

Articles 【研究論著】

**World Interculturalism:  
China Written in English**  
普世文化互動：以英文描寫中國文化

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**Keywords:** inter-writing, storytelling, interculture, China, the West,

**關鍵詞：**以不同文化文字互寫、講故事、文化互動、中國文化、西洋文化

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## Abstract

This essay has three sections plus a final concluding section, and makes two points. One, writing shows to reveal/shape the writer as such; my writing-down objectifies me to make me another who alone shapes me. Objectification through writing begins the socialization process. Two, I write in my language to write my life-style, my culture. Similarly, writing on China in English reveals China and the West to inter-show, inter-shape. Section 1 considers the first point, Section 2 the second, and Section 3 concretely executes both, to show how inter-writing intercultural. Writing in English shows how concrete/indirect/subtle China is, and this showing shows how clear/logical/analytical the West is. China must learn from the clear West; the West must learn from concrete China.

The essay goes as follows. [1] Cultures are circles, everywhere-centered and nowhere-edged, that inter-blend through [2] relativistic storytelling as in China. This phenomenon paves the way to [3] write on China in English to reveal and enrich both China and the West. The final Section [4] insists that such cross-cultural writing makes intercultural and heals conflicts to enrich the world.

## 摘要

本論文以三部分及一結論論述二點。第一、「描寫」顯示而且塑造了描寫者本身；我的描寫使我客觀化成為「他者」，且反過來塑造我。「描寫」客觀化了寫作者而創始了社會。第二，我以自己的語言寫作而寫出我的生活型態、我的文化。同樣地，以英文描寫中國文化，顯示中國與西方的個別特性，進而互相塑造。本論文的第一部分論述第一點，第二部分論述第二點。第三部分具體遂行這兩點，以顯示跨文化的描寫使諸文化互動互補。以英文描寫中國顯出中國的具體、間接、和委婉。這現象本身顯示西方明晰的論理性。中國必需學習西方的明晰；西方必需學習中國的具體。

本論文開展如下的思索：（一）文化如奇妙的圓圈，其圓心遍在，其圓周無限。（二）相對性的「講故事」（這是中國文化的特性）使諸圓圈互相混合。這現象使（三）中國文化的英文描寫彰顯中國以及西方的個別特性，使這兩個文化更形豐富。第四部分是結論，討論如何以跨文化的描寫使諸文化互動互補，醫治文化衝突，使全世界更豐富。

Having been forced to live in the West and to introduce China to it in English, I constantly have been confronted with the challenges of interculturalism and impressed with its abiding benefits. Here is my report on the fruits of years of reflection on this theme, written in English to perform and present my finding. Others are invited to write on the same theme with essays in Chinese.

This essay has three sections plus a concluding section, and makes two points. One, writing shows to reveal/shape the writer as such; my writing-down objectifies me to make me another who alone shapes me. Objectification through writing begins the socialization process. Two, I write in my language to write my life-style, my culture. Similarly, writing on China in English reveals China and the West to inter-show, inter-shape. Section 1 considers the first point, Section 2 the second, and Section 3 concretely executes both, to show how inter-writing interculturalities. Writing in English shows how concrete/indirect/subtle China is, and this showing in turn shows how clear/logical/analytical the West is. China must learn from the clear West; the West must learn from concrete China.

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## **1. Circles, Cultures, Stories**

There is a curious circle whose center is everywhere and whose edge nowhere, said Nicholas of Cusa and Augustine.<sup>1</sup> They used this circle to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (NY: Modern Library, 2000), p. 252. I once saw a book about how China also independently noted the existence of such a circle, but I have lost the reference.

describe God<sup>2</sup> but it also reveals actuality. We must consider what it is and then what it means, for this circle has much to do with cultures and storytelling.

To begin, what is this strange circle? A circle has a center point definitely related to all edge points, in coherence with them all. The circle with everywhere-center and nowhere-edge has a coherence that moves, for “everywhere” in this circle means “here and elsewhere” that always moves somewhere “else” than “here,” and so “nowhere” forever expands “elsewhere from ‘here’.” This circle is open, coherent, moving. Our many circles of understanding move to interblend, in rhythms of undulating waves, round and round, out and out.

Now, what does this intriguing dynamic circle mean? It describes [1] daily ongoing, [2] my life, [3] cultures, [4] interculture, and [5] storytelling.

One, the circle of everywhere-center and nowhere-edge describes daily ongoing in open coherence. The sun rises in the east each morning (constant) while the wind blows as it chooses (moving, indeterminate), and each day is this coherent unity (circle) of constancy (everywhere-center) and indeterminacy ever moving ahead (nowhere-edge).

Two, this dynamic circle describes the pond of my life dotted with raindrops of inspiration, each rippling out as a circle that constantly expands into nowhere, disappearing to blend into another ripple-circle made by another inspiration-raindrop, and then another, incessantly. The pond of human awareness makes a circle of many expanding circles in time, coherently one in centers everywhere to expand into an edge nowhere.

Three, all this is culturally significant. In the West, Einstein dissolved Newton’s absolute space/time into relative “spacetime;” Derrida “deconstructed” the absolute universe-circle into many subject-circles interrelated, “relativizing” into the others. Plato and Hobbes gathered up loose crowds into the politics of a center, a philosopher-king of a Leviathan, and Foucault “deconstructed” it into political rhythms of raw power push-and-pull. Our universe is now a “shoe-

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<sup>2</sup> I consider this circle as descriptive of God in my manuscript, *Nonsense: Cultural Meditations on the Beyond*, yet to be published. Here I consider this circle as descriptive of our historical actuality.

string” circle of moving “wavicle”-circles, each undulating into others, as the circle of a system cannot prove itself (Gödel), i.e., a circle exists as such thanks to the other to which it opens. Our circle of universe and its understanding is now waves of many inter-blends of circles expanding nowhere. The West expressed it in mathematical analysis and experimental deduction and induction.<sup>3</sup> We think/live in a moving circle of open-ended coherence in mathematical/experimental weaving of science/technology. Strict coherence blends open-ended circles into a Western pond.

China is another pond of many moving circles different from the West, and so the China-circle differs from the West-circle in cultural implications.

François Jullien wrote on the Chinese “shih 勢” that he takes as “the propensity of things.”<sup>4</sup> He perceptively saw it as a center that spreads to other notions in China, a key to understanding China. He may not have realized that the same universal reverberation of implications exists in all Chinese notions. “Heaven 天,” “Tao 道,” “nature 性,” “ritual-propriety 禮,” “princely man 君子,” “humanity 仁,” “loyalty-conscientiousness 忠,” “fidelity 信,” “filiality 孝,” “principle as the grain of things 理,” “breath-élan 氣,” “feeling-situation 情,” “the Yin-Yang 陰陽,” “the divine 神,” etc., each covers the entire Chinese thought-world. Tseng Tzu could have cited any common notion to thread Confucius’ Tao into One.

Why is such the case? It is quite possibly due to the nature of actuality itself. Almost any notion that interests us can be a center from which all implications flow. Chinese genius perceives this irradiation of ideas and captures it in a distinctive mode of thinking, historical and literary—concrete storytelling

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<sup>3</sup> Chad Hansen is today’s I. A. Richards, innocently taking Western “analytical logic” to be universally applicable, confidently pushing his analytical interpretation all through Chinese history of thought (*A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, Oxford, 1992). That story-thinking can accommodate analytical logic indicates how great story-thinking is, for analytical logic to house story-thinking results in tearing logic apart (as *Alice in Wonderland* Lewis Carroll did in) and tarnishing analytical logic itself (as Deleuze did to *Alice in Wonderland* by logicizing her, Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Towards a History of Efficacy in China* (NY: Zone Books, 1999).

making circles with everywhere-center and nowhere-circumference. Any moment/place can be a new circle to irradiate all sorts of new notional radii of implications, as any individual in any situation can begin an epoch-making revolution. "The situation shapes a hero; a hero shapes the situation."<sup>5</sup>

So, do not be trapped but always break out new to pursue the implications of a new insight, expand it into a new circle, and then go to another new circle.<sup>6</sup> Thus a brave new world begins with a new story-circle. History checks on how far a new circle can expand its implications. Does it expand just a few yards? If so, it is a false one (legalism, violence). Is its expansion unlimited in its horizon, "nowhere" to be seen? If so it is powerfully valid (e.g., compassion). Such is the circle/pond of Chinese circles, the Chinese culture.

Words are sense-alive only in their culture-pond. English "culture," "analysis," and "philosophy" cannot translate into Chinese. We must devise compound words, "文化," "分析," "哲學," nonexistent before,<sup>7</sup> with new senses to approximate Western technical imports.<sup>8</sup> To the West, China is "fuzzy and unclear;" to China, the West is "cold and barren." Confucius is a tiresome platitude-mouther in the West; Socrates is harsh and unreasonable in China.

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<sup>5</sup> Jullien's book sadly missed this shaping reciprocity between the 勢-situation and the individual (not just individuals helplessly riding on it), as did Saussy who reviewed the book, otherwise so attractively (in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1996, pp. 984-987). Besides, Saussy missed culture as an open circle (as did perhaps Jullien). Saussy's problem of the familiar lack of common categories in cultural comparison is resolved in *On Metaphoring*, foreshadowed in *Body Thinking* and *Togetherness*. I admit Saussy wrote in 1996 while my books mentioned here were out in 2001, 1998, and 1997, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Emerson's "Circles" (op. cit.) is alive primarily because of this emphasis on breaking out into novelty.

<sup>7</sup> That is, nonexistent before the Ch'ing period when China first contacted the West.

<sup>8</sup> "文化" meant teaching-transforming common folks with refined virtues (以文德化民); "分析" meant to divide; "哲學" came from Nishi Amane's (西周) "希哲學" adapted from 周茂叔's "希求賢哲."

Words in the West are hard to render into Chinese. Similarly, “風骨 (wind bones?)”<sup>9</sup> and “情節 (feeling joints?)” are untranslatable into English; “ssu 思” is not quite thinking, nor is “k’au 考” quite ideation/deliberation. This is why Confucius’ compact *Analects* and Lao Tzu’s dense *Tao Te Ching* are not rendered well into English in countless translations. “China has no philosophy” (Arthur Wright) though it has deep reflections on matters at hand. “China has no ethics” (Henry Rosemont, Jr.) though it has Five interpersonal Relations (五倫). Each culture has its “music” of sense/reason unchangeable into tunes/rhythms/resonance of other cultures.

Four, these culture-ponds are circles of expanding circles inter-blending with other culture-ponds into exciting multicultural inter-translations. Here is another circle, everywhere-center, nowhere-edge, in coherent flux, an inter-confusing, confusion-less, chaotic cosmos.

Here is room for creative misunderstanding, continual cultural miscegenation, creative inter-borrowing into a constantly emerging new world. I used to typify such interculture as “metaphoring.”<sup>10</sup> I claim here that this metaphoring activity is actually storytelling, as ancient as the history of humanity itself.

Five, these cultural circle-ponds, expanding to inter-blend, are expressed in storytelling in the languages of mathematics (West) and of notions/myths (China). They inter-yarn into a meaningful story that opens to unexpected other stories, blending with them. Story weaves itself out (open) yet remains itself (coherence).<sup>11</sup> How does storytelling form circles of everywhere-center and nowhere-edge? To answer it makes a good story.

Barfield said, “the past...live[s] on in the present...where we...re-enact”<sup>12</sup> into history. This meaning-reenactment in history-time and community-space is

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<sup>9</sup> Is “wind” here like “airs and graces” or “give oneself airs”? Did natural air come to have such human complexity because “ch’i 氣” as the root dynamics of life circulates throughout Nature and human nature?

<sup>10</sup> In *On Metaphoring: A Cultural Hermeneutic* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> I briefly considered the peculiarity of “story” in *The Butterfly as Companion* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 67-68.

<sup>12</sup> Owen Barfield, *Speaker’s Meaning* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1967), p. 23.

the dynamic circle of anywhere-center and nowhere-edge. Our use of words in roughly similar ways clusters into dictionary meanings in a cultural pond of communal usage. We express by contracting a lexical meaning (“furniture”) or expanding it (“focus”),<sup>13</sup> to make a circle-center to spread to its audience, and expand the circle’s edge indefinitely, “nowhere.” We are amidst this continuous complex reenactment, from time immemorial to future immemorial. This is a circle of anywhere-nowhere alive in history everywhere.

Word-usage tells stories of our meaning-expression, and Barfield’s *Speaker’s Meaning* tells stories of this storytelling. As English sense-expressions speak in other cultures, a culture-pond translates into another; circles of anywhere-center and nowhere-edge keep inter-blending to expand worldwide.

Our description above tells the story of three storytelling circles, each blending into others. We have told the story of how this circle of everywhere-center and nowhere-edge occurred in our history of thinking, then the story of what it is, then what it means. Each leads to and blends into the other. Are these stories three aspects of one story, or three separate ones? It is an open question. Answering it makes another story. “Here and there, funny things are everywhere,” said Dr. Seuss, and set out to write his stories for children of all ages. Life is funny/enjoyable, larger than logic, beyond what we think and sense, and bigger than what we can understand, evoking laughter.

Dr. Seuss is not alone. Ancient Kung-sun Lung 公孫龍 shows how logic can be twisted to tell stories of how beyond common sense things are. So did Escher, Einstein, Lewis Carroll, Erasmus, Voltaire, Twain, Chuang Tzu, all literary writers, and all mythologies. Things sparkle with fresh brilliance, going beyond our thing-perception.

Sadly, commentaries on *Kung-sun Lung*<sup>14</sup> and *Chuang Tzu* try to convolutedly fit them into the Procrustean bed of our common perception. A. C.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-32, 41-42. We need not go into details of how “furniture” and “focus” got transformed, expanded, or contracted, as Barfield sees them. It will detract from our main thread of reflection here.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Max Perleberg, *The Works of Lung-Sun Lung-Tzu* (Hong Kong, 1952, private printing).



Graham's studies turn *Moh Ching* 墨經 into dull scholastic contortions, not refreshing/expanding us into its vast "tall stories."<sup>15</sup> There are more "outrageous" things than dreamt of by our philosophy, so we must turn the outrageous to fit actuality.

History rhymes as poetry and music move us; both rhyme with solid historical reality in flesh. Scientists perform the same dull experiments to confirm a fact while kids repeatedly dance nursery rhymes, dancing life. Kids are as intent on funny "Humpty Dumpty" sitting on the wall as adults are on the "fact" of an egg breaking into pieces, without fun. If adults laugh at kids' "Humpty Dumpty" as infantile and unreal,<sup>16</sup> kids can laugh at adults' "fact" as adult-silly, for "fact" is no fun and nothing is more important in life than having fun<sup>17</sup>—and what is real, as history, is rhyming fun! Kids' "fact" is adults' "Humpty Dumpty."<sup>18</sup>

We are all kids<sup>19</sup> enjoying an "event". Kids call it a "story" to repeat by chanting its rhyme for fun, while adults call it a "science" to confirm by experimenting on it as fact. All such storytelling, rhymed and confirmed, becomes our "history." If it is far back in history, we call it a "myth" as with *Gilgamesh* or *Odyssey*. "Well, all this outrage may have originated in our actual experience," we adults insist with a long face. It doesn't matter, for kids enjoy the story, whether Humpty-Dumpty falls and breaks or no. And, kids' enjoyment

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<sup>15</sup> Chuang Tzu's "ch'i hsieh 齊諧" (that begins Chapter One) can mean "all jokes," that is, "tall stories." See my *The Butterfly as Companion* on this point. We are forced to say, "You must be kidding!" in disbelief always. Jokes often reveal truths.

<sup>16</sup> "You kids do no experiment; we repeat it to confirm facts." "Your 'experiment works' in your mind as our nursery rhyme works for us. Your 'experiment' is your favorite nursery rhyme. We kids repeat ours, too. Besides, your nursery rhyme is no fun; ours is, for we dance on ours, and you don't on yours!"

<sup>17</sup> Kids' "fun" an adult Aristotle called "happiness," which is less happy than "fun."

<sup>18</sup> Kids' Humpty Dumpty is factual as adults' egg, and adults' fact should be fun as kids' Humpty Dumpty.

<sup>19</sup> Are we not kids? We should be. "Great One is he who loses none of his 'baby's heart.'" (*Mencius* 4B12)

repeats the story—and their rhyming repetition<sup>20</sup> “confirms” the story for them as fun.

There exist far more things than dreamt by our philosophies. Here the “more...than” makes for an outrageous feature of our world. If reason/logos assembles matters to understand, then reason is story in four modes: story, science, history, and myth. And, the greatest of these is story that has to be outrageously rich/varied in science, history, and myth.

As Emerson correctly intuited, this circle is dynamic self-transcendence, going beyond itself and its milieu, breaking into pieces limitations of the experienced and the known/knowable. The circle is trans-experiential, changing experience into a new horizon; this breaking forth into the new is story that tells life itself.

This life-élan is told in an aesthetic<sup>21</sup> creation-story of the active Subject. Transferring the this-worldly self (aesthetics) from this-shore to the Beyond is religious transcendence. To obtain succor in our absolute trustful acceptance of the Absolute is Christianity. To reach Nirvana after ceasing all world-delusions is Buddhism. To obtain the Way to become sagely is for Confucianism the highest morality. To divinely<sup>22</sup> conform to the Way is Taoism where life itself is fulfilled in Nature. Now, we have told stories about life’s storytelling, the story of life’s storytelling, the circle of everywhere-center and nowhere-edge, pushing out of itself; it is “history” our life-story, our living.

In Chinese and English, “story” relates to “history.” As we are made of stories, stories overflow history<sup>23</sup> that we are. Thus we overflow ourselves; we are more than we actually are. So, thanks to storytelling, we are bigger than what we are.

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<sup>20</sup> Every time kids repeat a story they change it a little, as our oral tradition does. We call such repetition with variation “rhyming” as in poetry, music, and myths.

<sup>21</sup> Why “aesthetics”? Because art is the freest realm of human creation.

<sup>22</sup> Being “divine” is to become awesome “divine performer” of life’s music.

<sup>23</sup> Story overflows history because story can soar beyond fact to which history is confined.

“Story” at first narrates what happened; story is history (故事, 史譚, 事蹟, 來歷) that we would not tell unless interesting (軼聞, 逸事, 傳記, 逸話). Soon “interest” takes over and story overflows history to turn into tales taller than “facts,” “fables” (傳奇, 傳說, 小說), told to us before (典故, 來歷) and to us after. Telling forms us, history shapes us, and in the telling we stand-out/exist as “we,” as story. Without telling, there would be no story, and without story (情報, 情節, 結構), there would be no “we.” We overflow actuality to exist in storytelling.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Relativism as Storytelling

Storytelling is related to relativism. We must consider what “relativism” is and how crucial it is in life, i.e., tell a story. “Relativism” has two senses, a noun-assertion and a verb describing life-process. There are seven crucial points.

[1] We often take relativism as an assertion, an absolute terminal denial of all absolutes, to easily attack it as self-contradictory. Doesn’t it assert its own denial? Or, we attack it as irresponsible. Doesn’t it take all views as equally good, depending on one’s perspective, cultural or ethical? Philosophers since Socrates (contra sophists) and such as Kant (contra Hume) supposedly demolished relativism as we fight religious heresies.

We ask relativists, “Is there an absolute truth at all?” “Are all views equally valid?” “Is there a universal form of reasoning?” and “Can we judge between two views?”<sup>25</sup> We do so because we think we can know whole truths, but “There are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil.”<sup>26</sup> These questions are thus insoluble conundrums

<sup>24</sup> All this story of stories is woven with a glance at “story,” “history,” “storytelling,” and “exist” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). Chinese words and phrases inserted show how much the Chinese sentiment agrees with the West on “story” and “storytelling.” We all agree as humans on all of this.

<sup>25</sup> These are some of the typical questions treated in Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes, eds., *Rationality and Relativism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986).

<sup>26</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Dialogues* (Prologue, 1954). We ask, how about his own assertion? Didn’t he delightfully dare an insight of relativism itself?

once we take relativism as one of usual asserted views. Here we have reached a dead-end on this “issue” of relativism. We say relativism is dead wrong—and yet it keeps popping up in thinking.<sup>27</sup>

[2] Such an impossible maze refusing to leave us signals that relativism is crucial in life and that it is wrong to take it as a noun, a static view like absolutism. Relativism must instead be a descriptive verb to challenge an absolutist approach.

Challenging an assertive approach, relativism does not declare but sinuously describes, realistically points, and proposes, constantly critically alerting us to every issue and view, ever sifting/searching.<sup>28</sup> Relativism is as alive as actuality, unceasingly tells stories of life, so we can live through various views/attitudes to inter-learn, to inter-cultivate.

“Better” and “best” are usually taken as mathematically exclusive ordinals; if A is better than B, B cannot be good as A, and if A is the best, nothing else can be good as A. But we understand parents proudly declaring their children “the best in the world,” proud spouses pointing to their beloved as “the best dearest,” and proud children claiming their mothers “the most beautiful in the world.” So we freely use “better” and “best” as non-exclusive descriptions of blessedness. Non-exclusion is the human warmth of relativism.

[3] “But relativism cannot blindly describe; it must describe what life is and how we should behave.” Yes, it does. By being ruthlessly realistic, relativism points to an appropriate life-posture, ever alert, empathic, and critical to things/views. It tells us that, being “homo viator” (Marcel), we are and are to be ever

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<sup>27</sup> No independent article, “Relativism,” exists in Paul Edwards ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8 (Macmillan, 1967), or in Philip P. Wiener ed., *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, vol. 5 (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973). Still, both sets have a long list of its appearances in Indexes, e.g., “relation,” “situationism,” “skepticism,” “subjectivism,” and “anarchism.” Ubiquitous yet non-existent, relativism remains mysterious as a set view against absolutism.

<sup>28</sup> Is this why Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu tell stories of common living, alerting us to its implications, egging us on to reflect on them, yet proposing no definitive views? Is this how the Taoists came to be accused of committing an error of relativistic life-withdrawal—vague, indecisive, and irresponsible?

“on the way,” seeking, sifting, judiciously trailing the Tao of Nature. No view is perfect, none totally wrong; so, we must patiently go through with vigilance every view that comes our life’s way. “Never say ‘Never!’” Relativism is a rational normative posture of life itself.

[4] “But a view must have a goal; relativism cannot go aimless.” Yes, but its goal is not set eternally in Platonic heaven. Aristotle said, “happiness” is our common goal but differs as every life is different, and differs as life grows up. My son Johnny used to vow that he was going to be a garbage collector! I said, “Good for you!” Then he vowed he was growing up a milkman! I said again, “Good for you!” He is now a happy violinist, an erudite historian of music, and a medical technologist. Nothing is wrong with changing one’s interest as one grows/changes. All ends are endless (Dewey); this is life-pragmatism. Our goal of life goes on varying endlessly; so is the goal of relativism. The goal shift of relativism is unpredictable and non-arbitrary as is life’s.

“But relativism needs a method, not wandering. What is it?” It does have a method, careful discernment of views from inside them, existentially.<sup>29</sup> This is the truth hidden in the “laughing stock claim” of relativism that “all views are equally true; we are tolerant all around.” All views are not actually equally valid. Relativism is not blindly all-tolerant, but its method cannot be canonized, for it sinuously follows each view as it emerges.

Socrates complained that Euthyphro’s “definition” of piety, “what all gods love,” says “what all gods love and hate,” for they fight. Euthyphro could have said Socrates’ complaint holds only if he pursued an identical/universal definition of piety, which is absurd. No single “generic gift” pleases all; one loves a gift that another does not. Gifting is giftee-specific, not uniform or arbitrary; here is no “definition” but description.

[5] Now, here is a bombshell on method. Relativism does not argue but describes what actually is, and thereby argues—as Socrates did powerfully when he described how he came to be indicted as corrupter and unbeliever. He then described how, on the contrary, he improved souls (no parents came forward to

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Kuang-ming Wu, “Existential Relativism,” Ph.D. thesis, philosophy (Yale University, 1965).

indict him), as he followed the Delphic Oracle in disregard of his living, eventually his life<sup>30</sup>—and his description of this life-behavior demolished the indictment of impiety.<sup>31</sup> Kierkegaard and Voltaire, Hugo and Tolstoy, followed and kept telling stories. Western thinkers have been doing “thought experiments,” arguing with “examples” and “counterexamples,” and all Chinese thinkers have been “arguing” by tirelessly telling stories, actual or imagined. Story-argument is the most persuasive because it ruthlessly follows life. Someone still demurs, however.

“Facts are not opinions because facts are not values; examples are not points; relativism confuses description with demonstration.” This assertion/accusation commits false dichotomies in high abstract thinking. Thinking should be concrete. Far from being a contradiction, “concrete thinking” is the way humans live, to form history, an ongoing “story argument,” to which Chinese thinkers constantly appeal. We must expand on this.

G. E. Moore’s “naturalistic fallacy” says we can ask, “Why are they ‘good?’” to those naturalistic properties cited to compose things “good.”<sup>32</sup> Well, don’t those factual properties show how they compose “good,” and showing so demonstrates “good” as good? Isn’t this what Socrates did when he demonstrated—proved and showed—how unjustifiable the indictment was by simply describing how in fact he came to be indicted?

Another amazing story of “storytelling as argument” is Chinese Ssu-ma Ch’ien (c85-c145 BC).<sup>33</sup> As Grand Historian/Astrologer, Ssu-ma personally warranted his close friend’s loyalty, a general captured by enemy. When the general capitulated, Ssu-ma was offered to choose among suicide, execution, and castration. Too poor to bribe his way out, he had to choose castration to

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<sup>30</sup> *The Apology*, pp. 20-24, et passim.

<sup>31</sup> This is the best of journalism, whose factual description is an argument.

<sup>32</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, 1903.

<sup>33</sup> See William H. Nienhauser, Jr. ed., *The Indiana Companion to the Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 720-723.

“complete my deceased father’s history of China,” and devoted 28 years to his monumental *Shih Chi* (records of history).<sup>34</sup>

*Shih Chi* is unprecedented on three counts. One, it is the first comprehensive history of China that structured the way of subsequent Chinese historical writing. Two, it is a literary gem that shaped the style/technique of later Chinese fictive/historical romance. Three, most significantly, with its comprehensive literary eloquence, his magnum opus is the most radical vindication,<sup>35</sup> the most devastating indictment ever of the dynastic injustice. Socrates and Ssu-ma Ch’ien thus dramatically tell us that to tell stories is to show, and to show is to best argue, as Wittgenstein tirelessly tells us.<sup>36</sup>

“But thinking is systematic. How can storytelling weave a system?” Marcel’s dramas is systematic “under the heading of ‘yes-but,’” with no “intellectual imperialism” of having a system.<sup>37</sup> Marcel tells stories in “dramas.” Sartre packs “systematic” “phenomenological ontology” with stories of the intertwining of “being and nothingness.” A story-style delivery of thinking is thinking; dramatic storytelling is systematic argument. Relativism describes to demonstrate, i.e., argues in showing facts.

[6] Now, in describing how relativism describes to demonstrate, haven’t we told a story? Isn’t storytelling as sinuously alive as relativism, as alert/empathetic/judicious to life, and as realistic/formative as relativism? Doesn’t relativism point to the story-way of story-formation, first oral, then written, and then revised/rewritten in history? Isn’t history such a relativism-growth of storytelling? Isn’t it the way we all move/are to live? To be tells/lives stories in

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<sup>34</sup> Burton Watson has its selected translations as *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, vol. 2 (NY: Columbia University Press, 1961).

<sup>35</sup> This “revenge” is much more devastatingly long-lasting than suicide, seclusion, insurrection, etc.

<sup>36</sup> See e.g., Max Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein’s ‘Tractatus’* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964, 1966), pp. 1-19, et passim.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Arthur Schilpp and Lewis Edwin Hahn eds., *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1984), pp. 421-455.

relativism-way, the Way of life. “The Tao is walked and it is formed”;<sup>38</sup> life is lived, reflected on in stories, and it is formed.

[7] Now, the “self-defeating” feature of relativism so much exploited by its opponents takes on a strangely new significance. Wittgenstein celebrates it with an oracular saying that concludes the *Tractatus*,<sup>39</sup>

6.54: My sentences are illuminating in the following way: to understand me you must recognize my sentences—once you have climbed out through them, on them, over them—as senseless. (You must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after you have climbed up on it.) You must climb out through my sentences; then you will see the world correctly.

Philosophical thinking is “senseless”; we “climb up on the ladder” of thinking to “throw it away.” Still, Wittgenstein wrote all this down, and we understand it, before we can climb out through it. We still have to live with this senselessness, climb the ladder, before we kick it. Climbing the ladder follows its rungs, its rule; kicking it also follows rules to avoid hurt. Aren’t ladder-kicking rules the ladder-climbing ones?<sup>40</sup>

He has another saying, “Don’t worry about what you have already written. Just keep on beginning to think afresh as if nothing at all had happened yet.”<sup>41</sup> We then see that the ladder is our past, now no longer sensible. Thinking is a relentless kicking of the then for the now. Relativism forever begins at the

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<sup>38</sup> *Chuang Tzu*, 2/33.

<sup>39</sup> *Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*, translated by Daniel Kolak, Mountain View (CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998), p. 49. An earlier translation is C. K. Ogden’s (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus by Ludwig Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd, 1922) that has a slightly different rendering.

<sup>40</sup> Significantly, Black (“Is the ‘Tractatus’ self-defeating?” *ibid.*, pp. 378-386) rehearses our process of understanding mathematical “infinity,  $\infty$ ” and metaphysical concepts by extending ordinary notions, to defend Wittgenstein against the criticism that Wittgenstein is senselessness. Kicking is extending.

<sup>41</sup> *Wittgenstein Notebooks 1914-1916*, eds. by G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe, tr. by G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford, 1961), p. 30 (6), quoted by Black in *A Companion*, op. cit., p. 2.



beginning, learning from the past and then beginning afresh on our own. Learning is an imitation that kicks the original; imitation kicks mechanical copying.<sup>42</sup>

Here we can have no neat packaging; we must pick all insights, relevant or no. The messy advance shows how scattered a seminal writing is. This is why the dotted feature<sup>43</sup> of the journal-making of Pascal, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Marcel, Buber, and Paul Weiss<sup>44</sup> is so significant.<sup>45</sup> “Are these thinkers ‘relativists’?” Thinkers are alive when they are “relativistic,” as they sensitively follow relativistic life-following thrust, not quickly universalize sealing themselves in the glorious consistency of a system.

Reading continues its impact on life-quest. Journal-bits subtly connect a musical composition of life; its leitmotifs reappear in rhyming modulations, free, original, organic, climbing the journal-ladder, to provoke an illumination of life-perplexities. History-ladder is to be climbed to kick away, only to come back to climb and kick again.

Chuang Tzu insisted that the past is irrelevant today; to follow the past follows time’s footprints, not its moving shoes. Following the past reveres the scum of old, not its life; it is to push a boat on land, not a cart.<sup>46</sup> His insistence on uselessness of the past yet turns into the past for us to kick away. History

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<sup>42</sup> For Aristotle (*Poetics*, 48b4-14), learning occurs via pleasant imitation, but he never took it as exact copying. Cf. my “Learning as a Master from a Master: ‘Chuang Tzu’ in University General Education,” *Journal of Humanities East/West*, vol. 18 (December 1998), pp. 168-202.

<sup>43</sup> On “dotted pragmatics” see my *On Metaphoring*, op. cit., pp. 387-395.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Paul Weiss, *Philosophy in Process*, vol. 11 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1955-1989). Thinkers in the West are cited because all Chinese thinkers are journalistic.

<sup>45</sup> This is why these writers are hard to summarize and their “progress” hard to chart. This phenomenon is typified by Lao Tzu and a bewilderingly superb book on healing based on Lao Tzu, Greg Johanson and Ron Kurtz, *Grace Unfolding: Psychotherapy in the Spirit of the Tao-te ching* (NY: Bell Tower, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> Arthur Waley has conveniently collected these stories (*Chuang Tzu* 13/68-74, 14/35, 74-78, etc.) in *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (1939) (CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), pp. 14-19.

does not repeat itself; it rhymes.<sup>47</sup> Our kicking is the way to re-freshening our now that kicks. Thought experiment keeps going and we will later throw away most of it. For Kierkegaard, our true teacher is the dead one. We add, she is the teacher of the past who passes on before our present.

This is the way our life advances, the *modus operandi* of relativism, a dynamite exploding/pulverizing its surrounding as it presses ahead, building senseless ladders to explode them, and those pieces are bits of dynamite themselves to continue exploding. No wonder innovative writings are never a system, such as Socrates' early dialogues, Pascal's *Pensees*, Buber's *I and Thou*, with the protesting forwarding spirit of relativism. These writings are bits imploding each into the other to explode forward all over; they are systematic, never a system.

The *Tao Te Ching* builds its own ladders and does its own kicking, to exercise in significant futility. "Tao tao-able is no constant Tao," it begins, and then it goes on to "tao" out such an untao-able Tao! The volume begins advertising its own senselessness, as Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* ends with it. Both self-destruct. Why bother to build a ladder and kick it? This self-inconsistency makes *Tao Te Ching* and *Tractatus* alive, fresh and controversial, demanding to be re-interpreted by every new generation.

This is the story of relativism in its serpentine way as life is lived. Relativism is the way history tells our story to shape us. We must live well to understand relativism, and relativism must be studied to understand our life and the "logic of history"—story argument—that is our life. In relativism, our story and our history cease to be irrational. Here logic ceases to straightjacket our life to death. No wonder, relativism spreads all over to silently support philosophical writings—without appearing as a definitive topic in encyclopedias, in dictionaries.

Now, relativism inevitably leads us to culture, the deposit of a community's history, and further on to inter-involvement of cultures. It is important to

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<sup>47</sup> The saying is quoted in *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2003), p. 2, to justify its "Flashback" to Allen W. Dulles' report on the occupation of Germany.

concretely demonstrate this point. We now tell a story of writing China in English.

### 3. China Written in English: Threefold Impact toward Interculture

Here are three concrete questions.<sup>48</sup> What happens when Chinese culture is considered in English? How significant is the story of China written in English? How significant is a now common English translation and understanding of Chinese culture?

China is written in English<sup>49</sup> to interculture.<sup>50</sup> We write on China in English, not in Chinese, to reveal/shape China as concrete/allusive and the West as clear/analytical. It is “argued”<sup>51</sup> here that we write about China in English (A) to self-shape, (B) other-share, and (C) inter-shape to interculture. (D) Such threefold impact cures cultural conflicts to make world concord.

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<sup>48</sup> Jörn Rüsen in “How to Overcome Ethnocentrism: Approaches to a Culture of Recognition by History in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (*Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies*, June 2004, pp. 59-74) says that history is a narrative that forms cultural identity. Agreed, history is an identity-narrative, to which we gave a rationale. Then he said such narrative [1] ossifies as a, b, c, and [2] proposes a’, b’, c’ to fix/develop into [3] a “universal history” of “(the unity of) humankind.”

Three comments are in order. [1] is a common sense writ shaped; who does not know that history coagulates into ethnocentric pride? On [2], we can go on endlessly to cite d, e, f, etc., and propose d’, e’, f’, etc. to fix them. [3] shows the Western mind; its “universal history” will jostle for supremacy with Chinese one, Japanese one, African one, etc., and ethnocentric conflicts reappear on a meta-level.

We take off in a new threefold direction. One, we show how writing in China avoids the ossification Socrates worried about and continually shapes cultural identity. Two, we positively describe the modus vivendi of concrete interculturalism, “China written in English.” Three, we propose not a “universal history” but cultural inter-learning, inter-shaping, and inter-enriching, i.e., “world interculturalism.”

<sup>49</sup> I discarded “sinography” because of its technical ring, quite un-Chinese and even un-English.

<sup>50</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Tenth Edition, 1993), p. 609, has “interculture,” one word. To my knowledge, no other dictionary (not even OED) has it.

<sup>51</sup> “Argue” is put in quotes, for Chinese writers seldom argue deductively; this essay must “argue” in ways palatable to both Chinese and Western readers. We here performatively “argue” for intercultural humanity.

### A. Writing to Self-Shape

To de-scribe, i.e., write-down, objectifies. Writing [a] externalizes oneself to [b] bounce itself against the theme beyond self, and [c] project—throw-out beyond—such internal bouncing onto paper beyond/before oneself. Writing is then a going-beyond tripled, going beyond itself to self-externalize to self-communicate.

Writing thus prevents self-dissipation here now, by representing us, distancing us to confront us, for us to re-experience ourselves to understand—stand under—ourselves, undergo ourselves, and realize ourselves anew. Such realization, showing, and revealing of/to ourselves shapes us human,<sup>52</sup> in Socratic self-reflection. We are grateful that Plato de-scribed Socrates, shaped Socrates as one who urged us to self-reflect to shape ourselves. Writing shows the writer, thereby reveals to shape the writer as human.

“What do I do to own myself?” To write down this question answers it; my writing it down magnificently self-owns. To be self-conscious is to be uneasily beside myself; to be (conscious of) homecoming to myself self-forgets to heal self-consciousness, to be comfortably myself. Writing comes home to oneself; I forget myself when I write.

Writing about my situation [a] accepts myself to [b] unwind my jittery self; writing shapes me into myself unawares. Psychologists urge us to keep a daily journal to self-heal. Even the psychologist Freud wrote much in his neurotic days. They say he wrote despite depression. The truth is he wrote because of it to shape himself out of it.

Writing shapes me into myself independent of loss, use, worth, fame, effect, whatever is other than myself. Such writing that reveals and shapes my personal integrity is my sine qua non and my right to be alive as myself. Expressing myself in writing, talking, nodding to myself in my words, seemingly de trop,

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<sup>52</sup> Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 dramatically performed this self-real-ization as he devoted himself to writing/chiseling forth the monumental *Records of History* 史記, which solidly immortalized him throughout Chinese history!

vitality shapes myself to self-comfort. I am self-sufficed, self-pleased, for good or ill.

This is not selfishness as in the dictator's "I am the state!" Dictatorial selfishness needs his people's compliance to be fulfilled. In contrast, a Polish writer's assertion, "I am Poland," quietly says that he just rejoices in the pride of his culture where he roams unencumbered. I am deep in my culture as I write in its language revealing to me that I am myself, independent, alone and self-full in a little corner of my culture, away from limelight and pressure, and I am shaped as such.<sup>53</sup>

In my writing I rejoice in such pride of being myself, socially unbound deep in my society, free of selfishness that has to look up to others. The Pulitzer Prize-winner Eudora Welty, after her 90 odd years of writing, was described as follows:<sup>54</sup>

Welty never married, and lived almost her entire life in the family home in Jackson. She wrote and rewrote...What others called a sheltered life she called crucial to her art. "Southerners tend to live in one place where they can see whole lives unfold around them. It gives them a natural sense of the narrative, of the dramatic content of life, a form for the story comes readily to hand." Only in solitude, away from social clangs, can I observe deep and wide about life in all its details without distraction, without distortion.

Writing is my social mirror to shape invisible me. I go outside me as I write; I become my other, my writing.

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<sup>53</sup> All this I irreverently rifled from 高行健's rambling volume, 《沒有主義》(台北:聯經, 2001). The "Polish writer" appears in p. 10 as "波蘭流亡作家康布羅維奇." I arbitrarily arranged what I rummaged and added some for my pleasure, redundantly, because I was pleased, self-disappearing in the joy shared.

<sup>54</sup> This is quoted from *Newsweek* (August 6, 2001), p. 60, soon after she died happily ever after.

It is as senseless to ask why I write as asking why I want to be me.<sup>55</sup> I just want to write, as I just want to be me, as a kid just wants to dig a hole. I am my-writing as the kid is his-digging. I live on writing-all-this-down to give birth to me before me as the kid digs to give birth to himself. Not digging, he turns grouchy, “Nothing to do!” to wit, “cannot give birth to myself.” My instinct urges me to write, as the kid urges himself to dig. Excitingly, I see me “born” before me in my writing, “digging” me out.<sup>56</sup>

Writing puts me at ease, rids me of futility,<sup>57</sup> pushes me ahead, to keep me frivolously writing on. I am a Sisyphus nonchalantly rolling my own rock my pen<sup>58</sup> to keep me fit, renewing myself. God “is the poet of the world,”<sup>59</sup> for God shapes to enable poets to do as God the Poet does—to write Nature. In writing, I am what I will be.<sup>60</sup> On wings of writing I soar, with courage to be, beyond “I” as my “God beyond God.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Why can I not ask why I want to be me? To ask so I must pretend to be other than me, and painful psychosis of being beside myself erupts. My pain stops me from asking why I want to be me.

<sup>56</sup> Desiring lived/living words (*Phaedrus*, 274-275), Socrates warns us against writings to ossify us there, yet word-ossification decisively shapes. I would just keep writing to keep decisively shaping me, as Plato’s writing keeps spreading Socrates’ anti-writing.

<sup>57</sup> I feel no vanity of possible fame or futility of being rejected by the public or publisher. Confucius said (1/1), “People ignoring and not irritated, isn’t it so princely of a person?”

<sup>58</sup> Chinese proverb says that brushes are heavier than hoes that cultivate the land, for obviously the brushes cultivate writers who are more strenuous to shape than land.

<sup>59</sup> Alfred North Whitehead said, God “is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness.” (*Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition, NY: Free Press, 1978, p. 346)

<sup>60</sup> This is a shotgun marriage of two readings of God’s name in Exodus 3:14, “I-am-what-I-am” and “I-will-be-what-I-will-be,” to enable Paul to say, “By God’s grace I am what I am,” which means three things. [a] It is the Other Beyond, God, who enabled Paul to be “I am what I am.” [b] Paul said so in I Corinthians 15 (v. 10) on the “resurrection” of the past, the status quo, beyond itself. [c] Paul wrote it down as the Exodus-writer(s) did.

<sup>61</sup> “God beyond God” is Paul Tillich’s provocative phrase that concludes his *Courage to Be* (1951).

## B. Writing to Other-Share

Writing assumes culture/sociality. Writing is in a language I learn, and language and learning are social/cultural. In this context, importantly, my writing shapes and pushes me out as my other,<sup>62</sup> to other-share. Six points below explicate this important truth.

One, self-pride in writing is not self-glorying. The Carnegie Hall may memorialize Mr. Carnegie, yet Kant may have simply wanted to share what he had found. Writing shows my simple joy of sharing, “Hey, look what I’ve found!” In writing, sharing a joy of truth-discovery spontaneously takes place, not out of the need for self-enhancement.

Two, the writer naturally disappears in writing, in enjoyment together. “The more, the merrier,” says the writer and turns invisible. “O, for the word-forgotten one to word with!” wrote Chuang Tzu the self-forgotten one.<sup>63</sup>

Three, as my meditation on paper spreads to my alter egos, I disappear in my ideas beyond me to reach the society, even beyond my death. Ideas enter me to expand through me, and I am nowhere, fulfilled beyond me.

This sharing-without-sharing happened in Kao Hsing-chien’s 高行健 solitary nonchalance in an obscure corner of his society, delightfully echoing Chuang Tzu’s and mine. We three would look at one another, find nothing to oppose the heart of our minds, and part our ways. We are with one another without being with one another.<sup>64</sup> Friendship simply flows with insipid water.

Four, oddly, Kao’s obscure corner in Paris is now a storm center. He is the first writer in China to win the 2000 Nobel Prize in Literature. Being oneself, incorrigibly Chinese, merges into and with sharing oneself with non-Chinese cultures.

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<sup>62</sup> This way of taking “writing” turns Paul Ricoeur’s scholastic *Oneself as Another* (The University of Chicago Press, 1992) into a social dynamic.

<sup>63</sup> This sigh concludes his Chapter Twenty-Six significantly titled “Outside Things 外物.”

<sup>64</sup> *Chuang Tzu* 6/45-47, 61.

Five, as I meditate on ideas and write them out, I rank as a god in literature; I am what I am beyond me, disappeared as a god beyond god. Emerson writes,<sup>65</sup>

The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher world. St. Augustine described the nature of God as a circle whose centre was everywhere, and its circumference nowhere.... Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen in mid-noon ...

“Without end” ciphers the beyond as “every end a beginning” does myself writing. The circle’s center everywhere is “I” as its circumference nowhere is I beyond me. I am the Beyond, in me, writing. No wonder I am happy with flying birds above that hoard nothing, in songs of inter-thriving life that pulsate this world. “Those who hear not the music think the dancer mad”; I am madly writing/dancing my own music to disappear into a community beyond me. I am happy beyond joy and sorrow! “Ultimate joy, no joy,” chimes in Chuang Tzu (18/11).

Six, the “beyond” here ciphers intercultural. Writing China in English reveals such peculiarities of China as story-notions and the Yin-Yang of negating affirmation. These features would not have been noticed/clarified, and the Chinese writers would have kept on writing blissfully, routinely, were it not for English-writing on Chinese spontaneous writing. At the same time, the English thought-world is thereby revealed, affirmed, and shaped as how analytically lucid it is in its very revealing of the Chinese thought-world.<sup>66</sup> The twofold intercultural is achieved in China written in English.

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<sup>65</sup> *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (NY: Modern Library, 2000), p. 252.

<sup>66</sup> *My On Chinese Body Thinking: A Cultural Hermeneutic* (Brill, 1997), executed this China-West mutuality of inter-explication.



### C. Writing China in English: to Inter-Shape

We now concretely execute how the West reveals/shapes China to reveal/shape the West in turn. Writing exhibits a language to express a life-style, a culture. The English language with its specific parts of speech gazes to clarify/objectify/analyze/survey. The Chinese have no marked parts of speech to “indirect”<sup>67</sup> /implicate/intimate/wink.<sup>68</sup> The West analytically notes that all writing objectifies, Chinese writing fascinates to indirect, and all this reveals the West to confirm its analytical sensitivity. Take our common human theme, romantic love.

In 1916, six girls of rural Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, placed their letter, signed with six names and addresses, in a bottle in the Susquehanna River, saying,

We are all good looking and industrious young women, but the boys of our town are too slow. We want husbands. They must be good to look at and strictly temperate and above all they must not be slow.... Now if you mean business please write, finder of this bottle, and we will be glad to tell of our abilities and exchange photographs.

Happy conjugal endings ensued.<sup>69</sup>

In ancient China, the following “animated pastiche of a lovely rustic seducement” was recorded in the timeless *Classic of Poetry* 詩經.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Some Western writers did use indirection but they are atypical. Kierkegaard noticed/practiced indirection and was taken as an “odd ball” in the West, while Chinese writers spontaneously do so. See my *On Metaphoring: A Cultural Hermeneutic*, op. cit., p. 666 (Index on “indirection”).

<sup>68</sup> Complete clinical nakedness is a bore, while nudity is revealed through clothes-covering, indirectly.

<sup>69</sup> *Letters to the Editor: Two Hundred Years in the Life of an American Town*, edited by Gerard Stropnick, Tom Byrn, James Goode, and Jerry Matheny (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998), p. 181.

<sup>70</sup> Both the description and the translation are Wai-lim Yip’s (葉威廉) in *Chinese Poetry: An Anthology of Major Modes and Genres* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 36-37. The poem is titled 〈野有死鹿 [actually 鹿 with 囿 under it]〉. I changed his “seduce” to “solicit (誘).”

In the wilds, a dead doe./ White reeds to wrap it./ A girl, spring-touched:/ A fine man to solicit her./ In the woods, bushes./ In the wilds, a dead deer./ White reeds in bundles./ A girl like jade./ Slowly. Take it easy/ Don't feel my sash!/ Don't make the dog bark!

So the “eternal battles of the sexes” are fought stealthily in China and assertively in America even in the Victorian 1910s, though both slyly/delightfully, as two languages wonderfully cut these different styles of different cultures.

Translation into English of the Chinese originals reveals/shapes the differences of two language-worlds. Rendering Chinese sentences into English refreshingly defines (this is good) and unexpectedly delimits (this is bad) Chinese sensibility. Comparing Chinese originals with their English renderings edifies both Chinese and English readers.

Tilted toward Chinese language-freedom, unwittingly benefiting from “restrictive” “tyrannical framing” of English language, bicultural poet Wai-lim Yip sighed,<sup>71</sup>

I must consider myself fortunate to live [in] a time when both poets and philosophers in the West have already begun to question the framing of language, echoing...the ancient Taoist critique of the restrictive and distorting reconsiderations of language and power, both aesthetically and politically. When Heidegger warns us that any dialogue using Indo-European languages to discuss the spirit of East-Asian poetry will risk destroying the possibility of accurately saying what the dialogue is about, he is sensing the danger of language as ...trapping experience within a privileged subjectivity.<sup>72</sup> When William Carlos Williams writes “unless there is / a new mind there cannot be a new / line,” he also means “unless there is / a new line there cannot be a new / mind.”

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>72</sup> Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, tr. by Peter D. Hertz (NY: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 4-5.

Here in a single involved breath, Yip unwittingly confessed to having recognized in Chinese spontaneity a free breathing room for expressivity, thanks to the liberating inter-influences of two languages and modes of thinking. Yip may not have realized that Western clarity pinches Chinese sensibility to reveal the peculiarities of the West and of China, and the “distortion” enriches the West and China beyond their original features.

We note that, e.g., the English mind hesitates at a simple Chinese phrase “松風 pine wind.” Is it wind blowing through the pines, pine branches swaying in the wind, pine-scented wind, pines in the wind, wind in the pines, or all of these, or none, or something else?<sup>73</sup> China would respond, “I didn’t know all that; but do we have to choose from these alternatives?”<sup>74</sup> This response jolts the West to enter and savor the pre-reflective “pine-wind milieu,” as China confesses to being jolted to realizing various connotations in its simple phrase roaming in and out of fuzzy borders of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Syntactic ambiguity signals freedom to a poetic overtone. Yip writes,<sup>75</sup>

The words in a Chinese poem...have a loose relationship with readers, who remain in a sort of middle ground between engaging with them ([in] predicative connections [for] relationships...among the words) and disengaging from them (refraining from doing so, [for]... non-interference). Therefore, the asyntactical and paratactical structures in Chinese poetry promote a... prepredicative condition wherein words, like objects (often in a... montage)..., are free from predetermined relationships and single meanings... to readers in an open space. Within this space, and with the poet stepping aside, ... they can move freely and approach the words from [various] vantage points [for] different perceptions of the same moment. They have a cinematic visuality... at the threshold of many possible meanings.

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<sup>73</sup> 葉威廉著,〈中國古典詩中的傳釋活動〉,《聯合文學》(台北:聯經,1985年6月),pp. 168-181.

<sup>74</sup> A Chinese reader of Mencius would also respond with similar disbelief to I. A. Richards’s “experiment in multiple definition” in *Mencius on the Mind* (1932).

<sup>75</sup> Yip, *Chinese Poetry*, op. cit.

We now choose the commonest of expressions to show the Chinese peculiarities.<sup>76</sup> Here are two sorts of Chinese expressions, story-notions, and negating to affirm, all revealed by English sensibility.

Here are two common phrasal story-notions. First, Mencius' "pull seedlings, help growing" (2A2) distills his exemplum of a simpleton farmer who lovingly "pulled seedlings" to "help them grow," to kill them. This sentiment is expressible in "doing too much for its good," "the futility of over-helping," but none is as concrete, compact, and compelling as this four-character phrase.

Another example is also a common phrase, "push, knock."<sup>77</sup> It describes how Chia Tao 賈島 on horseback bumped into an illustrious writer Han Yü 韓愈, while wavering between "a monk pushes the moon-lit door" and "knocks."<sup>78</sup> Impressed, Han Yü decided on "knock." This phrase, "push, knock," reminds us of the story for our "to polish what we say," "select mot juste."

Life-compelling, stories capture the breeze of life un-trap-able in a conceptual box. Some exempla are concrete beyond neat conceptual packaging; others are beyond capsuling even in gnomic phrases.

Here are two stories packaged in gnomic phrases but beyond capturing in a box of logic, "Uncle Fort lost a horse" and "morning, three, evening, four."

First, consider "Uncle Fort lost a horse."<sup>79</sup> An Uncle at the frontier Fort once lost his horse. Condoled, he said, "How could this make no weal?"<sup>80</sup> The horse came back with a noble steed. Cheered, he said, "How could this make no woe?" Then, his son rode horseback, fell, and broke his leg. Consoled, he said,

<sup>76</sup> Chow and Yu have examples to show how Chinese grammar-ambiguity enables. Chow Tse-tsung ed., *Wen-lin: Studies in the Chinese Humanities* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Pauline Yu, et al., eds., *Ways with Words: Writing about Reading Texts from Early China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000). The English essays there by mostly English writers are on diverse readings of identical texts, perhaps unaware that their English lenses on an identical Chinese text reveal their diversity. They help us to see English impacts on Chinese understanding.

<sup>77</sup> The phrase "推敲" sums up a story in 〈賈忤旨〉 in 《鑑誠錄》.

<sup>78</sup> 僧推月下門 or 僧敲.

<sup>79</sup> The story is from the 〈人間訓〉 chapter in the *Huai Nan Tzu* 淮南子.

<sup>80</sup> 此何遽不能為福乎?

“How could this make no weal?” Soon a war broke out; most village boys fought and died. His son, a cripple, was spared the fight, and survived. The story ends here. Is it a happy ending? Do we still hear our Uncle asking, “How could this make no...?”? Do we see our dear Uncle Fort firm as the fort, ever guarding life against outside annoyance, weal or woe?

This story has been taken as “Just you wait” pose, “In happiness hide woes; in woes crouches happiness”<sup>81</sup> prudence, life metamorphoses, life uncertainty, etc. What single concept can capture all such variety of sentiments in this compact story-notion?

Our next exemplum is “morning, three, evening, four.”<sup>82</sup> A Monkey Uncle offered “morning, three [nuts], evening, four” to monkeys; they were furious. “Okay, then, morning, four, evening, three,” said Uncle, and they were happy.<sup>83</sup> Does this story express “Penny wise, pound foolish”? Giving someone a stone for bread? Making a mock of someone? Being impressed with life is vicissitudes? Being fickle? Or being flexible? Is it life itself? Again, the story defies conceptualization.<sup>84</sup>

Now, here are Chuang Tzu’s two stories beyond even gnomonic-phrase packaging. One is his butterfly-dream, another bantering with a logician on a Hao-bridge.

His first story is this.<sup>85</sup>

He once dreamed to be a butterfly, awoke to deny being a butterfly, and then he was not sure. Was he “he” dreamed to be a butterfly or

<sup>81</sup> *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 58. Cf. Luke 21:28.

<sup>82</sup> This story typifies Chuang Tzu’s (2/38-39) baffling profound Chapter Two, “齊物論.” See my *Butterfly as Companion*, op. cit., pp. 127, 178, 207, 387, and 419 (note 48).

<sup>83</sup> Rather than “Smoking is hazardous in ways A, B, C,” we can persuade, “Not-smoking is refreshing for not-A, not-B, not-C.” It is the principle of advertisement to keep our society happily on the go.

<sup>84</sup> Chuang Tzu’s explanation of “heavenly balance 天鈞” is as obscure as the story. I tried to understand it in *Butterfly*, op. cit., p. 501 (Index, “monkey”).

<sup>85</sup> I compressed this story that ends Chapter Two “齊物論.” Cf. *Butterfly*, *ibid.*, pp. 115-280, et passim.

“butterfly” dreaming to be he? He did not know, and said, “There must be a distinction; this it is that we call ‘things changing.’”

Ineffably delightful,<sup>86</sup> the story cannot even begin to sum up in a phrase. I wrote 500 pages of *The Butterfly as Companion*, and the story overflowed them.

His second story has two “stooges,” Taoist bum Chuang Tzu and brilliant logician Hui Tzu. They bantered over the Hao Bridge on why Chuang Tzu, being not minnows, could have said, “How enjoyable they are, darting back and forth!” After some playful jostling, Chuang Tzu declared, “I know it above the Hao!” As the chapter “Autumn Waters” the tale concludes, it floods over the logic-banks.

These exempla are beyond Western logic yet not arbitrary, exuding ineffable joy of life glowing larger/lustier than logic. They reflect the joys of Taoist life-paragons against solemn Confucian ones.<sup>87</sup>

It is time to take stock. We have been elucidating Chinese thinking in English. English translations let these Chinese phrasal story-notions hit us with three features of two thinking modes—[a] concrete China vs. abstract West, [b] negative-affirmative China vs. tidy West, and [c] China’s dot-pragmatics vs. the West’s orderly explanation. None of these has been noted in China or the West until we parsed China in English.

[a] Concrete China vs. abstract West: “Notions” (in China) are notables embedded in actuality; “concepts” (in the West) are ideas grasped out of actuality.<sup>88</sup> Thinking in the West flies off from concrete particulars into an abstract precision of concepts formally stipulated. Concepts stand on their feet to move on the ivory chessboard of thinking. In China, story-notions inspire thoughts inherently tied to story-actuality; they are (as “push, knock”) unintelligible without concrete stories packed in them (Chia Tao’s poem and

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<sup>86</sup> Contrast Franz Kafka’s dreary dream in *The Metamorphosis* (1915).

<sup>87</sup> Mencius’ “pulling seedlings to help growth 揠苗助長” is more Taoist than Confucian, and perhaps less joyous than Taoism. Mencius is a Taoist by default, perhaps unawares.

<sup>88</sup> See my reflections on this distinction in connection with “time” in *On the “Logic” of Togetherness: A Cultural Hermeneutic* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 349-353.

Han Yü's response). Their meanings consist in story-facts. Stories are actually concrete notions, notable "knots 結" in the actuality-"cords 繩".

The West also has stories, such as the famous "Pavlov's Dog" in a General Psychology class, but the instructor quickly leaves that Dog for the formal definition of "classical conditioning."

The instructor does not realize that the Dog-story points in a same direction as "classical conditioning" but with different meaning-contents. Dog, bell, food, and salivation are not related in meaning to stimulus and conditioning in "neutral stimulus, paired with unconditioned stimulus, to turn into conditioned one." We impose the latter as "meaning"-speculation onto the former event-sequence. Ironically, students are introduced to the abstract latter by the concrete former, only to be told to discard the former. In contrast, the Chinese people keep to a representative case as a concrete notion for generalization, as a "knot 結" of an actuality-"cord 繩."<sup>89</sup>

The contrast thus appears in the different usage of "exemplum." Exemplum in the West is an illustration as dispensable appendage to an abstract thesis<sup>90</sup>; "conditioning" stands by itself and Pavlov's Dog is just its decorative picture. In contrast, Chinese story-notions collapse when abstracted from the exempla they point to; a gnomic phrase graphically brings out an intention of its exemplum, senseless without it. On hearing a story-notion, Chinese eyes are glued to its concrete exemplum, which is the notion, an essential notable to "knot" the "cord" of actuality as no abstract concept can.

What is the "cash value" of concrete story-notions? "Deliberation" is trite; "push, knock" vividly depicts the perplexity of that monk trying to "push or knock" on the moonlit door. Compact illumination of the story-notions is beyond abstract clarity of concepts. The entire philosophical Taoism is made of exempla beyond concepts (Uncle Fort lost horse, happy monkeys at "morning, four, evening, three") and exempla beyond phrasing (butterfly dream, just knowing minnows self-enjoying).

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 349-360 has Chinese generalization of concrete particulars.

<sup>90</sup> The entry on "exemplum" in *The Oxford English Dictionary* has good explanations of this sentiment.

Exempla of such sorts reflect life larger/fuller/livelier than logic. They are Tillich's "symbols" that participate in the situation they point to, and grow and die with it. They are Polanyi's "metaphors" that symbolize the situation and impress it deeply on us.<sup>91</sup> Concrete exempla, in story-notions, burn into us to make us understand; now we know how with those notions to think in concrete actuality beyond abstract thinking. Chinese thinking goes in this actual story-notional way—so writes the West.

[b] Negative-affirmative China vs. tidy West: Negation in China strongly affirms as hollows in a bamboo strengthen it, as "A is not non-A"<sup>92</sup> vitalizes "A is A." Chinese thinking de-fines a notion with a story that de-scribes the situation, where "de-" is a negative performance. The notion embodies a story, to "ex"-press, "de"-fine actuality whose negative confirmation "de-" and "ex-" are.

Far from being just occasional, eight examples below reveal how integral/pervasive negation is in Chinese writing. They exemplify the Yin-Yang cosmic principle that begins with the negative Yin and continues on, traditionally dubbed "internecine, inter-nascent."<sup>93</sup> It is negation tripled. One, Yin and Yang inter-negate while, two, they negate their inter-negations to result in inter-birthing, and then, three, both negations double up into a Yang unity that negates these negations. Here are eight examples Western analysis reveals.

One, Confucius' *Analects* opens with three negative exclamations: "To do A, isn't it such a pleasure?! To do B, isn't it such a delight?! Not known<sup>94</sup> and not vexed, isn't it such a princely man?!" Such negative exclamations, tripled, are the strongest affirmations ever.

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (Harper, 1957); Michael Polanyi & Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago University Press, 1975), pp. 66-81.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. "不得不," "無非," and Japanese "しなければならない."

<sup>93</sup> 相剋相生.

<sup>94</sup> "Not know" scrapes us badly as Jesus' "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23).



Two, the epithet, “princely man 君子,” a person (morally) fit-to rule, is yearned after, never claimed. Confucius and Mencius explicitly denied that they were sages.<sup>95</sup>

Kung-sun Ch’ou [said],

“Tsai Wo and Tzu-lung excelled in rhetoric; Jan Niu, Min Tzu and Yen Hui excelled in the exposition of virtuous conduct. Confucius excelled in both and yet he said, ‘I am not versed in rhetoric.’ In that case you, Master [Mencius], must already be a sage.” “O, what word is this! Tzu-kung once asked Confucius, ‘Are you, Master, a sage?’ Confucius replied, ‘I have not succeeded in becoming a sage. I simply never tire of learning nor weary of teaching.’ Tzu-kung said, ‘Not to tire of learning is wisdom; not to weary of teaching is benevolence. You must be a sage to be both wise and benevolent.’ A sage is something even Confucius did not claim to be. What word [of yours] is this!”

The “sage” was often conferred unexpectedly by others later, as Confucius was.<sup>96</sup> The epithets, “sage” and “princely man,” are self-nugatory.

Three, Mencius often clinches his long exhortations to rulers with a negative conclusion, “Doing A, B, and C to care for your people and not being a princely ruler 王, never has such a thing happened in history!”<sup>97</sup>

Four, as with the epithet, the Princely Man, Mencius’ “pulling seedlings, helping grow”<sup>98</sup> seems affirmative—“help” and “growth” are affirmatives—until we look. We realize that it is a negative expression affirming things ineffably positive, which is only negatively expressible in a positive-seeming form that I must not interfere with growth, for it is tacit and unbeknown. Similarly,

<sup>95</sup> This is *Mencius* 2A2 in D. C. Lau’s translation (slightly modified), *Mencius: Volume One* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984), p. 59. Cf. *Analects* 7/3, 12/3.

<sup>96</sup> It was recorded in the *Analects* 7/26, 33, 34. See also 1/1.

<sup>97</sup> *Mencius*, 1A3, 1A7, 1B4, 2A5, 6B4, et passim.

<sup>98</sup> 揠苗助長, or just 助長. Significantly, the phrase appears within Confucianism that stresses education, which perhaps should not mean to “draw out,” e-duco.

Confucius simply raises “one” for the students to return with “three”; he never “helped” or “pulled” them.

Five, Mencius urges rulers to extend their royal innate “heart that cannot bear people (in pain)” to “governance that cannot bear people (in pain).” No stronger persuasion can be found in history than such an “unbearably” compassionate wording. Passionate negation strongly affirms.<sup>99</sup>

Six, “cannot ‘stop’ (不得已)” and “cannot ‘not’ (不得不)” describe both our unstoppable spontaneity, “cannot help but,” and natural inevitability, “cannot but be.” Taoists harmonize these two “inevitabilities” that negatively express positivity in nature.

Seven, “non-doing 無為” is not not-doing 不為 but a robust doing loved by Confucians and Taoists alike; sensitively refraining from “much ado about nothing” is an apt effective doing. “Rather stay put than move”<sup>100</sup> describes Chinese deliberation. Beware George Bush on 9/11!

Eight, few “negations” are more striking than philosophical Taoism. Vigorously opposing Confucius, Chuang Tzu the Taoist smilingly put his Taoist ideals in Confucius’ mouth<sup>101</sup> who renovated the tradition by venerating it. Taoism opposes the tradition to become a major tradition, as Confucius with later commentators claim to follow the tradition (as A) to “develop” the tradition in their respective ways (as non-As). Here is an elusive revolution, the negative positivized, in a typical Chinese Yin-Yang way, which the West’s analytical sensitivity reveals.

[c] Chinese dot-pragmatics vs. Western orderly explanation: Western interpreters notice that the Chinese people read the passages not by objective

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<sup>99</sup> *Mencius* 2A6, 4A1. Here as elsewhere, we see that the traditional Chinese ideal of government is not the legal democratic control on popular welfare (positive) but a “sage rule” in “unbearable compassion” (negative) with historical nostalgia (another negative). The rule manifests the Principle fanned by a lack of ideal political events. Chinese sociopolitical history is anti-sagely to negatively provoke sagely ideals.

<sup>100</sup> 一動不如一靜.

<sup>101</sup> On Chuang Tzu’s various uses of “Confucius,” see *Butterfly*, op. cit., p. 400 (long Note 10).

parsing<sup>102</sup> but by memorizing/chanting them in daily chores, where their “meanings come.”

Western culture goes after explicit/exhaustive/logically tight explication. Chinese thinking sits back, walks around, murmurs meditatively, lets the stuff sink in, and then jots down the harvest in analects/journals. Western sensitivity sees China’s pragmatics.

A terse essay pulsates with the rhythm of actuality to form a musical painting of daily struggling experience. Following it follows actuality; Chinese writing weaves-under history<sup>103</sup> as readers write on such experiential followings in journals. Then, after all this, the original dots still remain<sup>104</sup> a standing invitation to another reader to live with them and, in that new reader’s manner, to experience another tapestry, a fresh meaning-nexus. The original essay “raises one” for us variously to “return” with “two, three, ten.”<sup>105</sup> These under-weavings of reflective praxis are jotted down into a “tradition of commentaries.”

Such Chinese way of reading answers Nietzsche who lamented, “That for which we find words is something already dead in ...speaking.”<sup>106</sup> These Chinese

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<sup>102</sup> Our above sympathetic parsing was woven with dots of commonest Chinese phrases. This is dot-pragmatics of China informed by sensitive analysis of the West.

<sup>103</sup> “Subtle” is sub+tele, under-woven web. This is the creative Gestalt-experience of “novelty synthesis” noted in A.III., *On Metaphoring* (Brill, 2001). It is Chinese hermeneutics.

<sup>104</sup> This is how distinct Chinese culture is—it remains dotted while Greek, Indian, Arabic, Jewish cultures have scholastic ratiocination besides dot-sayings. Chu Hsi, say, is reputed to be a system-builder, a Chinese Aristotle, and from his scattered sayings people today pick bits and pull them together into “a system” for him. (See Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, Oxford University Press, 2000, Yung Sik Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*, American Philosophical Society, 2000). And yet Chu left only scattered analects. What “system” is it? How are we to know what his “system” is, if he wrote none? Does he our teacher need our help? Would “systems” others built for him hurt his “system”? These queries show that Chinese dot-sayings remain dots, not arbitrary or logical/analytical but coherent.

<sup>105</sup> *Analects* 5/9, 7/8. Such blossoming has beautifully occurred in 1/15, described in *On Chinese Body Thinking: A Cultural Hermeneutic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 56-57.

<sup>106</sup> Socrates preferred speech to writing (*Phaedrus*). Schopenhauer said, “Thoughts reduced to paper are generally nothing more than the footprints of a man walking in the sand. It is true that we see the path he has taken; but to know what he saw on the way, we must use our own eyes.” (quoted, “Introduction,” G. P. Baker & P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning: An Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*, vol. 1, University of Chicago, 1980) Chuang Tzu’s Wheelwright (13/68-74) announced that ancient

dot-sayings live on in a reader until one day they suddenly configure into a tapestry of meaning-Gestalt, while the dots remain dots waiting for another new configuring, then another. Dot-sayings thus originate writings anew, ever under way toward fresh insights. Dotted renews re-experiencing as written; it is a showing in writing, cognition re-cognizes as generations regenerate. Chinese writings are such free collections and configurations of live dot-sayings and their re-experiences jotted down. Thus Nietzsche is answered, in this writing-anew-alive to dot-metaphor into a tapestry; it is the “Chinese tradition” of life-hermeneutics, lived “tapestries” living on in history.

Here are two examples negatively to show how no Chinese classic can work experiential wonders of readers-shaping/sharing without going through this hermeneutic circle. The first example is Fingarette, the second is I. A. Richards.

Fingarette’s *Confucius*<sup>107</sup> is filled with breathtaking insights on the “authentic core” of the *Analects*, yet the Chinese reader would feel the volume somehow non-Chinese; its tapestry seems woven by an alien thread, analytical reductionism, thus. “She is silent about it” can mean “It’s not in her” as he took it, or “She assumes it.” Emotion-charged Psalms have few emotive words, nor do the Gusii tribe.<sup>108</sup> To see if silence means absence or assumption, we must look into the context and read commentaries.

Fingarette reads no “later additions” in the *Analects*—Mencius, Chu Hsi, Wang Yang-ming, etc. He just decided silence to mean absence, and reduced

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writings are scum. Huston Smith says orality gives memory, vitality, and poetic rhythm/flexibility of the conversation-tradition to stress things important. Letters rob us of them all. (*The World’s Religions*, Harper, 1991, pp. 368-370) Nietzsche’s epithet is in *The Twilight of the Idols* quoted in Harold Bloom’s *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (NY: Riverhead Books, 1998), pp. 715, 740-741. For Bloom, Nietzsche captured Shakespeare’s essence in Hamlet, that knowledge is lethargy to action, and words so creates the self as to kill action and the self. Bloom claims that Hamlet’s acting-in-theater resurrects death-of-action in thinking-speaking (743). Bloom speculated (what else?) that since English is the world language today, Shakespeare as the best/central of English is the universal author unmatched (718). The Chinese tradition responds as above to such Western self-conscious pride in intercultural hermeneutics and writing China in English.

<sup>107</sup> Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (Harper: San Francisco, 1972).

<sup>108</sup> R. A. Shweder & R. A. LeVine eds., *Culture Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 82-83.

warm li-rite to social convention with an inexplicable “magic” to draw people (chs. 1, 5). Confucius’ respect of history (a matrix of desirables) is a “strategic maneuver” to sway people to his local Lu culture (ch. 4). Tao is a “social convention” to shape humanity, minus the vast Heaven-earth context (ch. 2); jen-personality is outer response to interhuman sociality, minus unperturbed personal integrity. Private-personal distinction disappears in an inner-outer separation (ch. 3). The book runs logically surgically one-dimensional.

We feel similarly with another classic, Richards’ *Mencius on the Mind*.<sup>109</sup> He cited all logically possible readings of the *Mencius* 4B26 and 30 other citations, then scrutinized each reading, without noting the “possibilities” that the Chinese interpretive tradition cuts, and why. His analytical “experiment” and “scrutiny” are Western, for Chinese people do not experiment on logically possible meanings in a passage; they just live it to taste some of its implications.

In short, neither Fingarette nor Richards noted that what the Chinese texts mean for Anglo-Europeans differs from what the texts mean for the Chinese. Neither of them did cultural hermeneutics. The texts were an “exotic” mirror reflecting what/how they think. They read their ideas into the texts. Now, isn’t such Chinese discomfort due to their refusal—explicit (Fingarette) or implicit (Richards)—to blend in with the Chinese commentary tradition, hermeneutic tapestry, to “smoke/cure” (薰陶) them and ourselves into the Chinese texture of fragrance?

Hellmut Wilhelm writes on the ancient *Classic of Changes* 易經,<sup>110</sup>

[We must] keep in mind all the strata that ...make up the book. Archaic wisdom from the dawn of time, detached and systematic reflections of the Confucian school in the Chou era, pithy sayings from the heart of the people, subtle thoughts of the leading minds: all these disparate elements ...create [how] the book lives and is revered in China,

<sup>109</sup> I. A. Richards’ *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definition* (1932) (Richmond, Surrey, England: Curzon Press 1996).

<sup>110</sup> Hellmut and Richard Wilhelm, *Understanding the I Ching* (Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 51. Fingarette and Richards sadly missed this point when they studied Confucius and Mencius.

and ...we must not neglect the later strata either. In these, many of the treasures of the very earliest origins are brought to light, treasures that were up to then hidden in the depths of the book ...[W]e shall follow the lines back from the later to the earlier elements, in the hope that from the study of the living development of the book itself we may also derive insight into its meaning.

We can say of a Chinese classic, "We may interpret it as we will, but the way a classic has been read and lived across the centuries is an authentic part of its nature."<sup>111</sup> To say so amounts to a hermeneutic circle: To interpret Confucius, we must read the interpretive tradition; to grasp the tradition we must read Confucius. We shuttle between two poles, Confucius and tradition, to weave out a Chinese interpretive tapestry that is Confucius, whose weaving shuttle is our living in Confucius. This is the Chinese way of reading/understanding.

Mind you, Fingarette and Richards are not "wrong" but different, foreign to the Chinese tapestry. They stimulate renovation,<sup>112</sup> by showing/shaping Chinese manner of thinking in contrast to their non-Chinese style/atmosphere/approach. Western exegesis exudes unawares the venerable Anglo-analytical tradition. No Chinese thinker would approach the text, pose questions, solve them, explore, and deny other interpretations—that way. Intercultural hermeneutics thus enriches the "Confucius"-tradition, as we see this Western flavor as distinct from the Chinese.

One thing must be noted here, then. We think we are a clean slate on which to objectively write objects, as our direction and way of research ("writing") reveal our bent, our assumptions. Not to realize so is one thing; refusing to admit so is another. Meeting the Chinese bent that the West reveals also reveals the

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<sup>111</sup> Robert M. Adams said of More's *Utopia*, "We may interpret it as we will, but the way a book like *Utopia* has been read and lived across the centuries is an authentic part of its nature." (*A Norton Critical Edition: Sir Thomas More: UTOPIA*, tr. & ed. by Robert M. Adams, NY: W. W. Norton, 1992, pp. viii-ix) Adams did not say, however, that, therefore, to read *Utopia* we must read how "it has been read and lived across the centuries."

<sup>112</sup> H. G. Creel exclaimed, "In the fifty years in which I have been studying Confucius, I cannot recall that I have found the work of another scholar more stimulating than that of Professor Fingarette." (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, quoted in *Confucius*, back cover).

West. As the West admits to weaving its analytical tapestry,<sup>113</sup> a healthier intercultural hermeneutics would emerge to enrich both the Western and the Chinese interpretive communities.

#### **D. Inter-Writing to Inter-Culture**

I am deeply grateful for an anonymous reviewer's comment that goes as follows.

I think that, in general, this paper is challenging and interesting. And, it should be especially challenging and interesting to everyone involved in cross-cultural studies because the paper explores how people bring their language, culture and thinking to bear when they read texts from another culture, when they translate and write about texts from another culture. In other words, the author reveals the reader's own blind spots and false expectations when meeting foreign texts, but also how cross-cultural reading and interpretation creates something new for both sides. I think some readers would try to resist this argument and claim deeper cross-cultural understanding is possible, or say it is trivial. But, I think the author presents his case strongly and vividly by presenting and discussing many actual examples.

The reviewer seems to take this paper to describe how people bring their own cultural assumptions with "false expectations" to read a "text of foreign culture," and how such cross-cultural misunderstanding brings out something new.

Actually, this paper has not explored a familiar if not "trivial" problem of if, how, or how difficult cross-cultural understanding can obtain. Instead, this paper claims that such intercultural reading, successful or not, significantly inter-reveals features of cultures involved, thereby leads to their inter-shaping and inter-enriching.

Three sections so far thus have made two points. One, writing shows to reveal/shape the writer as such; my writing-down objectifies me to make me

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<sup>113</sup> Richards did, Fingarette was silent.

another, who alone shapes me. Objectification through writing of me the writer socializes me—to show to shape me among others. Two, I write in my language to write my life-style, my culture; writing on China in English reveals China and the West to inter-show, inter-shape. Section 1 has considered the first point, Section 2 has the second, and Section 3 has concretely executed both, to show how inter-writing intercultural.

#### 4. Writing China in English Incultures toward World Concord

All this leads to a thrilling conclusion, that writing on China in English makes an impact on both cultures into an interculture toward world concord. This Section explains this world-relevant point.

Huntington<sup>114</sup> wrote that world conflicts today are cultural, at our assumptive root. They originate in felt threats of “alien” cultures “we” don’t know. We meet this challenge by writing to meet each other and share/shape. Socrates prefers conversation, and Plato writes it down in Greek for readers to cross-culturally inter-write through history.<sup>115</sup> Contacts of two languages reveal two preexisting cultures to shape, clarify, enrich, and confirm them.

How can we manage misunderstandings in our inter-writing contacts? Three answers are here. One, this question reveals “mistakes” no one purposely commits. We realize mistakes afterward; we have historical self-reflective

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<sup>114</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996). Its dated mentality of tribal clash does point at a sober world fact today.

<sup>115</sup> Chuang Tzu wrote for a word-forgotten one to word with, having written that ancient writings are scum/dross (*Chuang Tzu* 13/68-74, 26/48-49). I wrote “Learning as a Master from a Master: ‘Chuang Tzu’ in University General Education” (*Journal of Humanities East/West*, National Central University, Taiwan, vol. 18, December 1998, pp. 167-202), so that the writing-forgotten “minds” can “meet” 會意 at the writing to joyously forget the meal. T’ao Ch’ien 陶潛 confessed to such an ineffable joy, “每有會意, 便欣然忘食” in “Biography of Mr. Five Willows 五柳先生傳”.



Socratism.<sup>116</sup> Detecting mistakes, we correct them one by one, sooner or later; this process makes history. How? Two, more inter-writing dispels occasional errors by more people, more often, as more logical argument cures invalid ones and more perception corrects optical illusions. Three, now is a cross-cultural era when we can keep on cross-checking from many diverse perspectives, to cut errors as they occur.<sup>117</sup> Our critical Socratism (Marcel), cross-cultural today, makes a world history of inter-correction, and inter-writing creates a good milieu for this world history as writing changes and shapes it.

Writing changes the world by showing our situation, thereby shaping public opinion that seems powerless, until we watch history to which China appeal. People rally to authorities, not themselves, yet they affirm the historic principle of highest authority, “Heaven sees in its people seeing; heaven hears in its people hearing,” that is, the supremacy of public opinion, and the world history validates their “fatuous doctrine.” King Wen’s 文王 sagely rule was credited to attending to his people, collecting/writing their “songs” in the *Classic of Poetry* 詩經.

People’s opinion collapsed the brutal “First Eternal Emperor of Ch’in 秦始皇” in a mere 30 years. Tu Mu 杜牧 wept as he wrote that people who “dared not talk but dared fume”<sup>118</sup> toppled the almighty Dynasty. Harriet Stowe quietly wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) to hit hard the public, to end slavery. Katharine Graham, the matriarch of *Washington Post*, stirred public opinion to pull down President Nixon.<sup>119</sup> Written communication shapes the public to change the world. It is how history is made.

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<sup>116</sup> My “Existential Relativism” (Ph.D. thesis, Yale, 1965) argues at length for this point (with J. Royce).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. my *Metaphoring*, op. cit., p. 668 (index on “objectivity”).

<sup>118</sup> 不敢言而敢怒.

<sup>119</sup> See Lin Yutang’s similar provocative ideas in *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (The University of Chicago Press, 1936). This Chinese “fatuous doctrine” is recorded in *Classic of History* (書經) II. 10a and was quoted by Mencius (5A5). On the *Classic of Poetry* 詩經, see, among others, Wai-lim Yip 葉威廉 ed. & tr., *Chinese Poetry* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 31-33. Tu Mu’s 杜牧 (803-852) elegy of “Prose-poem on the Op’ang Palace (阿房宮賦)” drips bloody pathos (see 《古文觀止》 [among others, 蘇石山編著,

Communicated public opinion makes democracy. The dictator's first task after conquest is to muzzle writers who fire no shots, for writing stirs people to fire dictators. Writing reveals/expresses culture to shape it, as grammar follows writing to guide it.

If writing reveals culture to revolutionize the world, powerful indeed is writing across cultures, writing China in English, that shapes an intercultural world. Jolted by English translation to realize itself as allusive, Chinese culture can strive to clarify its thinking as the West superbly does. Jolted by revealing Chinese thinking as concrete, the West can sensitize its analytical clarity as flexuously to actuality as China does. Writing China in English inter-shapes participant cultures. Describing the Chinese thinking in English sensitivity, our writing initiates their inter-writing in appreciative intercultural revealing. It is an essential step to world self-shaping, to prescribe and produce world concord. China and the West must inter-write to inter-grasp to interculture.

Our common destiny hangs on this thread of inter-writing into West-China togetherness, where family-differences thrive in "family resemblance"<sup>120</sup> of humanity. A language reveals a life-style, a culture, to shape it. Writing shapes the writer; inter-writing inter-shapes us all in interculture. Writing-China-in-English frames China to frame the West, to shape both cultures. We have no writing-in-general; a thousand miles of interculture-walks<sup>121</sup> start at our feet,<sup>122</sup> that is, writing China in English to inter-shape, to let our Global Family thrive together today.

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高雄麗文文化公司, 1995, pp. 604-610]). On Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) see Ian Ousby, ed., *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 909-910. One full third of *Newsweek* (July 30, 2001), is on Katharine Graham whose picture is on its cover.

<sup>120</sup> This section has interculturally extended Ludwig Wittgenstein's "family resemblance." (*Philosophical Investigations*, Third Edition, tr. by G. E. M. Anscombe, NY: Macmillan, 1958, Section 67, p. 32e)

<sup>121</sup> "World walks" is in plural because interculture "double walks 兩行" (*Chuang Tzu*, 2/40).

<sup>122</sup> "A thousand miles of walk begins underfoot," said Lao Tzu in *Tao Te Ching*, 64.