealogical work, on the contrary, would be to show how alternative techniques or arts existed for performing humility across different Asian cultures and times. (Stickney, 2010, pp. 75–76)

3.1.4 Concealment of My Own Place of Privilege Masks Both the Author and Rough Ground of the Investigation: Confessions of a Monolinguist

> 'The limits of my language are the limits of my world.' (Wittgenstein, TLP, 5.6)

In setting out on this new angle of approach, I have to first acknowledge that focusing on myself may seem contradictory, or even worse, an almost narcissistic way to address humility.[7] But using autobiography seems the best avenue for engaging in a battle for truth-telling (see Foucault, 2001, on *parrhesia*), journaling my way forward as a form of honest self-examination that also cares for the self.

In typical academic style, I wrote that paper from a vantage point that was both vaunted and masked. The terminology and phraseology perform what Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) refer to as (nearly impenetrable) academic armoring, in service of protecting and reproducing social elites. It was written from a position of safety: philosophical reflections on scenes of instruction I recollected, without interrogating my own positionality or intersectionality as a 'Straight' (hetero-sexual), White, Anglo-Saxon (formerly Protestant) American permanent resident in Canada (and two years later, also a Canadian citizen), even though I had begun with personal anecdotes about my geographical location in Canada. Most noticeably to me now, I was also too secure in my role as arbiter of felicitous performance, having been an English teacher and holding a doctorate degree. As Derrida realizes, however, my native language is not really mine.

> "I have only one language; it is not mine."
>
> Or rather, and better still:
>
> I am monolingual. My monolingualism dwells, and I call it my dwelling; it feels like one to me, and I remain in it and inhabit it. It inhabits me. The monolingualism in which I draw my very breath is, for me, my element. …

[7] Leonard Waks, in an unpublished paper, 'Humility in Teaching' (p. 5; see nt. 5 on questionable attribution to C.S. Lewis), 'True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.'

"Yes, I have only one language, yet it is not mine." Jacques Derrida (1996, pp. 1–2)

I am a descendent of both English and Norwegian immigrants to the USA: the English side going back eleven generations to the 1600s, and the Norwegian side to the late nineteenth century. As the third generation on the Norwegian side of the family, the only Norwegian word I know is a toast to good health: 'Skol!' President Theodore Roosevelt had declared at the beginning of the twentieth century that his intention was to transform America from a 'polyglot boarding house' into a unified nation, and this was achieved by attaching social prestige and self-esteem among immigrants to rapidly losing their first language and inculcating their own offspring into American English. The only time I heard a Norwegian accent was in the telling of 'Inge and Ole' jokes, where relatives made fun of the simplicity of these foreign-sounding mascots of our old-world culture.

I had studied some German in secondary school, and had even tried to learn some Cantonese while working in Chinese restaurants while in high school; at university, I took Russian (and passed). I was raised to be monolingual, and this in spite of emigrating to Canada, an officially bilingual country. None of my four children can speak French either, despite having taken it in elementary school and in Grade 9 in high school. We are all monolingual. This is why I open my reinvestigation with Derrida's confession, even though it is embarrassing frankly when I travel to conferences and I see many people in Europe and Asia speaking English as well as their first and often a third language. In Toronto, where I reside, there are many polylingual people, but this is because the Metropolis is very multicultural, and descendants of the original British and French settlers are now in the minority here. Where I live and teach, I speak the dominant language of North America[8] but I am in the category of other, the subaltern, in not speaking another language.

The sense of ownership of or entitlement to English is something I want to examine next.

Not only a dual citizen of the USA and Canada, I am doubly 'nationalized' by both the liberal arts I teach and the language I speak. At first, it may seem odd to speak of the liberal arts as places of residence to which one owes allegiances, but this is how Michael Oakeshott narratively construed them in his essays: always in defense of this threatened heartland from invaders without and traitors within. Oakeshott's image of the liberal arts as a bastion of safety, a Norman keep holding out against the barbarians at the gates and the *dance macabre* in education that would lead us to merrily lower our guard, is something that seeps into one's consciousness whether reading his work directly or merely taking in the drill as one acquires some facility with the various methods, terminologies, and tests of truth-claims that characterize each discipline: characteristic practices and an academic ethos teachers become emblematic of as adept citizens and public representatives.

Oakeshott created what Appadurai (2000) calls *nationness* through figurative places of commemoration, fortifications and state iconography. In delivering his 'Places of Learning'

[8] Spanish is rapidly gaining ground on English, as can be seen from signs along the Great Lakes warning of pollution in the fish, translated into Spanish.

> paper at Colorado University, for instance, Oakeshott expressed admiration for those over the centuries 'sailing under the flag of the Liberal Arts' (1975/1989, p. 1, Ed. nt.), constituting his nation-state and its citizens (audience). (Stickney, 2015, p. 496)

My point here is that this identification with the discipline we are teaching is magnified by an additional sense of belonging to a community of English language-users. None of us own the language, of course, but oddly we become its defenders also when we pass judgment on the propriety or suitability of other's usage. A continuum is at play as we gauge how fluent someone is and therefore how deeply inside the circle of this kinship group. Rarely do educators lower the draw bridge of this keep to assist outsiders' entry into the inner sanctum; without even realizing it, they are far more likely (even if unintentionally) to maintain a *cordon sanitaire* as though staving off the plague.

Overall, I presented over-confidence in my own ability to expertly discern intentions or meanings within silences, and in avoiding the isles of language problem putting too much faith in my ability to overcome, cognitively and perceptually, cultural-linguistic divides through some kind of hermeneutic fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1976) instead of developing new practices of engagement or language-games for bridging silences in the classroom. I should have reflected more deeply why one Asian woman at the end of my talk in Kyoto challenged my ability to understand Asian forms of humility, being so clearly on the outside of Asian cultures (even as someone who worked in Chinese restaurants and once tried to learn Cantonese). What an audacious move, for me to go to Kyoto to talk about Asian forms of humility: wanting to show respect for humility as I see it played by my students, but at the same time claiming some philosophical high-ground with Wittgenstein at the conference. In cutting a dashing figure for myself, the paper/presentation did not perform the preliminary work on myself and my pedagogical practices needed to cultivate inclusivity and equity.

> A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that's unlocked and opens inwards; as long as it does not occur to him to pull rather push it. (CV, p. 42e).

3.2 Bridging Silences

For Wittgenstein, the meanings of words vary according to the different ways in which we use them, like tools in this regard (OC §§61, 351). There is no absolute definition to refer to for meaning, even though we defer to authoritative sources such as the Oxford English Dictionary. For reading different performances of silence, there is no such text or thesaurus to which we may turn.

> *Silence itself* – the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between speakers – *is less the absolute limit of discourse,* the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, *than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies.* There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the *different ways of not saying* such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is

> required in each case. *There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.*
>
> - Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, p. 27; in Medina, 2006, p. 171, his emphasis)

Looking back at Medina's work on silenced peoples seeking expression (2006), I wish I had made better use of this passage he cited from Foucault, that runs counter to Gemma Fiumara's (1990) concept of silence as 'the other side of language.' As Foucault describes silences, they attend to or flow alongside discourses, like the body-language and gestures that accompany utterances and even pauses in speech.

3.2.1 Cases of Silence

> What is most difficult here is to put this indefiniteness, correctly and unfalsified, into words. (PI, p. 227)

Here are some of the numerous ways in which silence may be played and read in the classroom, although it is not exhaustive and more than one may be at play at a given time.

As strength.

- Arms folded, intransigence—resistance to what is being taught or enforced; obstinate refusal to learn or receive the message (conflicted, agonistic game of silence)—refusing indoctrination or consciousness-raising efforts that go against the person's belief system or foundational sense of right and wrong, true and false (opposing regimes of truth).
- Composure, even tranquility: in the flow, and possibly fully appreciative, but not breaking this happy state by talking (*eudaimonia*) and even pleasure (hedonistic enjoyment).
- Fully cognizant but withholding vocal assent or verbal engagement, etc.; these silences may or may not be accompanied by facial expressions and postures showing engagement and/or agreement. Withholding from playing some games and not others can also be an expression of identity: 'It's just not me.' 'I don't sing in public either….' Not that these identities are natural or essential, but they do play a role in opening or closing opportunities much as some people identify as athletic or not, musical or not, math competent or not.

As diversion or derailment.

- Distracted, on phone or laptop, as in breaking communication by stepping out of the community of speakers to self-isolate (solecism, or 'sole alone': broken link)
- Bewildered, as in unable to follow the flow of words—lost, or off track:
  - Hooked on an earlier point, and so falling behind while thinking,
  - Lacking needed background knowledge to comprehend the meaning
  - Lacking sufficient fluency in the language to absorb key terms or make sense of the syntax; incapacitated by lacking core competencies needed (e.g., ELL, learning disabled)

  - Physically and/or mentally unable to calm the body and mind in order attend to the speaker (autistic, ADHD, Turrets, Schizophrenia, hearing or speech-impaired, deaf and dumb, stutter, etc.)

- Decoding or translating while actively listening, but receiving at least part of the message.

As weakness or debility

- Timid, shy, scared, etc.
- Deferential, supine, submissive
- Reticence. Having an internal dialogue with or monitoring of one self that is self-critical and/or lacking in confidence, as in not trusting that what one would say is right or appropriate and so self-censoring (different from being hooked…; not having a side conversation with one self that is confident and relevant, as in going off on a tangent, employing prior learning …using imagination, etc.)—this is more about self-loathing, and so denying oneself a public face through speech.

As de jure *or* de facto *exclusion: no remit to speak*

- Cultural forms of debarring speech: women or youth do not speak up; elderly, etc.—minority groups within a dominant culture
- Lacking the feeling of entitlement due to race or age, gender, membership, etc. and so not having the entry ticket needed. 'Moon time' for Indigenous women, being excluded from the assembly. Not being a registered student, but auditing the course; this is your conversation, folks, not mine.

As self-preservation, guardedness, self-exclusion.

- Hiding accent, or affectation, to conceal immigrant status, social-economic class, or orientation.

I am not an expert 'technician' in this field, capable of discerning which of these games is played at any given time, and of course I could be wrong about the sincerity or authenticity of what is outwardly presented. Some diagnoses require professional expertise in fields such as speech pathology, psychology, language training, etc.[9] Nonetheless, considering the wider range of 'reasons' is of possible benefit in understanding students, as well as the possibility of recognizing and perhaps allowing for yet other games that I have not listed here.

Next, I consider ways of bridging the veritable 'isles of language.' The goal is simply to make all of our students more at home, as 'permanent residents' of the language instead of 'registered aliens' (to use the language of immigration). The most welcoming thing that educators can do is to respect the student and not read into their silences faulty interpretations; also, build into teaching enabling practices around which the students also have imput but do not demand speech when it is not willingly given.

[9] See Foucault (1989) on the emergence of the clinical gaze, in diagnosing patients for their maladies.

3.2.2 Practical Ideas Teachers Can Implement to Assist English Language Learners (ELL)

1. Allow students the option of posting their contributions to class discussions on a digital platform (like Google docs), and count this equally *as* participation: assessing the quality or significance of the contribution on criteria other than language proficiency, as we do when listening to oral forms of participation in the classroom.
2. If using matching or multiple-choice quizzes, teachers could record these as diagnostic assessments and then offer students an opportunity to write out definitions for their final assessment of learning. Grammar often misleads students into making the wrong choices in these easier-to-mark formats and my experience was that ELL students do far better writing out the answers. Of course, in multiple-choice and matching formats teachers are not marking grammar and spelling, so why do that now in assessing written responses if content was the sole criterion in these other formats?
3. Have students partner with more fluent speakers of English, and have students peer edit each other's written work on essays or reports, handing in drafts for assessment at different stages of the writing process. It has always struck me how much help we extend to fellow academics in reviewing and revising their manuscripts for journals or books, as well as doctoral candidates writing their dissertations. For some reason, when it comes to secondary students the fear is that they are not doing their own work, when it is precisely this group who would benefit most from learning how to write better. I would often give a due date, but then return the marked-up paper allowing students to revise and correct their paper, clearly indicating what they have changed, in order to move the grade up by some amount (e.g., up to 10%). Of course, the top students who are quite proficient at writing and referencing are most inclined to resubmit, going for the A + mark and higher grade point average for admittance to university. It is the weaker writers and at-risk students the teacher needs to reach most, perhaps motivating them to take this extra step by involving parents or special education and ELL teachers. Encouragement and praise are likely better motivators than threats, humiliation, and intimidation, as in learning mathematics.
4. Co-create a glossary of key terms, and make it manifest in the room through a word wall, or classroom dictionary (as Wittgenstein did in his classroom, but now this could be digital).
5. Provide an array of reading materials at different reading levels, just as we provide different size uniforms and shoes in school sports. Few secondary students will be reading at the level of academic journals like *Scientific American* or *Nature;* on some library resource servers like Questia you can select the desired reading level. Unfortunately, the teacher cannot provide readings in the student's first language if not also fluent in that language, as there is no basis for curating these resources and judging their suitability in terms accuracy of

factual content, relevance to the course material, and appropriate diction (even whether meeting community standards of decency).

6. Some of my colleagues who work with foreign students from China are learning Mandarin, and I hear them receiving correction and encouragement from these graduate students. This is commendable, but cannot be expected of teachers. For the ones I know of, this is now a part of their administrative or professional work, and even perhaps a part of the revenue stream for their departments (i.e., foreign students bring money into the program) as well as being of benefit on their frequent travels to China. Although acquiring even limited facility at translation would certainly be helpful, it is asking a lot of mainstream educators and less practical in more diverse polylingual classrooms (i.e., where Farsi and Urdu, Russian and Korean would also be an asset).
7. Embed ELL-related studies in all subject specializations with Initial Teacher Education programs, as many are now doing with Environmental Sustainability Education, so future teachers in every discipline have a more robust skill set for addressing the needs of these learners. Encourage reflection on these kinds of challenges during practicum placements, with an eye toward filling gaps through later training.
8. In addition to popular clubs like Debate Team, Model UN, and Entrepreneurship clubs, create something like a Toastmasters (Speech) Club for ELL students and allies where the emphasis is on practicing colloquial speech in English among speakers of many languages. The closest example is the Gay-Straight Alliance in some schools, which also promote inclusivity and acceptance of diversity, but clearly in these groups the goal is not assimilation to heterosexuality. Nor should these ELL clubs be only about conversion; they could equally assist members to learn more about the languages of the newcomers, possibly helping third generation immigrants to retrieve something of their family's first language. Our Toronto District School Board had an excellent heritage language program, designed to assist immigrants in retaining their first language.
9. In formal modes of education within the classroom, affinity groups can also be created where ELL students join non-ELL students, working together within what Rancière (1991) referred to as a 'circle of their need.' In the *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière was telling the story of a master trying to instruct students in a language he did not speak. Instead of explicating and directly instructing the students, he had to find a way of genuinely educating them, which was at the same time a form of emancipation. This meant adopting a presumption of equality: dropping the hierarchical relations of pastoral supervision, and of the explicative order where knowledge is distributed to the unlearned by means of lecture instead of group or self-directed inquiry and discovery-learning based on genuine interest and real need.
10. Allow for use of social media where students can post their ideas anonymously, as with *padlet* (where you can use settings to prevent swearing), *Socrative, Nearpod*, etc. See Andersson (2016) on this kind of 'third space' for being both consumers and producers of information (knowledge), or 'prosumers,' also

opening dialogue to a wider range of perspectives than are often allowed within monitored discussion in classrooms. In classroom discussion, the teacher often normalizes some forms of expression over others, reducing opportunities for pluralistic and agonistic engagement (see Mouffe, 2000, 2005). How will this help our ELL students? If students feel they are going to be ridiculed because of spelling or grammar mistakes, or by their pronunciation of words in oral communication, they may withdraw from participating. It is hard to develop a sense of agency and involvement in participatory democracy when your ideas do not appear in the public debate within classrooms. A democracy wall allows for anonymous posting of ideas, without fear of reprisal or punishment, effectively voicing what was otherwise made silent.

4 Conclusion

In probing the forms of silence teachers may witness in their classrooms, it is clear that silence can have political ramifications affecting civic freedoms within schools: it may signal intransigence on the part of the listener, or stubborn refusal to participate in a discussion the student sees as illegitimate, incorrect, insulting, or confounding, etc.; it can also be the result of a teacher stifling some voices through explicit or implicit rules governing the exercise of speech, whether under benign or hegemonic power relations (see Foucault, 1994c). Spaces for safely speaking easily become closed down, and often without the teacher intending that or realizing how this happens. For instance, inadvertently answering one's own questions in their framing or delivery does not invite response, other than sympathetic participation as a kindness to the speaker; or, a teacher's overt, masculine gestures and heteronormative language may deny comfortable space for homosexual (LBGTQ2S+) students to speak, leading them to hide affect in their voice and withdraw other indications of orientation. The teacher's communication and bodily comportment establish tacit criteria or background conditions for what is regarded 'normal' or 'felicitous' performance in the classroom, as do exemplary students commended for mimicking or even exceeding the teacher's style of public speech (see Medina, 2006, pp. 154–5).

A central question of this investigation is how we construct our understanding of more silent students, often imposing Western standards of public speaking, a character taxonomy and normative framework that tends to present silence as passivity or even weakness, and active vocalization as heroic self-assertion.[10] Where participation marks are awarded for students verbally engaging in the classroom conversation, this becomes both a practical and social justice concern as to how we fairly evaluate

[10] In 'The Will to Power,' Nietzsche uses the example of a dinner party, where aristocrats vie for who speaks over whom, thus forming the canopy of this virtual forest.

students belonging to other first language and ethnic communities.[11] Their nationality (birthplace) puts them at a disadvantage: one which educators could mitigate to some extent while still assisting them in gaining entry into the dominant culture. Conflating silence with character attributes adds to the problem. Seeing students interact with another in their first language, teachers may realize that someone who appears timid or removed in class is flamboyant or outgoing in social occasions.

It is also an epistemological problem, however, in terms of the degree of certainty a teacher can obtain in making judgments about student silences. As Wittgenstein reminds us, in digging down for justifications or reasons for such judgments our 'spade is quickly turned' (PI §§211, 217). Educators hit the same limits in trying to teach someone else, like a Teacher Candidate we are mentoring, how to make these kinds of judgments—something that requires vast background or contextualization as well as experience (see RPP II, §624). Part of what learning to judge expressions and gestures correctly entails is more nuanced understanding of the ineluctable or almost 'imponderable evidence' surrounding the appearance of faces and bodies (PI, p. 228). Meaning drifts in the 'atmosphere' and 'circs' surrounding and contextualizing both our perception of students and likewise their reception of our expressions and pedagogical practices (see Z §534). The needed background for comprehension and judging of reading expressions or assessing either the suitability or engagement level of an instance of 'teaching' is not easily conveyed through direct instruction; it is imparted gradually, through initiate training, observation and experience.[12] It is this art that I would ask readers to cultivate in their own pedagogical approach to reading silence, conducting an 'ethics of the concern for the self as a practice for freeing' both teacher and student (Foucault, 1994a).

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[11] Teaching on-line now through Zoom-meeting classes, many of my students who do not have sufficient bandwidth on their Wi-Fi and those who wish to remain unseen can shut down their video and simply display their name (white letters on a black background). When we go into breakout rooms for small group discussions, I see more students uncloaking but some remain faceless and silent throughout the class. This makes it almost impossible to read silences, as the student could be watching a football match, posting messages on social media, or even be absent from the classroom. Or, listening attentively.

[12] Like gaining a nose for good wine or coffee (PI, p. 218).

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Foucault, Truth-Telling and Technologies of the Self in Schools

Tina Besley

Abstract This chapter highlights how Foucauldian philosophical notions of care for the self are relevant to the moral education of young people, and yet, care of the self is seldom an explicit goal of education, apart from sometimes appearing in such curricula as health or personal and social education, or maybe values education classes. It considers Foucault's changing understandings about the self; truth-telling and technologies of the self; and his genealogy of confession, ending with a brief conclusion.

1 Introduction

When disciplinary measures exclude students from school, the serious long-term impacts are often reduced educational and life chances and in turn social exclusion. Care of the self and even moral education remains largely unwritten in school policies and seldom form explicit goals of education. Rather they tend to be part of a general moral education that may be part of the hidden curriculum or located within a specific curriculum such as values, health, personal and social, religious philosophy, civics and/or citizenship education. This chapter highlights how Foucauldian philosophical notions of care for the self are relevant to the moral education of young people in secondary schools. The chapter is divided into the following sections that pursue Foucault's changing understandings about the self: truth-telling and technologies of the self and his genealogy of confession. It ends with a brief conclusion.

Imagine a top student is about to sit the crucial exams that will provide a scholarship that is vital for the student to attend university. Such a school would likely have

This article appeared in Journal of Educational Enquiry, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2005, pp. 76–89. https://ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/EDEQ/article/view/503. An earlier version was presented at the International Network of Philosophers of Education Conference, and appears in the proceedings (Besley, 2002) and as Besley, (2005).

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_16

professionals such as school counsellors, educational psychologists, social workers and youth workers whose job might be to ascertain if this were a one- off experiment and to help if serious drug abuse were revealed, applying various 'psy' sciences (Rose, 1989, 1998).

This situation highlights important professional and ethical issues for teachers. School policies are likely to influence which course of action the teacher and the student pursue, since the implications of truth-telling and confessing are very different in each school. If the teacher knows that the consequences for being caught will mean exclusion for the student, should the teacher 'confess' this knowledge to the principal? Should the teacher turn a blind eye and say nothing, that is, lie by omission? Should the student confess? Apart from the pragmatic implications, there are also implications for how both the student and the teacher each constitute theirselves through their different practices of the self-care of the self, knowledge of self, confession and truth-telling—that are likely to be involved in the process. Such practices will further shape the individual's understandings of their own self. How the psy sciences of the twentieth century have conceived of and positioned youth displays complex notions of self and the other and is 'intrinsically linked to the history of government' (not politics). Nikolas Rose argues that this 'is part of the history of the ways in which human beings have regulated others and have regulated themselves in the light of certain games of truth', and the 'regulatory role of psy is linked to questions of the organisation and reorganisation of political power that have been quite central to shaping our contemporary experience' (Rose, 1998, p. 11). Schools are institutions that clearly involve such regulation and governance of the experience of their students.

2 Foucault's Notion of the Self

Late in his life when discussing his work, Foucault (1988b) said that his project had been to historicise and analyse how in western culture the specific 'truth games' in the social sciences such as economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine and penology have developed knowledge and techniques to enable people to understand themselves. Foucault not only provides quite a shift from earlier discourses on the self, but also brings in notions of disciplinarity, governmentality, freedom and ethics as well as notions of corporeality, politics and power and its historico-social context. His own understandings about the self-shifted over the years. Late in his life, he notes that he may have concentrated 'too much on the technology of domination and power' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 19). Nevertheless, for Foucault both technologies of domination and technologies of the self produce effects that constitute the self. They define the individual and control their conduct, as they make the individual a significant element for the state through the exercise of a form of power—which Foucault termed 'governmentality'—to produce useful, docile and practical citizens (Foucault, 1988c). Nietzsche inspired Foucault to analyse the modes by which human beings become subjects without privileging either power (as in Marxism) or desire (as in

Freud). Foucault develops Nietzschean 'genealogy' and Heideggerian concepts into technologies of the self in a reconsideration of Greco-Roman antiquity and early Christianity (Foucault, 1988b; Nietzsche, 1956).

Foucault took up Heidegger's critiques of subjectivity and Cartesian-Kantian rationality in terms of power, knowledge and discourse. This stance against humanism is a rejection of phenomenology, since Foucault saw the subject as being within a particular historic-cultural context or genealogical narrative. Foucault historicised questions of ontology, substituting genealogical investigations of the subject for the philosophical attempt to define the essence of human nature, aiming to reveal the contingent and historical conditions of existence. For Foucault, the self or subject 'is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself' (Foucault, 1997a). Self means both 'auto' or 'the same' so understanding the self implies understanding one's identity.

Foucault also harnessed Heideggerian notions of techne and technology. Heidegger questioned our relationship to the essence of modern technology, which treats everything, including people, 'as a resource that aims at efficiency—towards driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense' (Heidegger, 1977, p. 15). Unlike Heidegger though, who focussed on understanding the 'essence' or coming into presence of being or *dasein*, Foucault historicised questions of ontology and in the process was therefore not concerned about notions of *aletheia* or an inner, hidden truth or essence of self (Heidegger, 1977). Dreyfus points out that for both Foucault and Heidegger, it is the practices of the modern world and modern technology that produce a different kind of subject—a subject who does not simply objectify and dominate the world through technology, but who is constituted by this technology (Dreyfus, 2002).

Foucault set out a typology of four inter-related 'technologies': technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, technologies of power (or domination) and technologies of the self. Each is a set of practical reason that is permeated by a form of domination that implies some type of training and changing or shaping of individuals. Instead of an instrumental understanding of technology, Foucault used 'technology' in the Heideggerian sense as a way of revealing truth and focussed on technologies of power and technologies of the self.

Technologies of power 'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 18). Technologies of the self are the various 'operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being' that people make either by themselves or with the help of others in order to transform themselves to reach a 'state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 18).

Foucault's earlier work emphasised the application of such technologies of domination through the political subjugation of 'docile bodies' in the grip of disciplinary powers, and the way the self is produced by processes of objectification, classification and normalisation in the human sciences (Foucault, 1977). Foucault himself defended the 'determinist' emphasis in *Discipline and Punish*, admitting that not enough was said about agency, so he re-defined power to include agency as self-regulation, thereby overcoming some of the problematic political implications in his

earlier work (see Rabinow, 1997; Foucault 1985, 1988a, 1990; McNay, 1992). He emphasised that individuals are continually in the process of constituting themselves as ethical subjects through both technologies of the self and ethical self-constitution, and a notion of power that is not simply based upon repression, coercion or domination. By this point, Foucault saw individuals 'as self-determining agents capable of challenging and resisting the structures of domination in modern society' (McNay, 1992, p. 4). Rather than needing the expertise of the priest or therapist to ethically constitute the self, individuals are able to do it for themselves (McNay, 1992).

The history of sexuality, vol I (Foucault, 1980a) presented a change from technologies of domination. A common assumption of western culture is that the body and its desires—its sexuality—reveal the truth about the self. Hence, if one tells the 'truth' about one's sexuality, this deepest truth about the self will become apparent, and then one can live an authentic life that is in touch with one's true self. Foucault's work on sexuality is concerned with problematising how pleasure, desire and sexuality, the regimes of power-knowledge-pleasure as components of the art of living or 'an aesthetics of existence', have become discourses that shape our construction of ourselves through the revelation of 'truth' of our sexuality and of ourselves (Foucault, 1985, p. 12). Foucault (1988b) pointed out that, since a common cultural feature is the paradoxical combination of prohibitions against sexuality on the one hand and strong incitations to speak the truth on the other, his project became focussed on a history of this link, asking how individuals had been made to understand themselves in terms of what was forbidden, namely the relationship between truth and asceticism.

In 'The ethics of the concern for self as a practice of freedom' (Foucault, 1997a), an interview in 1984, the year of his death, Foucault explained the change in his thinking about the relations of subjectivity and truth. In his earlier thinking, he had conceived of the relationship between the subject and 'games of truth' in terms of either coercive practices (psychiatry or prison) or theoretical-scientific discourses (the analysis of wealth, of language, of living beings, especially in *The Order of Things*). In his later writings, he broke with this relationship to emphasise games of truth not as a coercive practice, but rather as an ascetic practice of self-formation. 'Ascetic' in this context means an 'exercise of self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself and to attain a certain mode of being' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 282). 'Work' completed by the self upon itself is an ascetic practice that is to be understood not in terms of more traditional left-wing models of liberation, but rather as (Kantian) practices of freedom. This is an essential distinction for Foucault because the notion of liberation suggests that there is a hidden self or inner nature or essence that has been 'concealed, alienated, or imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 282). The process of liberation, in this model, liberates the 'true' self from its bondage or repression. By contrast, Foucault historicised questions of ontology: there are no essences, only 'becomings', only a phenomenology or hermeneutics of the self—the forging of an identity through processes of self-formation. To him, liberation is not enough, and the practices of freedom do not preclude liberation, but they enable individuals and society to define 'admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 283). He rejected Sartre's idea

that power is evil, stating instead that 'power is games of strategy' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 298) and that the ways of avoiding the application of arbitrary, unnecessary or abusive authority 'must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and ethos, practices of the self and of freedom' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 299).

Foucault (1997a) contrasted two different models of self-interpretation: liberation and freedom, suggesting that the latter is broader than the former and historically necessary once a country or people have attained a degree of independence and set up political society. There may well be some translation difficulties between French and English around notions of liberation and freedom. For example, a person in chains is not free, and although they may have some choices, these are severely limited by their lack of freedom. They have to be liberated or freed from their total domination, so they have the freedom to practice their own ethics. Ethics is a practice or style of life. Freedom that equates to liberation is therefore a pre-condition of ethics, since ethics are the practices of the 'free' person. Foucault suggested that the ethical problem of freedom in relation to sexuality is politically and philosophically more important than a simple insistence on liberating sexual desire. In other words, he wished to understand freedom as the ontological condition for ethics especially when freedom takes the form of a kind of informed reflection. He began to outline this general understanding in terms of the ancient Greek imperative of 'care for the self'.

3 Truth-Telling and Technologies of the Self

> Why truth? … and why must the care of the self occur only through the concern for truth? [This is] the question for the West. How did it come about that all of Western culture began to revolve around this obligation of truth…? (Foucault, 1997a, p. 281).

As Foucault indicates, the compulsion to tell the truth is highly valued in our society. It is enshrined in how our laws operate. For instance, in court, witnesses are required to swear an oath to tell the truth, and they may be charged with perjury if they lie. Similarly, insurance will be cancelled if we do not tell the truth or disclose relevant information. Societal values certainly operate in the disciplinary regimes of schools and how they pursue regimes of 'truth'. In doing so, schools shape the student's self and their identities. Yet schools seldom formally perform this task or even consciously attempt it, despite government educational goals often referring to the type of person they are trying to form, citing variations on the theme of a 'good' citizen.

In 'Technologies of the self' (1988b), a seminar series held at the University of Vermont in 1982, Foucault's emphasis shifted to the hermeneutics of the self in his study of the first two centuries AD of Greco-Roman philosophy and the fourth and fifth centuries of the Roman Empire when Christian spirituality and monastic principles were prevalent. Foucault argued that the Delphic moral principle 'know yourself' (*gnothi sauton*) became dominant and took precedence over another ancient principle and set of practices that were to take care of yourself, or to be concerned

with oneself (*epimelsthai sautou*) (Foucault, 1988b). According to Foucault, care of the self formed one of the main rules for personal and social conduct and for the art of life in ancient Greek cities. The two principles were interconnected, and it was from this principle that the Delphic principle was brought into operation as a form of technical advice or rules to be followed when the oracle was consulted. In modern day western culture, the moral principles have been transformed, maybe partly because Plato privileged the principle 'know yourself', and this subsequently became hugely influential in philosophy. Foucault argued that 'know yourself' is the fundamental austere principle nowadays because we tend to view care of the self as immoral, as something narcissistic, selfish and an escape from rules. Although there is no direct continuity from ancient to present times, Foucault's genealogy of sexuality does indicate some continuities and some of the Ancient Greek roots of our sexual ethics. First, Christianity adopted and modified themes from ancient philosophy and made renouncing the self the condition for salvation but, paradoxically, to know oneself required self-renunciation. Second, the basis of morality in our secular tradition involves concern for the self. Echoing Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1956), Foucault argued that a respect for external law, in contradiction to a more internalised notion of morality, is associated with an ascetic morality in which the self can be rejected, so the principle 'know yourself' has obscured 'take care of yourself'. Furthermore, theoretical philosophy since Descartes has positioned the cogito or thinking subject and knowledge of the self as the starting point for western epistemology. Foucault argued for the return of the ancient maxim of care of the self because, since the Enlightenment, the Delphic maxim has become over-riding and inextricably linked with constituting subjects who can be governed.

Foucault elaborated on both the Greek (Platonic and Stoic) and Christian techniques of self. The Stoic techniques include first, 'letters to friends and disclosure of self', second the 'examination of self and conscience, including a review of what was to be done, of what should have been done and a comparison of the two', third, '*askesis*, not a disclosure of the secret self but a remembering' and fourth, 'the interpretation of dreams' (Foucault, 1988b, pp. 34–38). He pointed out that, rather than renunciation, this is 'the progressive consideration of self, or mastery over oneself, obtained not through the renunciation of reality, but through the acquisition and assimilation of truth … that is characterised by *paraskeuaz* ("to get prepared")' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 35).

In fact the Stoic techniques of self transformed truth into a principle of action or ethos, or ethics of subjectivity, that involved two sets of exercise: the *melete* (or *epimelsthai*) or meditation and the gymnasia or training of oneself. The *melete* was a philosophical meditation that trained one's thoughts about how one would respond to hypothetical situations. The gymnasia is a physical training experience that may involve physical privation, hardship, purification rituals and sexual abstinence. Foucault (1988b) remarked that, despite it being a popular practice, the Stoics were mostly critical and sceptical about the interpretation of dreams. It is interesting to note the re-emergence of many of these practices of the self in the different psy therapies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Foucault does a real service in pointing us to the philosophical and historical roots of some of these. Perhaps

Foucault's emphasis on the centrality of truth in relation to the self is to be developed only through the notion of 'others' as an audience, intimate or public. This form of performance allows for the politics of confession and (auto)biography.

In his discussion of ancient Greek (Plato, Socrates, Xenophon) philosophical notions of care of the self, Foucault (1997a) did not discuss the idea that care of the self involves 'care for others', or that care for others is an explicit ethic in itself. He accepted that the ancient Greek notion embodied in care of the self is an inclusive one that precludes the possibility of tyranny because a tyrant does not, by definition, take care of the self since he[1] does not take care of others. Foucault seemed to display a remarkable naivety about the goodness of human beings in accepting this inclusive definition in which care of the self involves a considerable generosity of spirit and benevolent relations for a ruler of others, be they one's slave, wife or children. He stated that care for others became an explicit ethic later on and should not be put before care of the self (see Foucault, 1984).

Peters (2003) discusses truth games, which Foucault elaborated in a series of six lectures given at Berkeley in 1983, entitled 'Discourse and truth: the problematization of parrhesia' (Foucault, 2001).[2] Foucault's genealogy problematises the practices of parrhesia in classical Greek culture. These are a set of practices that are deep-seated culturally for the West and take various forms. He demonstrates that these practices link truth-telling and education in ways that still shape our contemporary subjectivities; thus, they are relevant in understanding the exercise of power and control in contemporary life.

In the classical Greek, the use of *parrhesia* and its cognates exemplifies the changing practices of truth-telling. Foucault investigated the use of *parrhesia* in education to show that education is central to the 'care of the self', public life and the crisis of democratic institutions, intending 'not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity' (Foucault, 2001, p. 169). He claimed that truth-telling as a speech activity emerged with Socrates as a distinct set of philosophical problems that revolved around four questions: 'who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relation to power' (Foucault, 2001, p. 170). Socrates pursued these in his 'confrontations with the Sophists in dialogues concerning politics, rhetoric and ethics' (Foucault, 2001, p. 170). These lectures reveal how Foucault thought that the end of pre-Socratic philosophy allowed two traditions of western philosophy that problematise 'truth' to begin. The 'critical' tradition in western culture that is concerned 'with the importance of telling the truth, knowing who is able to tell the truth, and knowing why we should tell the truth' begins at precisely at the same time as an 'analytics of truth' that characterises contemporary analytic philosophy (Foucault, 2001, p. 170). Foucault

[1] The pronoun 'he' is used because these discussions about ancient Greek society only referred to free males as citizens, not to women.

[2] These lectures were edited by Joseph Pearson and first appeared on the Internet. They were published in 2001. Foucault did not write, correct or edit any part of the text, which is primarily a verbatim transcription of the lectures from the notes of one of the attendees.

said that he aligned himself with the former 'critical' philosophical tradition, rather than the latter (Foucault, 2001).

A shift occurred in the classical Greek conception of *parrhesia* from a demonstration of the courage to tell other people the truth, to a different truth game that focussed on the self and the courage that people displayed in disclosing the truth about themselves. This new kind of truth game of the self requires *askesis* which is a form of practical training or exercise directed at the art of living (*techne tou biou*). The Greek practice of moral *askesis* was concerned with 'endowing the individual with the preparation and the moral equipment that will permit him to fully confront the world in an ethical and rational manner' (Foucault, 2001, p. 144), aiming to establish a specific relationship to oneself, including self-possession, self- sovereignty and self-mastery. In marked contrast, Christian ascetic practices hold a different relationship to the self, since the theme of detachment from the world has its ultimate 'aim or target the renunciation of the self' (Foucault, 2001, p. 143). Thus, Foucault elaborated on his earlier argument in 'Technologies of the self' (1988b), whereby the crucial difference in the ethical principle of self consists of ancient Greek self-mastery versus Christian self-renunciation.

4 Foucault's Genealogy of Confession as Practices of the Self

Contemporary notions of confession are derived not simply from the influence of the Catholic Church and its strategies for confessing one's sins (where sin is mostly equated with sexual morality so that confession became the principal technology for managing the sexual lives of believers), but from ancient, pre-Christian philosophical notions (Foucault 1980a, 1988b). They have also been profoundly influenced by confessional techniques embodied in Puritan notions of the self and its relation to God and by Romantic, Rousseauian notions of the self (Gutman, 1988; Paden, 1988).

Foucault pointed out the shift of confessional practices from the religious world to medical then to therapeutic and pedagogical models in secular contemporary societies. Foucault defined his sense of confession (*aveu*) as 'all those procedures by which the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his sexuality which is capable of having effects on the subject himself' (Foucault, 1980b, pp. 215–216). Foucault argued that western society, unlike other societies that have an *ars erotica* (erotic art) whereby truth is drawn from pleasure itself, has *scientia sexualis* procedures for telling the truth of sex which are a form of knowledge power found in confession. In confession, the agency of domination does not reside in the person that speaks, but in the one who questions and listens. Sexual confession became constituted in scientific terms through 'a clinical codification of the inducement to speak; the postulate of a general and diffuse causality; the principle of a latency intrinsic to sexuality; the method of interpretation and the medicalization of the effects of confession' (see Foucault, 1980a, pp. 59–70). However, he moved beyond

simply focussing on confession of sexuality, to the more general importance of confession in the contemporary world. He concluded 'Technologies of the self' with the highly significant point that the verbalisation techniques of confession have been important in the development of the human sciences into which they have been transposed and inserted and where they are used 'without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self. To use these techniques without renouncing oneself constitutes a decisive break' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 49).

In early Christianity, two main forms of disclosing the self emerged: first, *exomologesis*, then *exagoreusis*. Despite being very different, with the former a dramatic form, the latter a verbalised one, what they have in common is that disclosing the self involves renouncing one's self or will. Early on, disclosure of self involved *exomologesis* or 'recognition of fact' with public avowal of the truth of one's faith as Christians and 'a ritual of recognising oneself as a sinner and penitent' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 41). Foucault pointed out the paradox that 'exposé is the heart of *exomologesis* … it rubs out the sin and yet reveals the sinner' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 42). Penance became elaborated around notions of torture, martyrdom and death, of renouncing self, identity and life, in preferring to die rather than compromising or abandoning one's faith. Foucault pointed out that Christian penance involves the refusal or renunciation of self, so that 'self-revelation is at the same time self-destruction' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 43). Whereas for the Stoics, the 'examination of self, judgement, and discipline' lead to 'self-knowledge by superimposing truth about self through memory, that is memorising rules'; for Christians, 'the penitent superimposes truth about self by violent rupture and dissociation'. Furthermore, '*exomologesis* is not verbal. It is symbolic, ritual and theatrical' (Foucault, 1988b, p. 43).

Foucault asserted that later, in the fourth century, a different set of technologies for disclosing the self-*exagoreusis*—emerged in the form of verbalising exercises or prayers that involve taking account of one's daily actions in relation to rules (as in Senecan self-examination). With monastic life, different confessional practices developed based on the principles of obedience and contemplation, and confession developed a hermeneutic role in examining the self in relation to one's hidden inner thoughts and purity. The procedures of confession have altered considerably over time. But until the Council of Trent in the mid sixteenth century, when a new series of procedures for the training and purifying of church personnel emerged, confession in the church was an annual event, so the confession of and surveillance of sexuality was quite limited (Foucault, 1980b). After the reformation, confession changed profoundly to involve not just one's acts, but also one's thoughts. Then, in the eighteenth century, Foucault suggested that there was 'a very sharp falling away, not in pressure and injunctions to confess, but in the refinement of techniques of confession' (Foucault, 1980b, p. 215). This point in time saw 'brutal medical techniques emerging, which consist in simply demanding that the subject tells his or her story, or narrate it in writing' (Foucault, 1980b, p. 215).

The history of sexuality (Foucault, 1980a) examines the techniques of the examination and the confessional or therapeutic situation, where the person is required to speak about their psyche or emotions to a priest or therapist who, as an expert in both observation and interpretation, determines whether or not the truth, or an underlying

truth that the person was unaware of, has been spoken. Accessing this inner self or 'truth' is facilitated by professionals in the psy sciences or helping professions (e.g. priests, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, counsellors) who may administer certain 'technologies' for speaking, listening, recording, transcribing and redistributing what is said, such as examining the conscious and the unconscious, and confessing one's innermost thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires and motives about the self and one's relationships with others. They may exert their expert knowledge to re-interpret and re-construct what a person says. However, in gaining this form of self-knowledge, one also becomes known to others involved in the therapeutic process. This can, in turn, constitute the self.

A further shift occurs from the medical model of healing where a patient 'confesses' the problem and inadvertently reveals the 'truth' as part of the diagnostic clinical examination to a therapeutic model where both the confession and examination are deliberately used for uncovering the truth about one's sexuality and one's self (Foucault, 1980a). In the process, the therapy can create a new kind of pleasure: pleasure in telling the truth of pleasure. But speaking the truth is not only descriptive. In confession, one is expected to tell the truth about oneself—a basic assumption that most counsellors continue to make about their clients. Because language has a performative function, speaking the truth about oneself also makes, constitutes or constructs forms of one's self. By these discursive means and through these technologies, a human being turns him or herself into a subject.

As confession became secularised, a range of techniques emerged in pedagogy, medicine, psychiatry and literature, with a highpoint being psychoanalysis or Freud's 'talking cure'. Since Freud, it could be argued that the secular form of confession has been 'scientised' through new techniques of normalisation and individualisation that include clinical codifications, personal examinations, case-study techniques, the general documentation and collection of personal data, the proliferation of interpretive schemas and the development of a whole host of therapeutic techniques for 'normalisation'. In turn, these 'oblige' us to be free, as self-inspection and new forms of self-regulation replace the confessional. This new form of confession is an affirmation of our self and our identity that involves 'contemporary procedures of individualization' that 'binds us to others at the very moment we affirm our identity' (Rose, 1989, p. 240). In truthfully confessing who one is to others (e.g. to parents, teachers, friends, lovers and oneself) 'one is subjectified by another … who prescribes the form of the confession, the words and rituals through which it should be made, who appreciates, judges, consoles, or understands' (Rose, 1989, p. 240). Through speech acts of confession, a person constitutes their self.

Whilst confession means acknowledging, it also involves a declaration and disclosure, acknowledgement or admission of a crime, fault or weakness. The acknowledgement is partly about making oneself known by disclosing one's private feelings or opinions that form part of one's identity. In its religious form, confession involves the verbal acknowledgement of one's sins to another. One is duty-bound to perform this confession as repentance in the hope of absolution.

Foucault (1985, p. 29) in *The use of pleasure* described technologies of the self as 'models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for

self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for deciphering the self by oneself and for the transformation one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object'. Foucault also examined the 'arts of the self', which are designed to explore the 'aesthetics of existence' and to inquire into the government of self and others. He discussed 'self-writing' as a means of counteracting the dangers of solitude and of exposing our deeds to the gaze and at the same time, because it works on thoughts as well as actions, it becomes a form of confession (Foucault 1985, 1997b). It permits a retrospective analysis of 'the role of writing in the philosophical culture of the self just prior to Christianity: its close tie with apprenticeship; its applicability to movements of thought; its role as a test of truth' (Foucault, 1997b, p. 235). In the literary sense, then, confession contains elements of identifying the self in a deliberate, self-conscious attempt to explain and express oneself to an audience within which the individual exists and seeks confirmation—that is, writing the self (see Peters, 2000).

Confession then is both a communicative and an expressive act, a narrative in which we (re)create ourselves by creating our own narrative, reworking the past, in public, or at least in dialogue with another. When the subject is confessing and creating its 'self', it seems to feel compelled to tell the truth about itself. Therefore, confession involves a type of 'discipline' that 'entails training in the minute arts of self-scrutiny, self-evaluation and self-regulation, ranging from the control of the body, speech and movement in school, through the mental drill inculcated in school and university, to the Puritan practices of self-inspection and obedience to divine reason' (Rose, 1989, p. 222). Whilst confession is autobiographical, compelling us to narratively recreate ourselves, it is also about assigning truth-seeking meaning to our lives. One can be assisted in this through therapies such as counselling or psychotherapy—the 'priesthood' of our secular society—who have replaced the theological form of confession. Although the use of listening techniques and the uncovering of self are similar, the elements of advice, admonition and punishment that are involved in the religious forms of confession are certainly no part of contemporary counselling either within or outside schools.

5 Conclusion

Foucault's discussion has strong and obvious relevance for schools in general and for school counselling as well as general counselling theories. Furthermore, his model of the care of the self in relation to practices of freedom provides a philosophical approach that offers schools and counsellors an ethically suitable way of dealing with the moral education of students. Foucault's account offers a very useful theory of power and also a Kantian-like basis for ethics based upon the way in which choices we make under certain conditions create who we become. Foucault's main aspects of the self's relationship to itself or 'ethical self-constitution' point to various ways that education of young people can help them to ethically constitute themselves: by ethical work that a person performs on their self with the aim of becoming an ethical subject; the way in which individuals relate to moral obligations and rules; and the

type of person one aims to become in behaving ethically. One element that might be derived from Foucault is the importance of 'writing' and 'reading' the self, alongside conversational or dialogical forms of 'talking' or confessing the self. Whilst acknowledging their current existence as counselling techniques, the emphasis in school counselling might be widened to re-emphasise the forms of bibliotherapy, diaries, journal writing, personal narratives, autobiographies and biographies, together with the educative impulse of all forms of fiction, poetry and drama or role-play—both in film and television—that focus on the self.

In ancient schools of thought, philosophy was considered to be a way of life, a quest for wisdom, a way of being and ultimately a way of transforming the self. Spiritual exercises were a form of pedagogy designed to teach their practitioners the philosophical life that had both a moral and existential value. These exercises were aimed at nothing less than a transformation of one's world view and personality by involving all aspects of one's being, including intellect, imagination, sensibility and will. In the contemporary world, schools have frequently been seen as an appropriate location for the moral education of young people. Socrates provided a set of dialogical spiritual exercises that epitomised the injunction 'know yourself!' and provided a model for a relationship of the self to itself that constituted the basis of all spiritual exercise that is at the very centre of a total transformation of one's being (see Davidson, 1997). In this model, the process of dealing with a problem takes primacy over the solution (Hadot, 1987). Foucault suggested re-instating care of the self, the maxim that 'know yourself' supplanted. This provides schools with an ancient philosophical basis or model, at once transformative, ethical, dialogic and pedagogical, which could both complement and correct certain emphases in Foucault's later thinking about truth, subjectivity and care of the self.

Current projects and even formal curricula with names such as values education, moral education, philosophy, civics, citizenship, personal and social education and so on, have emerged alongside increasing concern about the moral state of young people. They aim to deal with current social issues and with 'social exclusion' in the UK. Regardless of whether or not learning about the self could or should be a formal curriculum item, schools do need to have some awareness of the part they play in constituting the self of their students. Schools need to be aware of the technologies of power (domination) and of the self that they bring to bear on their students and the effect these have in constituting the self. Furthermore, they need to provide the means to address care of the self more consciously and truth-telling and confession form only a part of this.

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Subjectivity, Truth and the Historical Ontology of Ourselves: The Hermeneutics of the Self-Foucault's Lectures at the College de France, 1981–82

Michael A. Peters

My problem is the relation of self to self and of telling the truth. … My own problem has always been the question of truth, of telling the truth, the wahr-sagen*—what it is to tell the truth—and the relation between 'telling the truth' and forms of reflexivity, of self upon self.*

1 Introduction: The Subject and Truth

Foucault begins by asking 'In what historical form do the relations between the 'subject' and 'truth,' … take shape in the West?' (p. 2). He responds to his own question by suggesting there is a distinction between a 'philosophical analytics of truth in general'—a 'formal ontology of truth'—which poses the question of the conditions under which true knowledge is possible that creates a 'historical ontology of ourselves,' or in other words, the complex ways we have constituted ourselves as subjects of knowledge and truth. Foucault writes: 'In short, I think we can say that in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in his being as subject'. He maintains that the modern age of the history of truth 'begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth'. By making this observation, he returns to the ancient Greek notion of *epimeleia heautou* as care of oneself. He examines how *epimeleia heautou* as care of the self 'remained a fundamental principle for describing

Michael Foucault, (1988a) *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. A. Sheridan et al. New York: Routledge: 32–3.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_17

the philosophical attitude throughout Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman culture' (p. 8). This is a revelation for *epimeleia heautou* has long been overshadowed by *gnothi seauton* as foundation for the moral imperative 'know yourself.' *Epimeleia heautou* Foucault claims is important in the figure of Socrates, as he says: 'Socrates is, and always will be, the person associated with care of the self' (p. 8). Thus, Foucault locates care of the self with Socrates at the very beginning of Western philosophy, and he rehabilitates the notion alongside the imperative 'know yourself.' Socrates is entrusted by the gods to encourage others to take care of the self. It is one of the major functions of the philosopher and teacher, and Socrates has given up everything in order to teach others to care for the self. His role is to awaken others and to drive home the care of the self like a thorn into the citizen's flesh so to provoke a kind of continuous 'restlessness' throughout life in returning to the question, especially important then for young men—'You must care for yourself'. Foucault traces the history of the notion in late Stoic and Cynic texts and especially Epictetus in the *Discourses.*[1]

Gnothi seauton as the imperative 'know yourself' has been traditionally taken as the foundation of the relations between the subject and truth but is not a principle of self-knowledge; rather, it is more of a demand for prudence: in the sense of the Delphic origin 'you should always remember that you are only a mortal after all, not a god' (p. 5). *Gnothi seauton* is coupled with e*pimeleia heautou:* the former is formulated within the latter as is made clear in three passages in Plato's *Apology* where Socrates emerges as the person who encourages others to care for themselves.

The notion of care for the self was important in Plato and also for the Epicureans: 'Every man should take care of his soul day and night and throughout his life' (p. 8). Epicurus uses the verb *therapeuein* that carries the notions of service and worship as a kind of therapy for the soul. Foucault also refers to the significance of the notion for the Cynics and Stoics—central to Seneca. This notion has 'traversed and permeated ancient philosophy up to the threshold of Christianity' (p. 10) and within Christianity, in 'Alexandrian spirituality'. *Epimeleia* (of care) in Philo, Plotinus, in Christian asceticism, in Gregory of Nyssa's *On Virginity* where care of the self takes the form of freedom from marriage as the first form of Christian asceticism.

From these early textual references, Foucault extracts three principles:

1. *epimeleia heautou* is an attitude toward the self, others, and the world;
2. *epimeleia heautou* is a certain form of attention, of looking. (The word *epimeleia* is related to *melete,* which means both exercise and meditation).
3. *epimeleia heautou* always designates a number of actions exercised on the self by the self, actions by which one takes responsibility for oneself and by which one changes, purifies, transforms, and transfigures oneself (pp. 10–11).

Why then did Western thought and philosophy neglect the notion of *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) in its reconstruction of its own history? Foucault responds:

[1] For Foucault's Greek and Latin sources (taken from the French) see the Translator's Notes pp. xxxi-xli.

> We will call 'philosophy' the form of thought that asks what it is that enables the subject to have access to the truth and which attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access to the truth. If we call this 'philosophy,' then I think we could call 'spirituality' the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth. (p. 15)

As he explains the relations between subjectivity and truth petitions, the subject: (i) In ancient philosophy, there can be no truth without a conversion or a transformation of the subject; (ii) the subject can and must transform himself in order to have access to the truth is a kind of work; (iii) the truth enlightens the subject; the truth gives beatitude to the subject; the truth gives the subject tranquillity of the soul.

The hermeneutics of the self as *epimeleia heautou* is an ethical reading in terms of practices of the self; a problematization of the subject where there is a concern about one's virtue and soul, famously expressed by Socrates in the *Apology. Care of the self is to know oneself understood as an obligation, a principle and a practice, as a form of life.* It is a therapeutics of care of the self in relation to politics, pedagogy and self-knowledge.

2 Foucault's Lectures at the College de France, 1982: Twelve Lectures

The Collège de France was founded in 1530 as a higher education and research establishment in Paris in the 5th arrondissement, or Latin Quarter, across the street from the historical campus of La Sorbonne. The Collège is considered to be France's most prestigious research establishment, and professors are required to offer one course of twelve lectures per year which are open to the public so anyone can attend. Foucault's lectures were very well attended, and there was a large lecture hall and adjoining room that made the live presentation available to those who could not get in to the lecture hall. In the *Foreword*, Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontana write:

> Michel Foucault's courses were held every Wednesday from January to March. The huge audience made up of students, teachers, researchers, and the curious, including many who came from outside France, required two amphitheaters of the College de France. Foucault often complained about the distance between himself and his "public" and of how few exchanges the course made possible. 5 He would have liked a seminar in which real collective work could take place and made a number of attempts to bring this about. In the final years he devoted a long period to answering his auditors' questions at the end of each course (pp. xiv–xv)

Foucault was elected to the chair he called *The history of systems of thought* on April 12, 1970, which replaced the chair held by Jean Hyppolite. Foucault was 44 years of age. He gave a course of lectures every year except for a sabbatical year (1976–77) until his untimely death in 1984. The lectures were summarized from audio recordings and edited by Michel Senellart and later translated into English and edited by Graham Burchell. In *The Hermeneutics of the Self (1981–82),* he elaborates on the truth as an historically shifting concept in the human sciences, how the self is

discursively produced and accepted as true, and the significance of the discourse of truth for the experience of the self.

Foucault followed the method of theoretical and general exposition in first hour followed by a textual analysis in the second hour. In the text below, I have given a highly truncated summary and overview of the contents of each of Foucault's twelve lectures with an indication separating the first and second hours.

Some attention should be paid to the title of the course of lectures and in particular the term 'hermeneutics' which was used in connection with the self. Hermeneutics has a rich history in continental philosophy as the theory and methodology of interpretation especially of ancient texts in literature and philosophy. The question of 'who is the author' of a text or statement figured in the early forms of interpretative praxis dating from the Middle Ages. The interpretation of the self as a text analog also dates from early modern although the actual distinction between ontological and epistemological hermeneutics is explicitly made during the modern period. Foucault's approach is focused on the agency of the subject, and a set of broad assumptions concerning the truth and truth-telling practices involved in ethical self-constitution, often through the interpretation of texts. Foucault argues that treating the subject as a historical cipher to be interpreted, the *hermeneutics* of the self, is essentially a Greek and Christian form of the self in relation to itself, in which in Christianity the transformation of the self is intimately connected to exposing one's sins to a moral authority demonstrating the role that truth-telling plays in the formation of modern subjectivity. In *About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self* (Foucault, 2016), a transcript of 'Subjectivity and Truth,' and 'Christianity and Confession' delivered at Dartmouth College in 1980, Foucault traces the genealogy of the modern subject focusing on the centrality of confession as a medieval technique of the self that sets up a medieval association between confession, self-renunciation, and spirituality. This exposes the depth of technologies of the self that is a form of modern government based on the ethics of self-examination where a sinful self is replaced by a virtuous self through the vocalization of truth. The truth of the soul is found through various early medieval Christian practices that are part of the hermeneutics of the self that employs the redemptive power of the Church to harness forms of self-reflection in order to develop the knowledge to guide one's actions.

In *The Hermeneutics of the Self,* Foucault investigates the genealogy of the self in relation to care of the self and how this imperative has been eclipsed in the history of Western philosophy even though it has unquestionably been the basis for the mortality of the first centuries BC. Rules governing the care of the self have appeared and reappeared in the Christian obligation of self-renunciation and in secular obligations towards others and were transformed by the 'Cartesian moment' that requalified *gnothi seauton* (know yourself) in terms of modern epistemology as 'self-evidence' in the *Meditations* and 'by discrediting the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self)' (p. 14). The Cartesian approach recalibrated *gnothi seauton* as the starting point and epistemological foundation while displacing and discrediting *epimeleia heautou* and its potential role in modern philosophy. He argues if philosophy is 'the form of thought that asks what it is that enables the subject to have access to the truth and which attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access

to the truth', then spirituality is 'the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth' (p. 15). Such spirituality only has the right to access to the truth through an act of transformation that demands he becomes other than what he is. In other words, contrary to Descartes, 'the truth is not given to the subject by a simple act of knowledge (connaissance)'—'there can be no truth without a conversion or a transformation of the subject' (p. 15). The transformation of the self takes places through love (*eros*) or work (*askesis).* '*Eros* and *askesis* are, I think, the two major forms in Western spirituality for conceptualizing the modalities by which the subject must be transformed in order finally to become capable of truth' (p. 16). Finally, 'the truth enlightens the subject' where the act of knowledge is accompanied by spiritual transformation. In modern philosophy, the 'Cartesian moment' focuses on the act of knowledge alone which does not require self-transformation or spiritual enlightenment.

2.1 An Outline of the Course

The first lecture prepares the way forward for an understanding of the hermeneutics of the self as a narrative examined by Foucault in the remaining eleven lectures which focuses on the Socratic care of the self and the soul as the subject of action, to the self as an axis of of training and correction, and the emergence of the philosopher as a master and guide of the processes of subjectivation. Pedagogy figures strongly in these accounts alongside *erotics* of boys with its first cross-overs into early Christian forms of pedagogy. I provide an overview and synthesis of the lectures in schematic outlined below:

First Lecture

Care of the self as precept of ancient philosophy and first Christian texts.

The Cartesian shift from care of the self to self-knowledge, and the loss of spirituality as a set of practices. The education of and care of the self in *The Alcibiades.*

Second lecture

The Socratic care of the self; academic and erotic limits of Athenian pedagogy. Self as soul and soul as subject of action. The need for a master of the care. Care of the self as self-knowledge in Alcibiades. Political action, pedagogy, and the erotics of boys.

Third Lecture

The care of the self (from Alcibiades to the first two centuries A.D.)

Care of the self as axis of training and correction; convergence of medical and philosophical activity. The privileged status of old age; care of self and sectarianism

Fourth Lecture

Practices of the self in the first and second centuries. The question of the Other: three types of mastership in Plato's dialogues. The figure of the philosopher as master of subjectivation. The professional philosopher of the first and second centuries and his political choices. Systematisation of dietetics, economics, and erotics in the guidance of existence. Examination of conscience (correspondence between Pronto and Marcus Aurelius)

Fifth lecture

Neo-Platonist commentaries on the *Alcibiades* (Proclus and Ohympiodorus).

A philosophical art of living according to the principle of conversion; the development of a culture of the self. Questions from the public concerning subjectivity and truth. The Epicurean conception of friendship. The Stoic conception of man as a communal being.

Sixth Lecture

Care of the self, opened up by pedagogy and political activity. Conversion to the self.

Defense of a third way, between Platonic *epistrophe* and Christian *metanoia.*

General theoretical framework: veridiction and subjectivation. Knowledge (*savoir*) of the world and practice of the self in the Cynics: the example of Demetrius. Description of useful knowledge (*connaissances*) in Demetrius. Ethopoetic knowledge (*savoir*). Physiological knowledge (*connaissance*) in Epicurus.

Seventh Lecture

Conversion to self as successfully accomplished form of care of the self (metaphor of navigation; pilot's technique as paradigm of governmentality). The idea of an ethic of return to the self. Platonic recollection and Christian exegesis. The movement of the gaze in Natural Questions. The movement of the knowing soul in Seneca: description; general characteristic; after-effect. Conclusions: (i) essential implication of knowledge of the self and knowledge (*connaissance*) of the world; (ii) liberating effect of knowledge (*savoir*) of the world; (iii) irreducibility to the Platonic model.

Eighth Lecture

Knowledge (savoir) in Marcus Aurelius: the work of analysing representations; defining and describing; seeing and naming; evaluating and testing; gaining access to the grandeur of the soul. Examples of spiritual exercises in Epictetus. Christian exegesis and Stoic analysis of representations. Virtue and its relation to *askesis. Askesis* as practice of the incorporation of truth-telling in the subject.

Ninth Lecture

Conceptual separation of Christian from philosophical ascesis. The ascetic rules of listening: silence; precise non-verbal communication, and general demeanor of the good listener; attention. The practical rules of correct listening and its assigned end: meditation. The ancient meaning of *melete/meditatio* as exercise performed by thought on the subject. Writing as physical exercise of the incorporation of discourse.

Tenth Lecture

Parrhesia as ethical attitude and technical procedure in the master's discourse. The adversaries of parrhesia: flattery and rhetoric. The points of opposition between parrhesia and rhetoric: the division between truth and lie; the status of technique; the effects of subjectivation. Analysis of *parrhesia.* Galen 's 'On the Passions and Errors of the Soul'. Characteristics of *libertas* according to Seneca: refusal of popular and bombastic eloquence; transparency and rigor, incorporation of useful discourses; an art of conjecture. Pedagogy and psychagogy: relationship and evolution in Greco-Roman philosophy and in Christianity.

Eleventh Lecture

Meaning of the Pythagorean rules of silence. Definition of ascetics. Appraisal of the historical ethnology of Greek ascetics. Alcibiades: withdrawal of ascetics into self-knowledge as mirror of the divine. Life's work. Techniques of existence; Exercises of abstinence. The practice of tests and its characteristics. Life itself as a test. Seneca's 'De Providentia': the test of existing and its discriminating function. Epictetus and the philosopher-scout. The transfiguration of evils: from old Stoicism to Epictetus. The test in Greek tragedy.

Twelfth Lecture

The grasp of self by the self in Plato's *Alcibiades* and in other philosophical texts. The three major forms of Western reflexivity: recollection, meditation, and method. The illusion of contemporary Western philosophical historiography. The meditation on death: a sagittal and retrospective gaze. Examination of conscience in Seneca and Epictetus. Philosophical ascesis. Bio-technique, test of the self, objectification of the world: the challenges of Western philosophy.

There are several elements that occur repeatedly throughout the twelve lectures beginning with education of and care of the self in *The Alcibiades.* There is a historical trajectory from an ancient philosophy based on a set of techniques with methods and objectives, that took the form of a 'pedagogy' relying on a relationship with a master and guide especially in the first and second centuries, a requirement that fades away and give way to other functions, especially in the adult world.

3 Foucault's Course Summary

One of the few requirements at the Collège de France was to provide a course summary, that for the theme of the theme of the hermeneutics of the self in 1982 was first published *Annuaire du Collège de France*, (*Histoire des sysstmes de pensee, annee 1981–1982* (1982), pp. 395–406). This summary provides a careful retrospective on what topic was pursued during the year. In this case, Foucault writes: It involved studying it not only in its theoretical formulations, but analyzing it in relation to a set of practices which were very important in classical and late Antiquity. These practices were concerned with what was often called in Greek *epimeleia heautou* and in Latin *cura sui*. To our eyes, the principle that one should 'take care of the self,' a theme that was often combine with and formulated in terms of the theme of self-knowledge (p. 491). This theme was important for citizens because it taught them to take care of the city-state as much as themselves, rather than simply accumulating wealth and taking care of one's material goods.

What is somewhat astounding is that Foucault reveals that same notion of care for the self surfaces eight centuries later with Gregory of Nyssa (b. 335–395), a bishop venerated as a saint in Roman Catholicism who was strongly influenced by Origen of Alexandria, an early Christian scholar and ascetic who adopted the ascetic lifestyle of the Sophists. Origen is also alleged to have castrated himself. Gregory is often seen as a Trinitarian theologian ('one essence in three persons') believed in the universal salvation of all human beings, after necessary purification that could take a long time. Foucault presents him as Christian theologian who uses care of the self as the reason to 'renounce marriage, detach oneself from the flesh, and, thanks to the virginity of heart and body, rediscover the immortality from which one has fallen' (p. 493). Thus, 'Christian asceticism, like ancient philosophy, places itself under the sign of the care of the self and makes the obligation to know oneself one of the components of this basic concern.' But it is clear that care of the self was not 'an invention of philosophical thought' but rather an activity; 'The term *epimeleia*

itself refers not just to an attitude of awareness or a form of attention focused on oneself; it designates a regular occupation, a work with its methods and objectives' (p. 493). It becomes a philosophy precept for all of Greek life, and in the *Alcibiades,* it becomes clear that it is a form of activity engaged in during one's life where early training and pedagogy gives way to a self-critical (an 'unlearning) to rid oneself of 'bad habits' and 'false opinions.' The training was conceived of as a struggle where individuals were given both the courage and techniques to enable him to fight throughout his life, rather like an athlete or warrior protecting and fighting for his soul. This in essence, provided the background for what Foucault calls the culture of the self that has both a therapeutic and curative role, closer to the medical than the pedagogical model, designed to cure the diseases of the soul. This culture, at least in the first and second centuries, was dependent on a relationship with a master or guide based on love and erotics, although the need for the relationship lessened over time. Even so, the relationship took different social forms, sometimes purely scholastic, sometimes private counselors or family, and friendship relationships. The notion of a culture took the form of 'a set of practices generally designated by the term askesis' (p. 497), aided by true and rational discourses (logoi) to provide theoretical knowledge '(the principles that govern the world'), that were ready to hand. The 'ascesis of truth' (p. 499) emphasized the importance of both listening, writing and taking notes on readings and conversations that could be memorized in taking stock of oneself. As Foucault elaborates:

> There is then a whole set of techniques whose purpose is to link together the truth and the subject. But it should be clearly understood that it is not a matter of discovering a truth in the subject or of making the soul the place where truth dwells through an essential kinship or original law; nor is it a matter of making the soul the object of a true discourse. We are still very far from what would be a hermeneutics of the subject. On the contrary, it is a question of arming the subject with a truth that he did not know and that did not dwell within him; it involves turning this learned and memorized truth that is progressively put into practice into a quasi-subject that reigns supreme within us. (p. 501)

Foucault distinguishes between forms of training involving endurance and abstinence from those that involved a training in thought, including the *praemeditatio malorum*, 'the meditation on future evils' (p. 501). He indicates 'Between the pole of the meditatio, in which one practices in thought, and that of the *exercitatio*, in which one trains in reality, there is a series of other possible practices designed for testing oneself (p. 503); and 'At the pinnacle of all these exercises there is the famous *meiete thanatou*—meditation on, or rather, training for death (p. 504).

We might summarize this model in terms of the following precepts and principles.

1. The *juridico-political model*: being sovereign over oneself.
2. An ancient philosophy based on a set of techniques with methods and objectives –a pedagogy--that gives way to other functions and an adult function.
   - In the first and second centuries, the relation to the self is always seen as having to rely on the relationship with a master or a guide.

3. The culture of the self, comprised a set of practices generally designated by the term *askesis of truth*—listening, writing, taking stock of oneself, memory exercises for what one has learned.
4. The *meditatio,* in which one practices in thought:
   - techniques for linking the truth and the subject
   - 'a training in thought and by thought'
   - *praemeditatio malorum,* the meditation on future evils (imagining the worst).
5. *Exercitatio,* in which one trains in reality
   - exercises of abstinence, privation, or physical resistance.
6. Practices designed for testing oneself
7. *Meiete thanatou*—meditation on, or training for death

The Hermeneutics of the subject was an historical investigation in Hellenistic and early Christian philosophy that brought into question of the relations between the subject and truth, providing a general ethical framework based on care for the self, designed to analyze the different forms of experience of the relation between the subject and truth. Foucault maps the emergence of the modern age when in the history of truth knowledge (*connaissance*) and knowledge by itself unaccompanied by any demand for change, inner transformation or work on the self, grants access to the truth.

Foucault's 1982 course on the hermeneutics of the self that focuses on the different conceptions of care of the self, an ethical transformation of the self in light of truth—an existence based on truth and on truth-telling practices, is first investigated in his studies of ancient sexual ethics in *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self* (1988), volumes in *The History of Sexuality*. He provides an accessible elaboration in the interview 'The Ethics for the Concern of Self as a Practice of Freedom' (1984) and his final courses *The Government of Self and Others* (2010) and *The Courage of Truth* (2011) for on ethical practice of parrhesia which he gives in a series of lectures called 'Discourse and Truth' at the University of California, Berkeley in 1983 (Foucault, 2001). Foucault's final volume of *Histoire de la sexualité 4: Les aveux de la chair*, was published by Gallimard in 2018. *Confessions of the flesh,* the book Foucault was working on while in hospital in his final days, was published despite Foucault's wish for no posthumous publications, focusing on 'The formation of a new experience,' 'Being a virgin' and 'Being married' and later based on the Church fathers sections that dealt with the monk and the married man. As he argues:

> The 'flesh' is to be understood as a mode of experience, that is as a mode of knowledge [*connaissance*] and transformation of the self to the self, as a function of a certain relation between the cancellation of evil [*mal*] and manifestation of the truth. (pp. 50–51)[2]

[2] The translation is based on Stuart Eldon's review of Foucault's book at https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/review-foucaults-confessions-flesh/.

In this text, Foucault investigates the first few century of the Western Church returning again and again 'to the relation between wrong-doing and truth-telling, and the importance of telling the truth about oneself. (Eldon, 2018)

3.1 The Culture of the Self

The course context elaborated by Frederic Gros (1982, pp. 507–550) is essential reading to understand Foucault's course and the Hellenistic and early Christian obligation to tell the truth expressed as care for the self and understood as practices of truth-telling, confession, and self-examination in various schools of philosophy and in the early Christian monasteries framed by rules and practices in a relationship of obedience to a spiritual master or director. In the preparation of the course for publication Daniel Defert, Foucault's partner, a sociologist and heir to Foucault's estate, made available to Frederic Gros five bound dossiers entitled 'Alcibiades, Epictetus,' 'Government of the self and others,' 'Writing the self,' 'Culture of the self—Rough Draft' and 'The Others.' On a careful reading of the Dossiers Fredric Gros (1982) argues:

> The Hellenistic and Roman care of the self is not an exercise of solitude. Foucault thinks of it as an inherently social practice, taking place within more or less tightly organized institutional frameworks (the school of Epictetus or the Epicurean groups described by Philodemus), constructed on the basis of clan or family (Seneca's relationships with Serenus and Lucilius), woven into preexisting social relations (Plutarch's interlocutors), developing on a political basis, at the emperor's court, etcetera. The care of the self goes as far as to entail the Other in principle, since one can only be led to oneself by unlearning what has been inculcated by a misleading education. "*Rescue, even from one's own infancy, is a task of the practice of the self"* Foucault writes (dossier "Government of the self and others"). Here the folders "age, pedagogy, medicine" of the "Government of the self and others" dossier, and "critique" of the "Alcibiades, Epictetus" dossier, are explicit: Taking care of the self does not presuppose the return to a lost origin, but the emergence of a distinct "nature," though one that is not originally given to us. (p. 536)

Quoting from the Dossiers ('The Others') Gros makes it clear that Foucault conceives of the culture of the self, that is less of a choice as a form of life structured through life practices where the relationship to the self predominates over any other relationship 'In laying down the principle of conversion to oneself, the culture of the self fashions an ethic that is and always remains an ethic of domination, of the mastery and superiority of the self over the self.' (p. 540). In this exposition Gros, then reveals the political stakes of the course where he introduces the concept of 'the governmentality of ethical distance' isolating the power relations in a relationship to the self which is at the same time a relationship to sovereignty, a fact that defines one's participation in political and public life.

In his 1984 interview, Foucault early on examines an ethics of the care of self as a practice of freedom where he says:

> The concern with freedom was an essential and permanent problem for eight full centuries of ancient culture. What we have here is an entire ethics revolving around the care of the self;

> this is what gives ancient ethics its particular form. I am not saying that ethics is synonymous with the care of the self, but that, in antiquity, ethics as the conscious practice of freedom has revolved around this fundamental imperative: 'Take care of yourself' [soucie-toi de toi-meme]. (p. 285)

In the late 1970s, Foucault turned away from political analyses of how subjects are produced through disciplinary and complex institutional practices to how individuals produced themselves as moral subjects—as individuals who subject themselves to moral codes and various spiritual techniques that were designed to construct the self as an autonomous agent. Some scholars describe this as a shift from politics to ethics. 'The Subject and Truth' was Foucault's major theme in his last years using titles *Truth and Subjectivity*, *Hermeneutics of the Self*, *The Government of Self,* and *The Government of Self and Others* in his last courses posing the question: How does the individual become ethically self-constituting subjects? As he says in *Discourse and Truth: the Problematization of Parrhesia*, six lectures given by Michel Foucault at the University of California at Berkeley, Oct-Nov. 1983, where he begins to investigate the meaning of the word 'Parrhesia.' The word 'parrhesia' appears for the first time in Greek literature in Euripides [c.484–407 BC] and occurs throughout the ancient Greek world of letters from the end of the Fifth Century BC. But it can also still be found in the patristic texts written at the end of the Fourth and during the Fifth Century AD, dozens of times, for instance, in Jean Chrisostome [AD 345–407].

'Parrhesia' is ordinarily translated into English by 'free speech' (in French by 'franc-parler', and in German by 'Freimüthigkeit'). 'Parrhesiazomai' is to use parrhesia, and the parrhesiastes is the one who uses parrhesia, i.e., is the one who speaks the truth. As Foucault explains:

> My intention was not to deal with the problem of truth, but with the problem of truth-teller or truth-telling as an activity. By this I mean that, for me, it was not a question of analyzing the internal or external criteria that would enable the Greeks and Romans, or anyone else, to recognize whether a statement or proposition is true or not. At issue for me was rather the attempt to consider truth-telling as a specific activity, or as a role.
>
> 'Discourse & Truth', Concluding remarks by Foucault, http://www.foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/

Foucault asks 'In what historical form do the relations between the 'subject' and 'truth', …. take shape in the West?' (Foucault, 1982, p. 2), and he responds to his own question arguing there is a distinction between a 'philosophical analytics of truth in general' (a 'formal ontology of truth'), which poses the question of the conditions under which true knowledge is possible, and a 'historical ontology of ourselves,' one of whose principal questions concerns how we have constituted ourselves as subjects of knowledge and truth:

> In short, I think we can say that in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in his being as subject.

And he surmises, 'I think the modern age of the history of truth begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth.'

He demonstrates in ancient philosophy that there can be no truth without a conversion or a transformation of the subject, and the subject can and must transform himself in order to have access to the truth is a kind of work, and the truth enlightens the subject; the truth gives beatitude to the subject; the truth gives the subject tranquility of the soul. Why did western thought and philosophy neglect the notion of *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) in its reconstruction of its own history?

> We will call 'philosophy' the form of thought that asks what it is that enables the subject to have access to the truth and which attempts to determine the conditions and limits of the subject's access to the truth. If we call this 'philosophy,' then I think we could call 'spirituality' the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth. (p. 15)

Hermeneutics of the Self demonstrates the fundamental role that pedagogy and the pedagogical model played in establishing the culture of the self, its institutional arrangements, its relationships, and its ascetic practices, employing various metaphors of athletics and war, initiating the exercises of a training regime sometimes overlapping with the medical model but always directed at care for the self and the development and purification of the soul as an ongoing life project. Since Foucault gave this course of lectures, the literature has grown and expanded both in relation to historical and textual studies on original sources, and also in terms of philosophy building on Foucault's work in education and across the humanities and social sciences. There are interesting historical questions in relation to the differences in pedagogy in Hellenistic and in the first schools of early Christian culture. There are also more reflective accounts that attempt to use Foucault's corpus to provide a framework for analyzing both education and pedagogy today, where the 'spiritual' transformation of the self no longer holds swath but rather a crude 'competitive individualism' of neoliberalism constructs the individual as *homo economicus,* where truth has given way to forms of 'post-truth' in the governmentality of the subject.

For all the emphasis of changing historical forms and differences in Western conceptions of the self, Foucault also reveals the remarkable durability of certain Greek practices and the extent to which they underwrote early Christian practices than previously thought. The focus on the relationship with a master or spiritual director that became one of the founding practices of the architecture of the early Western Church instrumentally brought together confession of sins, individual salvation, and reconciliation with the Church as a necessary act to obtain divine forgiveness. Confession and the ability to grant absolution, originating in the early monasteries, gave great power to priests and other spiritual guides and while the practice changed over time as did the system of penance, it proved to be an enduring feature of the Church surviving into the modern era. The relationship at the heart of confession has survived intact, although in different forms, even though the sacrament is often offered only by appointment. As a formalized practice within the Church confession has also proved to be a network of unequal power relations applied in ways that have corrupted the subject and have compromised the relationship between the priest and members of his flock, which has been especially problematic for young boys and girls. The corruption of the pastoral relationship of care within modern Christianity

is not confined to confession but overlaps with education where the priest is also teacher. Forms of sexual abuse in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have come to light in many cases involving widespread allegations, investigations, and trials with institutional cover-ups by Church administrations. These cases have revealed the extent to which the pastoral relationship, constructed in a network of power relations, has been subject to systematic abuse. The hermeneutics of the subject therefore also needs a genealogy of the dark secrets of abuse that has accompanied the pastoral relationship in organized religion, in education and schools, in hospitals and medicine, and in many institutions that exist in modern world. It is substantially still the unwritten hermeneutics of the subject.

As Foucault demonstrated, sex became the privileged focus of confession that was historically connected with the obligation to tell the truth about oneself. Through the confession of inner secrets truth becomes the means by which the subject seeks to improve itself. Foucault's (1998b) investigations adopted a more general form of argument that Western man [sic] has become a 'confessing animal.' Foucault shows us that confession has become the most valuable technique for producing truth in society, and in moving from religious to secular forms, becomes the basis for Foucault's disassembling the 'philosophy of self.' Confession as an uncovering of the truth of the self together with the notion of aesthetics of existence needs to be supplemented by the hidden history of abuse that corrupted the pastoral relationship and has also led to the 'broken' traumatic subject as part of the culture of the self, an historical condition of sexual violence that now has become the basis for a third wave feminist movement currently sweeping the Western world. In this situation and others that involve sexual violation, it may be beneficial to move from a confessional to a critical politics of truth (Chiacchieri, 2019).

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Postscript

Michael A. Peters

Reconstruction of the Roman Garden of the House of Vetti in Pompeii. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_gardening#Persian_gardens

> And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
>
> And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

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M. A. Peters et al. (eds.), *Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation*,
East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3_18

> And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.... (8–10)
>
> And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.
>
> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
>
> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (15–18)
>
> https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-2-4_3-24/
>
> For millennia and throughout world cultures, our predecessors conceived of happiness in its perfected state as a garden existence.
>
> Robert Pogue Harrison (2008) *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition.* University of Chicago Press.

Pedagogies that are based on the ethics of self-cultivation and seek a transformation of the self in terms of virtue, happiness and 'living well' are one of the underlying pillars of humanistic philosophy and wisdom traditions in both the East and West. Pedagogical philosophies of self-cultivation have been both the moral foundation and cultural ethos for education within antiquity. The classical 'cradle' civilizations of China and East Asia, India and Pakistan, Greece and Anatolia, focused on the cultural traditions in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in the East and diverse forms Hellenistic philosophy in the West, including Platonism, Pyrrhonism, Epicureanism, Cynicism and Stoicism. Traditions of self-cultivation combine religious, philosophical and mythical theologies and can be found also in Ancient Egypt and the other Ancient Near Eastern cultures, including Ancient Iran (Persia) (Peters, 2020).

In Table 9, for instance, of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, one of the oldest surviving poems from ancient Mesopotamia, Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk, seeks eternal life and in his travels finally ends up at the 'Garden of the Gods' where the trees are laden with jewels. The story has provoked scholarly comparisons with the Garden of Eden and also provoked the suggestion that the notion of the garden as divine paradise may have originated in Sumer that was handed on down to the Babylonians. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon reputedly were an engineered series of tiered gardens creating terraces of hanging plants, shrubs and trees. The gardens if they existed at all and were not just a mythical ideal may have been located several centuries BC, perhaps at Nineveh.

The Garden of Eden is a terrestrial paradise, referred to as 'garden of God' in *Genesis* 13:10. The idea of the garden as an earthly paradise is a theological myth of primaeval history that provides the story of the creation of man, woman and their fall—a fall from a state of grace and innocence to the human Earthly condition comprised of the knowledge of sin, suffering and death. In this context, the garden quickly became holy ground, sacred, a sanctuary where people could be in the presence of God—it was literally the Gardens of Gods, and the garden became the sacred place of worship, an outdoor temple that offered sanctuary and spiritual guidance. In the Genesis myth of the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are told that there is the tree of life and the tree of knowledge (of good and evil) and if they eat from the tree

they will surely die (Gen. 2:16–17). In Jewish mythology, the tree of life is the tree that produces new souls, administered and looked after by the Angel Gabriel and Laila, the Angel of Conception. The tree of knowledge is said to connect heaven and the underworld while the tree of life connects all living things—it is the tree of creation and associated in folklore with fertility and immortality. The Tree of Life is also found in ancient Egypt in the myth of Osiris who is lord of the underworld and judge of the dead.

The Eden narrative raises questions about human obedience to God but also the birth of human consciousness and the cost and dangers of obtaining knowledge and wisdom. It is a classic pedagogical scene—emphasising obedience but also the risks of learning. Eating the forbidden fruit symbolizes the beginning of knowledge of right and evil—interpreted in terms sexual knowledge, omniscience, moral discernment and divine knowledge.[1] The Eden narrative is also a story about death and immortality, heaven and earth, and the original concept of paradise on earth is often embellished with pastoral imagery and conceived of as a garden (Mettinger, 2007). The 'paradise garden' is an old Iranian construction, sometimes called the Islamic garden, was symmetrical and walled with running water, fruit-bearing tree and flowers. *Genesis* 2:10 reads: 'And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads'. The four rivers (the essence of symmetry) are repeated by the Prophet Muhammad who spoke of the four rivers of water, milk, wine and honey. The Islamic garden puts a heavy emphasis on water and shade and the garden was seen as a place of spiritual and physical cleansing and refreshment. In Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, paradise is associated the Garden of Eden. The Islamic garden took different forms but always with water or a fountain at the centre as the famous Alhambra in Granada, Spain, demonstrates with its exquisite courtyards.[2]

The garden and its design is also implicitly a history of moral approaches and ethical ideals, and a dialogue about general relationship with Nature, that sustained life and provided spiritual, ascetic and aesthetic values as the basis for practices of self-cultivation. Garden practices, gardens—their design, architecture, cultivation, and the activities of 'gardening' (sustaining practices)—became central to philosophy and pedagogy. Working in the garden is in itself often conceived of as a spiritual form of self-cultivation.

Similar moral and aesthetic principles existed in the classic Chinese and Japanese gardens as 'landscapes for self-cultivation' (Zhang, 2018). These gardens concerned principles of aesthetic appreciation and were sacred places for cultivating moral character, for learning and holding philosophical dialogues about Nature and the environment. They were also spaces for ethical discussion, as Zhang (2018) notes.

> All the Chinese schools of thought held that everything in the universe was made up of the basic material Qi. In essence, Qi is cosmic energy or a life force; it may also refer to air or breath. Daoists contend that Qi arises from the ultimate oneness, yuan qi, and evolves into a twofold primeval structure: zheng qi (正氣,"positive spirit") and xie qi

[1] https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/related-articles/tree-of-knowledge.

[2] https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/314/.

(邪氣,"negative spirit"). The design of a Chinese garden guided by the philosophical ideas of Daoism, Confucianism, and to a lesser extent, Buddhism, is to promote the positive spirit and eschew the negative one.

Zhang (2018) argues that 'the design philosophy of classical Suzhou gardens in China, with regards to their natural and architectural elements on the moral education of the inhabitants.' Classical Chinese gardens are the basis for 'cultivating environmental ethics, … aesthetics, and … moral characters.' The classical Suzhou gardens in Jiangsu province, now part of UNESCO World Heritage, dating from the sixth century and flourishing during Ming dynasty and after, reflecting 'the profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture in their meticulous design'.[3]

The Chinese landscape garden has a history extending back some three thousand years to its beginnings in the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BC), often constructed as royal gardens where the king hunted game. Imperial gardens were built embodying both botanical and zoological aspects with artificial lakes and mountains. Once Buddhism was introduced into China after the fall of the Han dynasty, there were many thousands of temple gardens built that became the source for the gardens for poets and scholars in the period 221–618 AD. One notable example was the *Jingu Yuan* (金谷園), or *Garden of the Golden Valley*, built in 296 by Shi Chong (石崇, 249–300) who invited a group of famous poets to celebrate the garden, initiating the tradition of poetry and literature of gardens, contributing *Jingu Shi*, or *Poems of the Golden Valley.* The first Golden Age of the classical garden occurred during the Tang Dynasty (618–907). These were imperial gardens or scholar's gardens (*wenren yuan*) were celebrated by poetry and painting. New designs and techniques of domestication, propagation and grafting developed during this period and both aesthetic and cultivation technology were further developed in the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Both the architecture and the design of the classical garden contain pavilions, bridges and courtyards that were designed for special purposes and named as such including, for instance, The Lingering Garden, Retreat and Reflection Garden, Humble Administrator's Garden, all in Suzhou China. Ji Cheng was one of the first to write a work on the design of gardens, called *Yuanye, or The Craft of Gardens (1633), focusing on* the architectural rather than natural features. He is famous for his saying 'Even though everything [in the garden] is the work of man, it must appear to have been created by heaven…' The Chinese garden is a form of landscape art that inaugurates landscape traditions in literature, poetry and art with attention to the propagation and arrangement of exotic flowers, while also embodying the principles of Chinese cosmology and the general relationship with nature.[4] Classical Chinese gardens had a strong and enduring relationship with classical Chinese literature, painting, other related artistic genres and demonstrating a clear connection with classical Chinese philosophy emphasizing the profound spiritual dimension of gardens and gardening (Wang, 2015).

[3] https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/813/.

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_garden#cite_note-61.

The notion of 'moral cultivation' and the ways in which 'aesthetics and ethics are thought to be intertwined in "non-Western" artistic traditions, especially with respect to the natural world' (Shapshay et al., 2018). The accomplishment of Japanese arts—the way of tea, the way of flowers, *aikido* and Zen landscape gardening—involves forms of self-cultivation that help to form the ethical individual as well as teaching ethics, training the mind and the body. Spiritual values are learned through the practice of the arts (Carter, 2007). Zen inspired gardens derived from Mahayana Buddhism is based on meditation as a means of self-discovery and self-cultivation understood as experience rather than a school of ethics. Zen gardens began in the eleventh century when temple gardens were encouraged by military leaders. Such gardens are considered a tranquil and serene place for practice of contemplation and meditation, especially for monks meditating on Buddha's teachings.

The classical Chinese influenced Japanese gardens which in turn influenced garden design and garden metaphysics in Europe especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Chinese garden design impacted on the English Landscape Garden Movement through Jesuit missionaries and the writings of Leibniz on Confucian values, registering with Addison, Pope and Sir William Temple who was a collector of Chinese paintings and porcelains. It opened up a new era of the Anglo-chinoiserie garden creating a new English aesthetic ideal (Liu, 2008). Anglo-Chinois was a French term for a type of informal landscape rock-garden developed from Chinese examples that represented the chinoiserie garden style embellished with Chinese garden architecture of the pavilion and pagoda and written about by William Chambers' *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (1772) and Georges Louis Le Rouge's *Jardins anglo-chinois* (1776). Later Chinese garden design became very fashionable in Europe.[5]

The formality and symmetry of Renaissance gardens seem to imply a state of perfection echoing the Garden of Eden. Italian Renaissance gardens experienced a revival of classical gardens in their Greek and Roman forms and also expressed Arab garden traditions embellished through Islamic symbolism. They continued the traditions of the medieval garden traditions with high walls, flat beds and arched trellises. The emphasis was on order inspired by classical forms and values although the Renaissance introduced a new view of perspective that unified the secret gardens (*giardino segreto*), the porticos constructed for shade, the flower beds of rare flowers, and the accompanying statues, columns, vases, fountains and lakes. Simone Kasier (2015) explains.

> Gardens were favorite places for discussing ethical problems concerning the relationship of nature and man in the Renaissance. What is more, moral-philosophical aspects accompanied the very idea of the garden. Gardens were supposed to reflect an image of the world, the view of the world as conceived by its creator, and thus their order shed light on the virtues and character of the latter. The ethical dimension of gardens is closely related to their emblematic identification with paradise found expressed in literature, the visual arts and garden architecture alike.

[5] https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/gard_3/hd_gard_3.htm.

The relationship between philosophy and gardening in the West is strongly influenced by Egyptian and Persian ideas and models, and the relationship was well established in Ancient Greece with philosophers such as Epicurus, who like his Athenian contemporaries, was interested in the good life and how to pursue it. The link between philosophy and the garden and between philosophy and the ethics of self-cultivation have been enduring in both the East and the West. In 306 BC Epicurus bought a house with a garden outside Athens, near the Academy, which was established as a place of retreat from the city. The Garden of Epicurus became intimately linked with Epicureanism. The motto carved over the entry to his garden was 'Dear Guest, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure.'[6] He established a school known as 'Ho Kepos' (The Garden) based on the highest value of *ataraxia,* a state of serene calmness.

In Chinese philosophy, the ethics of self-cultivation have been the essence of Confucianism and Chinese humanism for centuries (Peters, 2020). In Western philosophy, by contrast, the interest in the ethical ideal of self-cultivation has recently experienced a revival in the form of virtue ethics that gave central importance to the development of moral character after the publication of G. E. M. Anscombe's (1958: 1) seminal article 'Modern Moral Philosophy'. Virtue ethics highlighting moral character is one of the three major approaches in normative ethics, the other two being deontology and consequentialism. All three classical traditions—Aristotelian, Confucian and Buddhist—reveal that although each provides its own distinct figure of the virtuous person, they are remarkably similar in their conception and emphasis on moral self-cultivation as a practical answer to how humans become virtuous (Peters et al., 2021). Dennis and Werkhoven (2018) have developed a new strand of 'the cultivation of the self' in moral philosophy which provides an alternative to the contemporary Aristotelian focus of standards for right actions by focusing on 'conceptions of human life that are best for the one living it' examining the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on Spinoza, Kant and Nietzsche in the Western tradition and more recently, Hadot on 'spiritual exercises' in Ancient philosophy and Foucault, who through notions of 'care of the self' demonstrates the role of aesthetic practices in the cultivation of the self.

Increasingly, the new field of environmental virtue ethics that is derived from the role and interactions that agents have with other animals and the environment, including specifically natural landscapes and also gardens, as well as 'the wild', involves attributions of moral agency to natural features such as scared rivers[7] (Sandler & Cafao, 2010). In the era of Covid-19 as human beings push back against the wilderness, the critical question of the ethics of human survival comes to depend on mass extinctions of other animal species and our human relationship to stands of bush, trees and the entire ecosystem.

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[6] http://wiki.epicurism.info/Epicurus%27_Garden/.

[7] NZ granted the Whanganui River legal personhood in 2017 to protect it, thus recognizing environmental features as well as persons. Local *iwi* (Maori tribe) have a relationship with this 290 k river that stretches from Mount Tongariro to the Tasman Sea, for nearly 900 years, regarding it as a *tupuna* or ancestor.

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