

“ENCOUNTERING CHINA: THE CENTRALITY OF CULTURE”

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I. A CHANGING WORLD ORDER: ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL

1. The two conflicted images of China: R. Peerenboom in *China Modernizes: Threat to the West, or Model for the Rest?*
2. We cannot overestimate the power of wealth. The phenomenon: *xiahai* 下海 in Shanghai 上海.
3. Soft diplomacy: Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, New Zealand, G20
4. Anticipating 2015: Three centers of power
5. OED: the word “Chinese” as “inscrutable”
6. The demonizing of China: human rights example (first and second generation: *individual* liberties and entitlements vs. flourishing *community*)
7. The continent called “China” is rising. Sea change: from increasing economic and political power to cultural influence.

8. Educating the world on China: 許嘉璐. Internationally
300+ Confucius Institutes 孔子學院, and domestically
Canonical Learning fever 國學熱

9. Here comes China: What is Chinese culture?

10. J.L. Borges:

“Around 1916, I decided to apply myself to the study of Oriental literatures. As I was reading with credulous enthusiasm the English translation of a certain Chinese philosopher, I came across this memorable passage:

‘It matters little to a convict under a death sentence if he has to walk on the edge of a precipice; he has already given up living.’*

To that phrase, the translator had appended an asterisk and indicated that his interpretation was to be preferred to that of a rival sinologist who had translated:

*‘The servants destroy the works of art so as not to have to adjudicate on their merits and defects.’

At that point . . . I did not read any further. A mysterious skepticism had crept into my soul.”
(*Œuvres complètes* vol. 1, 1183).

11. Recent archaeological finds

12. Europe's "interpretation" of China's Abrahamic "God": *tian* 天 "Heaven," *yi* 義 "righteousness," *dao* 道 "the Way," *li* 禮 "ritual," *xiao* 孝 "filial piety," *ren* 仁 "benevolence," *li* 理 "principle."
13. Qian Mu 錢穆: What does Chinese culture bring to the table? Saussure: *langue* and *parole*
14. Orientalism as a corrective: despotic, mystical, backward, occult, collective, pagan
15. Barnes and Noble, Borders: "Eastern Religions"
16. Western academy: Chinese philosophy is *not* "philosophy"—taught in religion/Asian studies departments
17. Trying to take Chinese culture on its own terms. Interpretive asymmetry: "shoehorning." Chinese philosophy's encounter with Western philosophy is NOT its defining moment.
18. Here comes China: What is Chinese culture? What does Chinese culture have on offer for a changing cultural order?

II. WHAT IS "CONFUCIANISM?"

1. Confucius + "ism" or 80 generations of *Ruxue* 儒學?
2. From Shang dynasty (ca. 1570-1045 BCE) bronzes of the "gentlefolk" to the Zhou dynasty (1056?-256

**BCE) aestheticization of the human experience
through achieving propriety in roles and relations
(*li* 禮)**



3.

4. **Analects 6.25:** 觚不觚觚哉觚哉 “A *gu* ritual vessel that is not a *gu*—a *gu* indeed, a *gu* indeed!” Icons and artifacts.
5. **Analects 7.1:** 子曰：“述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭。” The Master said, "Following the proper way, I do not forge new paths; with confidence I cherish the ancients—in these respects I am comparable to Old Peng."
6. **Analects 13.39:** 子曰：“人能弘道，非道弘人。” The Master said, "It is the person who is able to broaden the way, not the way that broadens the person."
7. **Analects 15.16:** 子曰：“不曰‘如之何如之何’者，吾末如之何也已矣。” The Master said, "There is nothing that I can do for people who are not constantly asking themselves: 'What to do? What to do?'"
8. **Radical empiricism:** not ethical *theory*, but an attempt to optimize the human experience grounded in a relatively straightforward account of how to make the most of ordinary life in family and community. 天人合一 *Zhongyong* 1: 致中和，天地位焉，萬物育焉。 “When balance and harmony are achieved, the heavens and the earth will be in their proper places and all things will flourish in the world.”

9. Hilary Putnam:

. . . elements of what we call “language” or “mind” *penetrate so deeply into what we call “reality” that the very project of representing ourselves as being “mapper’s” of something “language-independent” is fatally compromised from the start.* Like Relativism, but in a different way, Realism is an impossible attempt to view the world from Nowhere.

If we find that we must take a certain point of view, use a certain ‘conceptual system’, when we are engaged in practical activity, in the widest sense of ‘practical activity’, then we must not simultaneously advance the claim that it is not really ‘the way things are in themselves’.

We must accept our own reflexivity as “beings who cannot have a view of the world that does not reflect our interests and values.”

10. Perennial issues: personal cultivation, centrality of family relations, parents and children, teachers and students, learning and culture, governing, modeling, ancestors, religiousness, propriety, respect, shame. Making the ordinary extraordinary. Enchanting the everyday.

11. *Daxue*1b-2a: 古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先修其身；欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；欲誠其意

者，先致其知，致知在格物。物格而後知至，知至而後意誠，意誠而後心正，心正而後身修，身修而後家齊，家齊而後國治，國治而後天下平。自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本。其本亂而末治者否矣，其所厚者薄，而其所薄者厚，未之有也！此謂知本，此謂知之至也。

The ancients who sought to demonstrate real excellence to the whole world first brought proper order to their states; in seeking to bring proper order to their states, they first set their families right; in seeking to set their families right, they first cultivated their own persons; in seeking to cultivate their persons, they first knew what is proper in their own heartminds; in seeking to know what is proper in their heartminds, they first became sincere in their purposes; in seeking to become sincere in their purposes, they first became comprehensive in their wisdom. And the highest wisdom lies in seeing how things fit together most productively. Once they saw how things fit together most productively, their wisdom reached its heights; once their wisdom reached its heights, their thoughts were sincere; once their thoughts were sincere, their heartminds knew what is proper; once their heartminds knew what is proper, their persons were cultivated; once their persons were cultivated, their families were set right; once their families were set right, their state was properly ordered; and once their states were properly ordered, there was peace in the world. *From the emperor down to the common folk, everything is rooted in personal cultivation. There can be no healthy canopy when the roots are not properly set, and it would never do*

for priorities to be reversed between what should be invested with importance and what should be treated more lightly. This commitment to personal cultivation is called both the root and the height of wisdom.

12. Where does meaning come from?
“Appreciating” each other in family and community.

III. THE PROBLEM: BLIND JUSTICE OR MORAL IMAGINATION?

1. *Analects* 13.18: 子路: 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 in conversation with Confucius said, "In our village there is 'True Goody-goody.' When his father took a sheep on the sly, he reported him to the authorities." Confucius replied, "Those who are true in my village conduct themselves differently. A father will cover for his son, and a son will cover for his father. And being 'true' lies in doing so."
2. What is Confucius' position? Aiding and abetting criminals? Obstruction of justice? Or doing what each of us would really do?
3. Principle of justice versus appropriateness in the specific context (*yi* 義)? Idealism versus holistic aestheticism.
4. Goddess of Justice (Themis, Justitia), or:



5.

***Classic of Family Reverence* 孝經 : On Remonstrance 《諫諍章》** 故當不義，則子不可以不爭於父，臣不可以不爭於君。故當不義則爭之。從父之令，又

焉得為孝乎！ Thus, if confronted by reprehensible behavior on his father's part, a son has no choice but to remonstrate with his father, and if confronted by reprehensible behavior on his ruler's part, a minister has no choice but to remonstrate with his ruler. Hence, remonstrance is the only response to immorality. How could simply obeying the commands of one's father be deemed filial?



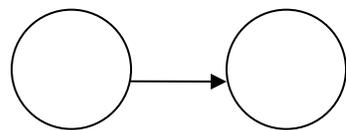
6. Is serving principle always just?
Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop (1831-1884). Rice vs. Caeytano (2000). 1778 (first contact) to 1883 (will). 800,000 to 46,000 Hawaiians.

IV. INTERPRETIVE ASYMMETRY: HOW DO WE TAKE CONFUCIANISM ON ITS OWN TERMS? AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE ON OFFER?

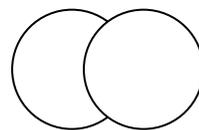
1. Interpreting “Confucian Role Ethics” 儒學角色倫理學
2. Trying to take Chinese philosophy on its own terms. Interpretive asymmetry: “shoehorning”. Its encounter with Western philosophy is NOT its defining moment.
3. Articulating an interpretive context: The *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經). Traditional Chinese Medicine 中醫: What is the heart-mind (*xin* 心)? Holistic,

processual, relational, gerundive 動名詞性的,
rhythmic—primacy of doing: “thinking and feeling,”
moving line, *how* as well as *what*. BUT what is the
heart-mind 本身 *in itself*?

4. Holism: a) relationally constituted persons b) moral imagination c) human-centered religiousness.
5. What is morality? Growth in relations. Putting oneself in another’s place (*shu* 恕) and doing one’s best (*zhong* 忠).
6. “Human *beings* or “Human *becomings*?” A narrative understanding of “person-ing:” you are what you do. You mean what you mean for others.
7. Autonomous “Soul” vs. 仁 “virtuosic relationality.”
“Everybody please stand up” vs. “big family 大家請站起來”: “family” as the governing metaphor for all relations
8. *Ren* 仁 as “consummate” person/conduct: “*con-summa*”



Human “Beings”



Human “Becomings”

8. “Individuality” as an accomplishment: becoming distinguished in relations.

7. *Ren* 仁 is not altruism or egoism, but “self-loving

自愛” in relations: 己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人

8. Abstract, decontextualized principle-based, virtue-based morality vs. holistic vision of the moral life with focus/field relationship between totality and particularity.

9. Example: reconsidering “potentiality” as transactional and collaborative: acorn 橡果 (松鼠), chicken egg 雞蛋 (早餐)

V. FAMILY 家 AS A STRATEGY FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INGREDIENTS 大家，國家，人家

1. *Analects* 論語 1.2 君子務本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其為仁之本與。 “Exemplary persons concentrate their efforts on the root, for the root having taken hold, one’s vision of the moral life will grow therefrom. As for family reverence (*xiao* 孝) and fraternal deference (*ti* 弟), these are, I suspect, the root of becoming consummate in one’s conduct (*ren* 仁).”

2. **Four Books 四書: *Great Learning* 大學, *Analects* 論語, *Mencius* 孟子, *Zhongyong* 中庸: radial growth beginning with personal cultivation.**
3. **Roles as concrete, normative guidelines: “grandmother” him, “brother” her, “teacher” her, “son” him.**
4. **Concrete conduct as the source of principles, virtues, values.**
5. **Being “true” as trust: optimal appropriateness (*yi* 義) and achieved propriety in one’s roles and relations (*li* 禮) as the measure of consummate conduct (*ren* 仁).**
6. **Discrete “finite” games versus holistic “infinite” games.**

VI. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF CONFUCIAN ROLE ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN AN AGE OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE?

1. **Pragmatic: begins from a relatively straightforward account of the human experience.**
2. **“Infinite” rather than “finite” games: not winning but strengthening relations to continue the game.**
3. **A “relationship” is a “relating to,” a “giving an account.” There is no alternative to dialogue.**

4. Begins from the uniqueness of each person and each situation: *shu* 恕 is “putting oneself in the other’s place.”
5. Good relations require hard work: *zhong* 忠 “putting your heart into it,” “conscientiousness.”
6. Morality is a never-ending process of growth in relations. It is education.
7. There is no “righteousness.” What is right is what is most optimally appropriate for all concerned, and is constantly changing.
8. If your neighbor does better, you do better.
9. Modeling as a strategy for change rather than the imposition of principles.
10. An alternative human-centered, non-exclusive model of religiousness.
11. The direct line between morality and religiousness. *Religare*: “binding tightly. Contribution as a warrant for a robust sense of belonging.

VI. CONFUCIANISM IS *NOT* THE ANSWER

1. The limits of family: corruption, parochialism
2. Regulative ideals

3. A place at the table: China a stakeholder in “bringing peace to the world” 平天下