

Research Notes 【研究討論】

Re-Investigating the Way : Zhu Xi's Daoxue

「道」之再探：論朱熹的道學

John H. Berthrong*

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關鍵詞：朱熹、理、氣、誠、太極、價值論

* *Professor, School of Theology, Boston University, U. S. A.*

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Abstract

This essay presents in outline of an argument for interpreting Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) mature Daoxue 道學 philosophy in terms of an architectonic of four configurative traits: form, dynamics, unification, and value. Further, it is proposed that Zhu's Daoxue ought to be considered a form of axiology in terms of contemporary comparative global philosophical dialogue. It is important to try to present Zhu's Daoxue or Teaching of the Way as a living philosophical option and not just a historical artifact; it is, as David Hall and Roger Ames have explained, a fine example of *ars contextualis* or the art of the contextual as a form of relational axiology. One of the chief examples adduced to sustain this thesis is Zhu's theory of *cheng* 誠 or self-realization. Further, there is also an extended discussion of the formative role of *li* 理 principle and *qi* 氣 vital force as critical elements of the structure of Zhu's thought.

摘要

本論文以建築構成學 (architectonic) 的角度來詮釋朱熹 (1130-1200) 道學的四個組成特色：形式 (form)、動能 (dynamics)、一體性 (unification) 和價值 (value)。此外，文中也將把朱熹的道學放在當代全球比較哲學的對話語境中，把它看成是一種「價值學」(axiology) 的形式。吾人認為，朱熹的道學或是「道」的教誨，應該被看成是實際生活方式的選項，而非僅僅是歷史的文化遺產。如同 David Hall 和 Roger Ames 兩人所解釋的，朱熹的道學是「情境化藝術」(ars contextualis) 作為關係價值論 (relational axiology) 形式的一個良好範例。這個論點可以援引朱熹關於「誠」(或是「自我實現」) 的理論做為支持。另外，文中也將延伸討論「理」和「氣」在朱熹思想中作為構成要素的關鍵性。

Apologia

This essay needs an *apologia* for its present form: it is a promissory outline argument about and analysis of the pervasive structural features of Zhu Xi's Daoxue or Teaching of the Way. I argue that Zhu's thought involves a consistent pattern of exposition that includes what I call the traits of form, dynamics, and unification, plus an axiological goal or value for the emergent person or event. Zhu's version of Song Daoxue is a form of axiology¹ with a distinctive cosmological vision attached to its claims for its preferred ethical outcomes, the ultimate values to be realized through self-cultivation. This claim about the persistent deep metaphorical architectonic of Zhu's complex discourse is part of a larger attempt to make sense of Zhu's thought in a way that puts it into dialogue with certain modern Western philosophical schools, the most germane being the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and the allied schools of American pragmatism and naturalism.² I strongly believe Zhu's vision provides a fascinating voice within the emerging 21st Century discourse of global comparative philosophy and theology.

¹ For instance, as I note n. 23 below, even the use of axiology as a descriptive of Zhu's philosophy is not beyond challenge. Shun Kwong-loi, in arguing against Zhang Dainian in "On the Idea of Axiology in Pre-Modern Chinese Philosophy," in Robin R. Wang ed., *Chinese Philosophy in an Era of Globalization* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 37-44, believes that axiology is not what the classical or even the Song philosophers had in mind in framing their philosophical debates. Nonetheless, and following Zhang Dainian and Mou Zongsan's interpretations of Zhu Xi in *Xinti yu xingti* (Mind-Heart and Nature), 3 vols. (Taipei: Chengzong shuju, 1968-69), I believe that axiology as value theory is one way to describe, albeit in Western terms, what Zhu was trying to accomplish with his *daoxue*. My thinking about the nature of axiology is indebted to the work of Robert C. Neville, *The Cosmology of Freedom* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974). Certainly by the Song revival thinking of axiology is hard to avoid when reading both the Northern and Southern Song masters.

² The plausibility of the comparison of Zhu's *daoxue*, process philosophy, pragmatism and American naturalism is defended in my forthcoming *Expanding Process: An Essay in Comparative Philosophy and Theology*. Along with an extensive chapter on Zhu's thought, there is material on the methodology of comparative philosophy and theology deemed necessary to defend the juxtaposition of philosophers and schools divided by vast cultural and temporal distances.

None of the strong warrants or extended proofs needed to sustain this argument and analysis can be produced in a short essay. For instance, I refrain from quoting extensively from Zhu's rather vast corpus; although I have mounted such a defense in previous studies.³ The only excuse I can offer is that, in later and longer studies, I hope to demonstrate this kind of architectonic analysis of the configuring traits of Zhu's Daoxue is an entirely plausible reading of Zhu's philosophical system. Of course, it is not the only plausible reading possible of Zhu's philosophy. Zhu's Daoxue is such a large mansion, with so many fascinating rooms, that imposing only one interpretive hermeneutics on his philosophy is well-nigh impossible.

I have always thought that it was a shame that Zhu was not able to follow the example of the classical master Xunzi both in terms of the content and form of Xunzi's philosophy. In content there are such fascinating similarities that are obscured by Zhu's allegiance to the hypothesis that the Mengzi is the true follower of Kongzi and that Xunzi is a failed branch of the taproot of the Confucian Way. For instance, Xunzi also had interesting reflections on the role of *li* as principle, pattern, or order in Confucian discourse. In terms of form, it is likewise a shame that Zhu Xi did not follow Xunzi's path in writing coherent essays about critical philosophical ideas and arguments. If only, for instance, Zhu Xi had written a series of extended and illuminating essays on the relationship of *li* and *qi*, of *taiji* and *xin*, the task of a contemporary aficionado of Daoxue would be so much easier. What follows is an attempt to articulate and recast Zhu's philosophic vision in a contemporary ecumenical fashion.

A Structural Analysis of Zhu Xi's Architectonic

³ See John H. Berthrong, "Glosses on Reality: Chu Hsi as Interpreted by Ch'en Ch'un," Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1979; "Master Chu's Self-Realization: The Role of *Ch'eng*," *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 43, no. 1 (January 1993), pp. 39-64; *All under Heaven: Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian Dialogue* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994); *Concerning Creativity: A Comparison of Chu Hsi, Whitehead, and Neville* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998); *Transformations of the Confucian Way* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

In a number of previous publications I argued that Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) mature Daoxue discourse has a clear architectonic structure based on a set of three constantly re-articulated themes or traits configurative for any of the myriad creatures or events of the cosmos operating on two distinct levels of cognition and interpretation (see n3 for Berthrong 1979, 1993, 1994; 1998).⁴ Borrowing both from A. N. Whitehead's analysis of how actual entities emerge as concrete realities in the cosmos and from Paul Tillich's philosophical systematic theology, I have labeled these three cosmological and axiological traits 'form,' 'dynamics,' and 'unification,' and add the autotelic value of harmonious balance as the preferred result of self-cultivation. Great philosophers often have a favorite set of expansive, even vague concepts they use to interpret reality; these terms or traits taken together are rather like lens through which the thinker sees the world.⁵ Without wanting to press the analogy too far, when lens works well we do not tend to notice them even though they frame the whole world in front of the observer. Like glasses, we look through them but have to adjust them

⁴ There are a number of fine contemporary and traditional studies of Zhu Xi's thought and I would recommend the following four books for anyone interested in further reading: Donald Munro, *Images of Human Nature: A Sung Portrait* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992); Yung Sik Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi, 1130-1220* (Philadelphia, PA: Memoires of the American Philosophical Society, 2000); Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) in English and finally Li Guangde, *Zhuzi Yulei Dachuan* [The Complete Works of Master Zhu] (Taipei: Kuangxue she yinshu yuan yin xing, 1977) for the basic works in Chinese as topically anthologized in the Qing dynasty. Yu Yingshi, *Zhu Xi's Historical World: Research on the Political Culture of Sung-era Scholar Officials* (Taipei: Yunchen Wenhua Gongsi, 2003) has also added an exhaustive and innovative magisterial study of Zhu Xi's role in the political culture of the Southern Song. Three standard studies on Zhu Xi by outstanding Chinese scholars are Qian Mu, *Zhuxi xin xuean* [A New Study of Zhu Xi], 5 vols. (Taiwan: Sanmin shuju, 1971); Chen Lai, *Zhu Xi zhexue yanjiu* [An Investigation of the Philosophy of Zhu Xi] (Taipei: Wenlu chubanshe, 1990), and Liu Shuxian, *Zhuzi zhexue sixiang de fazhan yu yuangcheng* [The Development and Completion of Zhu Xi's Thought] (Taipei: Student Book Company, 1982).

⁵ Ioan P. Couliano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, translated by Magaret Cook (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) has brilliant account of positive and negative role of conceptual lens in his study of magic in the Western Renaissance. He shows how these lenses can be ever so different depending on the historical era and can cause us to see the world, even to operate in the world in remarkable different fashions. See pp. 1-27.

from time to time to get an even better glimpse of the world around us. Sometimes philosophers are highly cognizant of the conceptual apparatus they deploy and this kind of conceptual awareness is the case for Zhu Xi. Just as we cannot think of Plato without the notion of form or Aristotle without ethical or political norms or Newton without gravity, we cannot imagine Master Zhu without, for instance, his favorite traits of *li* as principle, pattern, structure, or order and *qi* as vital force.

In the following outline I expand my catalog of Zhu Xi's three primarily cosmological traits to include the fourth axiological motif of 'peace' or 'harmony,' a harmonious value of self-cultivation.⁶ By peace or harmony I designate that part of Zhu's complex intellectual architectonic matrix that includes the trait of the axiological goal of the process of study and self-cultivation so richly discussed throughout Zhu's entire corpus. In short, Zhu always had a place for ethical outcomes in his mature Daoxue. As was the case with so many of his Song dynasty colleagues, Zhu held that the truly ultimate goal of Daoxue praxis was to become a sage or at least a *junzi* [in Du Weiming's modern translation, a profound person].⁷ My specific question then becomes, what are some of the defining axiological characteristics of the sage? At least one such autotelic trait is the notion of an achieved harmony of the mind-heart as informed by the cultivation of human nature within the dynamics of the specific allotment of *qi* or vital force as normed by *tianming* or the mandate of heaven. None of these descriptive devices has seemed strange to colleagues in the field of Zhu Xi studies, but I believe it is important for scholars of Zhu's Daoxue to pay more careful attention to the rich complexity and nuance of Zhu's philosophical presentation than has often been the case in the past. If we do not note the true pattern and complexity of Zhu's tripartite cosmological configuration of the emerging objects and events of the world and also acknowledge the special place of the axiological

⁶ I have expanded on the issue of the organizing traits or root metaphors in Berthrong 1979, 1994, and 1998a (see n. 3 above). But, I have come to believe that we must also indicate the ultimately goal of the system in order to fully understand Zhu's philosophical achievement.

⁷ Du Weiming (Tu Wei-ming), *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, Revised and Enlarged Edition, 1989).

trait of harmonious value for the emerging person, then we will simply fail to do justice to Zhu's vision of the Confucian Way as Daoxue.

Before we deal directly with Zhu's mature Daoxue, we need to clarify a preliminary comparative methodological issue concerning the use of Western labels for forms of Chinese philosophic and religious discourse. In the case of what I call Zhu Xi's mature architectonic of form, dynamic, unification, and harmonious value, this is the need via comparative philosophical theory to sort out the relevance of the typical Western genres of metaphysics, ontology, and cosmology in regards to Zhu's philosophical system. In other publications I called Zhu's architectonic a 'meta-system' because I wanted to avoid identifying Zhu's reflections with any one of the Western trinity of metaphysics, ontology, or cosmology (see n. 3 above). Notwithstanding the problem of the cross cultural application of philosophical terminology, if pressed, I would and have argued that Zhu Xi's Daoxue's architectonic is cosmological (and axiological) in sensibility—hence the often made comparison with Whitehead's process cosmology in modern Western philosophy.

Nor am I alone in my queasiness in applying these hallowed Western designators to either classical or Song Confucian discourse. For instance, David Hall and Roger Ames have recently developed a special term for what I have called a 'meta-system' by inventing the new genre of *ars contextualis* (the art of the contextual, to be defined below) in a number of their joint publications over the last two decades. If I had to make a choice in labeling Zhu's architectonic of assertive, active, and exhibitivite modalities (borrowing Buchler's theory of human query),⁸ I would opt for Hall and Ames' *ars contextualis* because it comports itself so neatly between the hallowed Western trio of ontology, cosmology, and metaphysics and yet captures a number of the salient features of the generalized Confucian worldview in its classical and post-Song forms. The trait that *ars contextualis* secures so well is the notion of relationship and situation or circum-

⁸ For Buchler's discussion of these matters, see Justus Buchler, *The Main of Light: On the Concept of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) and *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, Second Edition (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

stance that dominates Confucian discourse from Master Kong to Dai Zhen in the Qing dynasty.

Later in the essay I also cite Cheng Zhongying (Cheng Chung-ying) in order to suggest another strong rationale for adding a fourth trait to my previous portrait of Zhu Xi's mature thought. In terms of Western terminology for the designation of the fourth key trait of peace or harmony as a profoundly axiological sensibility, Whitehead yet again provides a worthy suggestion. In the concluding chapter of *Adventures of Ideas* (1933) this architectonic axiological trait is called peace and Whitehead holds that some notion of harmony as the quality of peace is essential to a civilized human life.

The notions of 'tenderness' and 'love' are too narrow, important though they be. We require the concept of some more general quality, from which 'tenderness' emerges as a specialization. We are in a way seeking for the notion of a Harmony of Harmonies, which shall bind together the other four qualities, so as to exclude from out notion of civilization the restless egoism with which they have often in fact been pursued. 'Impersonality' is too dead a notion, and 'Tenderness' too narrow. I choose the term 'Peace' for that Harmony of Harmonies which calms destructive turbulence and completes civilization.⁹

As noted below, the notion of unification, or *cheng* as authentic self-actualization within Zhu's Daoxue vision, comes close to what Whitehead sought to achieve in his evocation of peace as the Harmony of Harmonies. For the reasons adumbrated below, I decided to add this trait of harmony or value beyond the three traits of form, dynamics, and unification in order to make sense of Zhu's comprehensive project of renovating the teaching of the classical Sages. *Cheng* as self-actualization eventuates, when properly conducted, in a sense of harmony or *he* as defined in the opening section of the *Zhongyong* according to Zhu's

⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 367.

exegesis. Along with articulating a comprehensive worldview, Zhu also provided a program of personal self-cultivation with harmony as a critical specification of *cheng*.

Whitehead's attempt to articulate the notion of 'peace' in order to define the ultimate aim of civilized human life could almost be a commentary on the opening section the *Zhongyong* as translated by David Hall and Roger Ames.

The moment at which joy and anger, grief and pleasure, have yet to arise is called the nascent equilibrium (*zhong*); once the emotions have arisen, that they are all brought into proper focus (*zhong*) is called harmony (*he*). This notion of equilibrium and focus (*zhong*) is the great root of the world; harmony then is the advancing of the proper way (*dadao*) in the world. When equilibrium and focus are sustained and harmony is fully realized, the heavens and earth maintain their proper places and all things flourish in the world.¹⁰

This notion of harmony or *he* is the kind of generalization that Whitehead sought when he thought about the benefits of humane flourishing and called peace, the summation of human life. Hall and Ames make the added claim that harmony or peace is a necessary trait for the flourishing of the whole cosmos and ends with the linkage of heaven, earth, and humanity. Moreover, both Whitehead's peace and harmony are the outcome of an arduous path of self-cultivation.

The reason that I expanded my articulation of Zhu's *ars contextualis* is that his architectonic remains incomplete if we do not pose a question that always needs to be asked about a project such as Zhu Xi frames in his mature Daoxue, namely, what is the final aim, goal, or value of the exercise? Zhu is relentless in explaining what the proper path of Daoxue entails, but he is also equally clear that there is a reason for all this immense effort on the part of the student. This is, of course, the desire to achieve the qualities of a sage, or if not a sage, cer-

¹⁰ David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Focusing on the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 89-90.

tainly to strive to become a *junzi*. But even if we accept that Zhu Xi, and here Zhu simply functions as a marker for many Northern and Southern Song Confucians, sought to achieve sage wisdom or become a profound person, we ask yet again, to what ultimate end does such a search lead? What is the nature of this final goal? The answer, at least for Zhu, is finally a vision of the harmony or peace as outlined in the opening stanzas of the *Zhongyong*. All the studious efforts at self-cultivation come to naught if there is lack of personal harmony; and, of course, this personal harmony must be inextricably interconnected to all the other levels of human intercourse with family, friends, civil society, and indeed the entire cosmos. As Kongzi taught, this is a heavy burden but a burden that brings its own reward, the sense of harmony or peace as the outcome of human effort.

What has become more and more clear to me is that Zhu Xi's mature Daoxue as a profoundly axiological *ars contextualis* organically fuses four domains of Western philosophy into one architectonic that overlaps the philosophical domains accounted for by the Western philosophic disciplines of metaphysics, ontology, cosmology, and social ethics or value theory qua axiology. What is so historically important about Zhu Xi is that, by paying attention to the worldview of his *ars contextualis*, we can see quite clearly how he goes about constructing, explaining, and defending his vision of how the world of the ten thousand things and events takes shapes and what the role of the human person is within the Dao of Heaven, Earth and Humanity. There is nothing simple about any of this; nor, was Zhu successful in lacing together all the diverse and divergent ends his brilliant foray into metasystematic discourse provoked.¹¹ Such ex-

¹¹ Tillman, *Chu's Ascendancy* (1992), has provided us with a brilliant discussion of how Zhu Xi engaged in dialogue with his friends, only to lose most of his best critics in his 50s. Tillman asks us to wonder what Zhu's thought would have been like if he had been able to continue with his philosophic colleagues who were as astute as he was. One can catch a glimpse of what might have been possible by reviewing the profound debates about Zhu's philosophy as carried out by Korean scholars during the justly famous Four-Seven Debate in the Choson dynasty (see Berthrong *Transformations*, 1998). See also Michael Kalton ed., *The Four-Seven Debate: An Annotated Translation of the Most Famous Controversy in Korean Neo-Confucian Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994); Edward Y. J. Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi T'oegye and Yi Yulgok: A Reappraisal of the "Four-Seven Thesis" and Its*

pansive articulation of a comprehensive architectonic moves to the edges of human intelligibility; such grand visions are always contested. The fate of Zhu's project demonstrates the struggle to explain the role and destiny of the human person within the Dao. Later scholars have praised Zhu; others have damned him, but no one overlooks Zhu. Zhu is one of those rare philosophers who actually gave voice to a major worldview, and in trying to understand the history of the development of later traditional Chinese philosophy and even the modern encounter of Chinese civilization with the vast complex of contemporary Western world, he cannot be ignored in any study of Chinese thought.

Zhu Xi in Modern Confucian Philosophy

One of the reasons to expand my architectonic analysis of Zhu Xi is because of my dialogues over the last two decades about the nature of Zhu's philosophy, in person and by reading, with Mou Zongsan, Julia Ching, Cheng Zhongying, Du Weiming, Liu Shuxian, Peng Guoxiang, Wm. Theodore de Bary, Rodney Taylor, Zheng Jiadong, Robert Neville and many other colleagues. Professors Ching, Du, Cheng and Liu are important members of what is now called the New Confucian movement.¹² This group of scholars, parallel to the great Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Confucians, is attempting to restate the philosophic and religious teachings of the Confucian Way in and for the modern world. The New Confucians reject the notion that Confucianism is only of historical interest. Rather, the New Confucians argue that, when properly interpreted and transformed into a modern key, Confucian discourse continues to be of importance to globally minded intellectuals in the twenty-first century. Confucianism, the New

Practical Implications for Self-Cultivation (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), and Ro Young-chan, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi Yulgok* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

¹² See Umberto Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism: The New Confucian Movement* (Taipei, Taiwan: The Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001) and John Makeham ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Confucians hold, has something to contribute to the emergence of truly ecumenical world philosophy because of its unique set of worldviews.

Having said all of this, I need to confess that Zhu Xi is definitely not the favorite traditional philosopher for the majority of New Confucians. For example, Feng Youlan almost alone reprised Zhu to any meaningful fashion in a series of major studies in the 1930s.¹³ Other New Confucians could and did, from time to time, appreciate Zhu's grand synthesis, but it was only Feng who set about to present a modernized version of Zhu's Daoxue philosophical sensibilities. Notwithstanding the general New Confucian tendency to rely more on thinkers allied with Wang Yangming's *xinxue* or the Study of the Mind-Heart for the contemporary revival of Confucian discourse, Cheng Zhongying has written a number of influential articles, addressed below, attempting to defend the continuing philosophic relevance of Zhu Xi and the *lixue* or Study of Principle movement. These articles focus on the question of Zhu Xi's mature philosophical methodology and show that we cannot disconnect Zhu's philosophical methodology from his ultimate aims for humane self-realization, and we address this material at the end of this essay. Moreover, Cheng points to the fact that if we do not understand what I call the trait of peace or harmony in Zhu's intellectual edifice as expressed in his methodo-logical concerns, we miss something crucial about Zhu's thought.

The Architectonic of Zhu Xi's Vision of the Dao

Before we begin the detailed examination of Zhu Xi's architectonic traits, it is necessary to outline the basics of his architectonic meta-system as an *ars contextualis* or the art of the contextual.¹⁴ Hall and Ames suggest a metaphor of fo-

¹³ Cheng Chung-ying [Zhongying] and Nicolas Bunnin eds., *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

¹⁴ For an excellent discussion of rise of early Chinese cosmologies, see Michael J. Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000) and *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). For an equally illuminating discussion of the role of wisdom from a comparative perspective in the classical

cus and field for the emergence of the human person rather than a discrete individual settled with or surrounded by other discrete substances as the preferred Confucian vision of a moral metaphysics. Hence, a philosopher such as Zhu Xi is providing us with methodology that is ultimately contextual, a hermeneutic of the constantly changing and creative interactions of the Dao as cosmos of focus and field.

Our focus/field model [of the person] must be understood in terms of the general vision of *ars contextualis*. It is the “art of contextualization” that is most characteristic of Chinese intellectual endeavors. The variety of specific contexts defined by particular family relations or socio-political orders constitute the “fields” focused by individuals who are in turn shaped by the field of influences they focus. *Ars contextualis*, as a practical endeavor, names that particular art of contextualization which allows focal individuals to seek out viable context which they help to constitute and which in turn will partially constitute them.¹⁵

Without some basic understanding of Zhu's fundamental intellectual traits set within a cosmos articulated by an *ars contextualis*, it is impossible to comprehend his vision of harmonious value as the autotelic outcome of the unending creative process of the interaction of form, dynamics, unification, and ultimately the goal of harmonious balance. As noted before, the various expositions of Zhu's mature thought suggest the triadic traits of form, dynamics, and unification capped by the value of self-realization of harmony for the person (and then

period see Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

¹⁵ David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 273-274. See also David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987) and *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).

family, society, and indeed, the whole cosmos). Needless to say, Zhu Xi's formal philosophical vocabulary is taken from the Confucian classics as represented by the Four Books (his own epitome of the classical Confucian tradition), although there are some notable exceptions to this rule.

The most notable exception to this Confucian norm is the term *wuji* as non-ultimate, the uncontrived ultimate. As is now recognized, *wuji* is commonly recognized as of Daoist provenance.¹⁶ One certainly does not find *wuji* anywhere in the Four Books. While Zhu's terminology is drawn almost exclusively from the Confucian classics, it is often the case that these terms have mutated during their transmission from the classical age of the Warring States, Northern Song Neo-Confucian masters, and Zhu's further deployment of these terms in the Southern Song. *Wuji* was immortalized for the emerging Neo-Confucian philosophic tradition in Zhou Dunyi's 'Diagram of the Supreme Polarity'.¹⁷ Zhu Xi's ever faithful and sometimes even creative disciple Chen Chun (1159-1223) was also concerned to explain how the Uncontrived Ultimate is merely used to explicate the true meaning of the Supreme Ultimate. "*Wuji* (having no extremity) means infinity; it merely describes principle as having no shape or appearance, spatial restriction, or physical form, very much like the operation of Heaven as 'having neither sound nor smell'".¹⁸ The appeal here is to the fact that the notion of the Uncontrived Ultimate serves to clarify an important Confucian insight, and, hence, it is completely appropriate to use the term in this context (see also Chen 1986, 115-120; 188-192). Moreover, while almost all Zhu Xi's technical vocabulary is drawn from the Confucian classics, his manipulation of key terms

¹⁶ Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. 1 (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957-1962), pp. 140-150.

¹⁷ Wm. Theodore de Bary, Irene Bloom, and Richard Lufrano eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 1, Second Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999-2000), pp. 669-682. These selections on Zhou Dunyi are the work of Professor Joseph Adler.

¹⁸ Chen Chun (1159-1223), *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained (The Pei-his tzu-i) by Ch'en Ch'un (1159-1223)*, translated and edited by Wing-Tsit Chan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 116-117. See also Zhang Jiakai, *Quanshi yu Jiangou* (Beijing: Zhongguo zhaxue qingnian zueshu wenku, Renmin chubanshe, 2004) for an illuminating study of Chen's life and works.

generates new meanings to fit the novel situations devised for them by the Song Neo-Confucians.

Obviously, one cannot apply the triadic typology of form, dynamics, and unification mechanically. It is a heuristic device designed to illumine certain aspects of Zhu Xi's thought, just as is the recognition that Zhu also often frames aspects of his thought in terms of dyads, as most recently demonstrated by Donald Munro (*Images of Human Nature* 1988). All these conceptual tools help to understand the complexities of Zhu's thought. Analysis of the triad of form, dynamics, and unification is only one way of trying to get at the deep grammar of Zhu Xi's mature and always vivid vision of the Dao. There are other ways of trying to delineate Zhu's hardwires, to borrow the language of computer science, of the system. Yet Zhu is persistent enough in working his analysis in terms of form, dynamics, and unification that it is a useful heuristic device to showing some of the architecture of his mature thought.

I am deeply impressed with the thematic approach of Donald Munro's analysis in *Images of Human Nature* (1988) in terms of a symbolic analysis of Zhu Xi's texts governed by a set of finely tuned contrastive dyads. Notwithstanding Munro's exposition, I firmly believe that a creative figure such as Zhu Xi benefits from multiple modes of analysis. There is richness in Zhu's thought that cannot profitably be exhausted by only one approach. Just as the Song Masters themselves believed that there were a number of possible approaches to the interpretation of the classics, the same case can be made for the study of Zhu's Daoxue school.

Moreover, various terms (*xin* or mind-heart and *cheng* or self-realization are a prime examples) can and do play different structural roles in different areas of Zhu Xi's thought. For instance, in Zhu's moral anthropology, *xin* or mind-heart serves to unify the formal and the dynamic aspects of the emerging person because it defined as the most refined aspect of a person's allotment of *qi*. Yet the mind-heart is also representative of the dynamic aspect of primordial creativity itself and is one of those pivots of being co-implicated with principle and *qi* which gives Zhu's intellectual world such a protean quality. Terms such as mind-heart simply function at different levels of discourse and I will not argue

that one can once and for all pronounce that mind-heart must be always read as a dynamic or unifying element. Zhu Xi's system is complicated enough not to lend itself to any facile reductionism, including the simplification of one's own privileged hermeneutical tools.

The Architectonic of Vital Principle, Vital Force and their Unification

I argue that Zhu Xi formulated his mature system with three systematic traits—form, dynamics, and unification¹⁹—and links the configuration of these traits in the generation of any object-event to a sense of peace, harmony, or value for that particular object or event as a fourth explanatory trait. For Zhu Xi, the first key analytic trait represents the formal side of reality, with *li* or principle, pattern or order being the key semantic maker for the formal trait of anything that is. The formal analytic elements are his rational principles or modes of analysis of any object, event, or ritual in our collective universe. In terms of Zhu's general contribution to Chinese philosophy, his analysis of principle was so important that his whole school was later called *lixue* or the Learning of Principle. We can also add *taiji* as specification of principle as a specialized account of principle as the norm for the emerging object, event, or person. The Supreme Ultimate, as the most refined and comprehensive of principles, provides the locus for the lure by which the principle of a thing informs the actualization of any object-event. In Whitehead's terms, the Supreme Ultimate plays a crucial role in the concrescence of any object-event as it achieves its own form of definiteness. *Taiji* might well also indicate the vital aspect of principle such that *li* cannot be construed as merely a static form—principle is ordering and not merely ordered as it were.

¹⁹ For a detailed presentation of the specifics of the tripartite analysis, see Berthrong 1979, 1994, and 1998 (n. 3 above). The most exhaustive list of citations from Master Zhu illustrating my understanding of form, dynamics and unification is found in the 1979 dissertation.

The Supreme Ultimate (or the Supreme Polarity as translated by Joseph Adler in de Bary et al (*Sources* 1999-2000, 1: 672-676; n17) or *taiji*, as a symbol of cosmic order, also provides a description of order as a generic ordering principle as found in the *dao* or the Way of the cosmos. The formal trait indicates potentiality; such potential exists as *li* or principle but is not actual or concrete without contextualization within *qi* or vital force. Principles are not the concrete things or events per se. Rather, they are the sources or lures for the possibility that events can achieve actuality in becoming what they ought to be. For example, principles provide the norms by which ethical actions can be judged humane and civilized, and hence are the potential models for all human conduct or by which we construct a fan for use on a hot summer day. *Li* are formal principles that have being or true actuality if and only if they are actualized in some concrete event or entity—although principle per se lacks cosmological or causal creativity without recourse to the other elements of Zhu's system. As Mou Zongsan has so brilliantly argued, the *li* of the myriad things and events are the 'mere' reasons for the universe (Mou *Xinti yu Xingt* 1968-69, 1: 58). However, without this 'merely' potential quality, nothing could arise, flourish, perish, and contribute to the differentiation of the cosmos into the myriad things. At least for Zhu Xi, the 'mere' of mere potential is extremely important.²⁰

For Zhu Xi, these *li* are his rational principles of analysis for any object or event in our collective universe. As we noted above, the most conspicuous of

²⁰ As any astute reader of Zhu Xi knows, any simplistic definition of *li*/principle as simply a 'static' form is suspect. Zhu Xi is not a bad Neo-Platonist with some kind of unchanging and perfect realm of forms. Actually, and this will be the subject of a forthcoming study, I believe that the analysis of principle is still a major problem in Zhu's thought. While I ultimately defend a more 'living' reading of principle, scholars who have argued that principle is much, much too static in his complicated cosmology do have substantial reasons for their interpretation that I take seriously. However, this is an extension of Zhu's own work and will be defended at some length in future works.

Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1954, vol. 2, p. 474) makes the interesting comment that *li* represents the most living and vital pattern for Zhu Xi. And even though Needham himself will settle, when forced, on organization as a translation for *li*, one could also suggest 'vital pattern' based on Needham's highly suggestive interpretation of Zhu's theory of *li*.

these formal traits of analysis are principle/*li* and principle's conjunctive relationship with *qi* or vital energy, matter-energy or the configuring dynamic patterns of anything that is.²¹ Moreover, the Supreme Ultimate/*taiji* plays an important role in defining the formal trait in that it provides the lure by which the principle of a thing or event informs the process of actualization. The Supreme Ultimate/Polarity also affords a description of order as found in the Dao as the Way of Heaven. These formal terms all indicate the reality of defining norms but do not necessarily imply any form of actuality. They exist but are not specific prior to the concrete process of actualization. They are not definite things or events in themselves; they are the sources of potentiality for actualization. For example, they provide the norms by which ethical actions can be judged, and are hence the potential models for all human conduct. They are formal principles that are real but are not self-realizing prior to the process of actualization.

This kind of interpretation of the formal traits has been documented and criticized at great length by Mou Zongsan in his monumental study of the rise of Neo-Confucianism (Mou *Xinti yu Xingti* 1968-69, 1:58ff). The language of form, dynamics, and unification is mine and not Mou's, but there is nothing in Mou's opus that would contravene my usage. However, the formal traits are the 'mere' reasons of the universe, not the concrete people, events, moral choices, or things of the lived world of human experience. Yet these *li* become ever so real when they are realized in the context of human life, choice, decision, and action. They become the stuff of human history as the ideals of Neo-Confucian civilization. One is tempted to say that these 'mere' principles are on an ontological par with the concrete things and events of the human world. While Zhu Xi is not always clear on this point, he does not want to postulate a dualistic ontology wherein we can discover some other world of 'mere' principles beyond the analysis of concrete things and events.

²¹ The notion of configuration or configured force is drawn from the ongoing work of Manfred Prokert on the theoretical foundations of Chinese medicine. See Manfred Prokert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1974) and with Christian Ullman, *Chinese Medicine*, Translated by Mark Howson (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1988).

The second trait and its related motifs and themes are implicated with the dynamic side of object-events, the domain of *qi* as vital or configuring force. Since Zhu Xi is concerned mostly with an analysis of human conduct in its moral aspects, the key terms for the dynamic side of his thought often deal with his moral anthropology. The obvious concepts are *xin* or mind-heart and *qing* or feeling as manifestations of *qi*. And of course, the grand pan-Chinese concept of *qi* or vital force or matter-energy is always part of this aspect of Zhu Xi's thought. These dynamic elements refer to human life through self-cultivation, a series of classical Confucian ethical disciplines that produces moral excellence. All the dynamic traits refer to object-events, most specifically the lives of real human beings and to the observable activities and dispositions of these living human beings. The mind-heart, for example, refers both to the agency that is the seat of human personality as well as the mechanism by which the other human capacities are regulated. Thus, as Zhu quoted Zhang Zai's insight into the relationship of the mind-heart to the emerging human person, the mind-heart unites human nature (the principle of humanity) and the feelings.²²

The dynamic trait, for instance in the living self-realization of mind-heart as the highest form of *qi* as vital force, always and everywhere concerns the actualization of persons, events, or things. Because Zhu Xi is most concerned with human conduct in its moral aspects, the key terms in his moral anthropology are derived from Confucian speculation on the ethical issues of human relationships and cultural achievements such as ritual action and the arts. These dynamic terms such as *xin*/mind-heart refer to the manifestations of human life through self-cultivation aimed at the production of moral excellence and humane flourishing. All terms in the cluster of *xin*, *xing*/human nature, *qing*/emotions, and *shen*/spirit denote the activities and dispositions of human beings either subjectively or as inter-subjectively observable processes in the conduct of normal human life. The mind-heart, for example, refers both to the agency that is the seat of human personality and to the mechanism by which the other faculties are

²² Li Jingde (fl. Ca. 1263), *Zhuzi yulei dachuan* [The Conversations of Master Zhu, Topically Arranged], vol. 1 (Taipei: Chengzong shuju, 1973), p. 329.

regulated. Thus, as Zhu so often said, the mind-heart fundamentally unites human nature and the natural human emotions as a dynamic process.

The third set of traits signifies the unifying elements of reality. The most important of these are the ethical virtues of *ren* or humanity and *cheng* as self-actualization (Berthrong, "Self-Realization", 1993). These terms have a descriptive content because they refer to the process by which things become or reside in some particular state. As the highest human ethical norms, they define what it means to be fully human. Both of these terms carry the strongest positive connotations in the Confucian tradition—they are the ideal states or moral virtues that all persons should seek to emulate. Only a sage can truly be said to achieve humanity and self-actualization. While a person can be described in terms of principle and matter-energy, the process by which the principle is unified into a human life is called *cheng* or self-actualization. However, *cheng* is more than a mere description of the process by which a person appropriates culture and virtue, it is a statement of what this process should be, and points toward the ideal realization of all actuality in the life of the sage. *Cheng* moves in the direction of being the unifying definition of the ideal actualization of principle (Li, *Yulei* 1973, 1:350). *Ren*, or humanity, indicates another direction of ethical perfection. It describes the moral intentionality of a person that gives unity of purpose to all civilized human conduct.

It is always important to remember that, for Zhu Xi, all of these virtues can be discussed only in terms of the cultivation of the mind-heart. As in many other aspects of Zhu's thought, one cannot escape the need to focus on the role, definition, and functions of the mind-heart. As Qian Mu has commented throughout his magisterial study and commentary on Zhu's Daoxue, if there ever was a school of the mind-heart within Neo-Confucianism, Zhu deserves to be considered as its exemplification (Qian, *Zhuzi* 1971, Vol. 2). One of the most crucial things that emerges in Zhu's voluminous discussion of the mind-heart is that the actualization of virtue and true humanity takes place in the mind-heart, hence *xin* is the true *topos* of unification. Of course, this means that there is nothing simple about the analysis of the concept of the mind-heart for Zhu Xi. Mind-heart is that

feature of humanity that combines both the qualities of principle and matter-energy.

This trait of unification has a descriptive content because it refers to the process by which things come together in some particular state. Both *ren* as humaneness and *cheng* as authentic self-realization carry strongly positive connotations. They are ideal states or moral virtues that a person should seek to emulate. While a person can be described in terms of principle in relationship with matter-energy, the process by which the principle is unified in actuality is called *cheng* or self-actualization or self-realization when thinking specifically about the human process of self-cultivation. *Cheng* is more than a description of what this process should be and points to the ideal foundation of all actuality. It moves the Confucian in the direction of unifying the ideal actualization of principle in the formation of a person of virtue and a participant in the creation of a just social order (Li Yulei 1973, 1:350). *Ren* or humanity differs from *cheng* in that *cheng* describes the moral intentionality of an individual that gives unity of humane purpose to all human conduct. Precisely here, with *ren* and *cheng*, that we need to consider the autotelic goal of harmony or peace. The self-realized person, along with all the other memorable achievements, also finds a sense of harmony or peace that if it does pass all understanding, certainly lends a powerful satisfaction of the process of self-realization of the prime Confucian ethical norms.

In summary, we can say that Zhu Xi often thematized his analysis of the world in terms of form, dynamics, and unification, and likewise did so in order to encourage the kind of proper Confucian self-cultivation that would eventuate in a harmonious life. This is even the case when Zhu is working with various inherited dyadic concepts as has been so carefully elucidated by Donald Munro in his study of Zhu Xi's theory of human nature (*Images of Human Nature* 1988). Zhu loved to pose questions in terms of dyads that find their mediation through some third term that does not belong directly to either term of the dyad per se. There is a comprehensive, self-reflexive synthesis at play that Zhu Xi found compelling that balances the creative act of the mind-heart between human nature (principle as form) and human emotion (matter-energy as dynamic action).

Zhu Xi, and Chen Chun as his most analytic disciple, repeatedly articulated their meta-system as an *ars contextualis* in terms of the traits of form, dynamics, unification, and axiological ethical value or goal. This tendency can be observed in each of the dyadic sets of terms and also is characteristic of all of the architectonic terms when taken together. To repeat, Zhu Xi posed questions about the world in dyadic forms which find their mediation or resolution through a third term which does not belong directly to either term of the dyad—all with an eye to the final axiological outcome of moral self-cultivation. As Munro (*Images of Human Nature* 1988) has pointed out, there are tensions in the way Zhu tried to resolve some of these problems, such as a proper Confucian understanding of the balancing of private concern with social solidarity.

The Axiological Basis for Zhu Xi's Moral Metaphysics

As seen above, Zhu Xi has one indispensable term for his vision of the principled, formal, or normative traits as the transcendent order of the world: *li*/principle. *Li* was so crucial that Zhu's legacy has been called the school of principle even though he was as concerned with *xin* or mind-heart as anyone in the Neo-Confucian tradition. His exposition of *li* was more than a mere description of an ordering principle for the world; it was an articulation of the way the world ought to be, a world which would transcend the failings and injustices of the present order. In trying to explain *li*, Zhu Xi engaged in a profound attempt to frame a moral meta-system grounded in a self-transforming and self-transcending axiology of creative being and meaning.²³ This is an example of the

²³ As noted, Professor Zhang Dainian recently published an article suggesting that traditional Chinese thought can be characterized by its axiological orientations (Wang *Chinese Philosophy* 2004, pp. 13-35). In a finely crafted response, Professor Shun Kwong-loi (*ibid.*, pp. 37-44) makes strong counter argument that it is not prudent to call early Chinese thought axiological because the classical Chinese thinkers did not have the kinds of concerns that are taken to be the basis for axiology in the modern Western tradition or for modern Chinese philosophers. While I appreciate Shun's arguments, I still believe that the term axiology captures a great deal of the spirit of both classical Confucianism and its extension in the work of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Neo-Confucians, broadly conceived. For instance, I have always been persuaded that Xu Fuquan and Mou Zongsan were essentially correct then they noted the trait of 'concern con-

kind of philosophical reasoning that Mou Zongsan, borrowing from his friend Xu Fuguan, called the motif of profound concern consciousness. Mou holds that concern consciousness is a distinctive, even normative philosophical theme in both classical and Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Confucian discourse, and is certainly a close ally of what is considered axiology in the Western philosophical tradition.

My definition of axiology follows Robert C. Neville, who has been, in turn, deeply influenced by pragmatism, process thought, Neo-Confucian and contemporary New Confucian traditions. In *The Cosmology of Freedom*, Neville writes, "The general metaphysical hypothesis is that, to be determinate, a thing must be some kind of harmony of essential and conditional features."²⁴ As we have already seen, in Zhu Xi's philosophy, the essential features of all things and events are his normative principles (the *li* of things); the conditional features are provided by his theory of *qi* as configuring energy or vital force; and the harmony of the thing or event is dominated by *ming* (decree) and *taiji* (supreme ultimate) as they function as the pivots of becoming as being, a metaphor suggested by the Chinese meaning of the Supreme Ultimate.

Neville (*Cosmology* 1974, 35) continues his depiction of axiology in this fashion: "The reason why the 'real internal constitution' of a thing is such and so, is that such and so is a good way its given or potentially given constituents can be ordered." Neville takes care to point out that the past is important for this creative process. "The past sets limits on how it can be treated by the con-creating occasion, but the past becomes actual in the present only through the creativity of the present occasion." (*Cosmology* 1974, 37) But just as Neville does, Zhu Xi argues that there is a residue of creativity in the becoming of a person, especially the profound person, the student of the *Dao*. For Zhu Xi, the pro-

sciousness' as a critical feature of all forms of Confucian discourse. I have always taken Mou's exposition of 'concern consciousness' to be one of the most brilliant expositions of axiology I know of in the literature of world philosophy (Berthrong, *All under Heaven*, 1994).

²⁴ Neville, *Cosmology of Freedom* (1974), p. 30.

found person perfects him/herself by choices made and is considered a co-creator of the values of the world.

What distinguishes this axiological approach from other philosophic beginnings is that “axiological cosmology emphasizes the sense of subjectivity referring to what is unique to the identity of individuals in contrast to what is externally derivative” (*Cosmology* 1974, 49). A philosophy founded on axiology mixes together the language of ethics, aesthetics, religion, and even natural observation as the basis for its analysis of what is. Valuation is perceived as the foundation of reality; the world is incurably moral and interrelated by means of the shared values of becoming and being for any creature altogether. The language of morally shared concern becomes the language of a moral meta-system.

Neville further holds that the harmony of essential and conditional features can be understood in terms of elegance, which is a combination of simplicity and complexity (*Cosmology* 1974, 49). For Zhu Xi the simplicity of the person resides in the process of realizing principle, which is unitary in its essential features. The complexity of the person is given by the interaction of yin-yang and the transformation of *shen*/spirit within *qi*. The elegance of the sage is the ability to harmonize these potentially conflicting poles of being. Zhu Xi calls this ideal harmonization *ming* and *taiji* the very pivots of the emerging person and the universe itself. For Zhu, to answer what constitutes the formal, normative nature is to describe how a person makes choices about the world, choices that will ultimately give rise of human flourishing. Questions of metaphysical analysis become, to borrow Mou Zongsan’s insightful phrase again, questions of moral metaphysics. The essential feature of moral metaphysics is that it rests on axiological premises. To be real is to make harmonious and humane moral decisions, to make an effort to be in right relation to the world as a sage person. Harmony or peace is an essential outcome of the process of actualization or realization of the formal, dynamic, and unifying traits that characterize any object of event in the cosmos understood in terms of *ars contextualis* as a primordial axiology.

In summary form, Figure 1 below is the basic architectonic vision. See Figure 2 for an expansion of this figure on page 163.

Formal Traits:

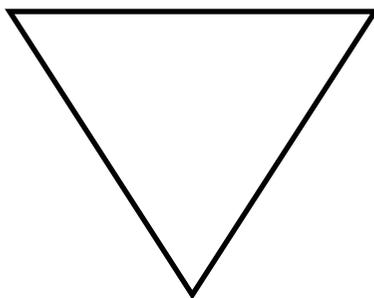
Li as principle, pattern, order

Xing as human nature, natural tendencies

Dynamic Traits:

qi as vital force, matter-energy

qing as emotion, desire, emotion



Unifying Traits

Xin as mind-heart unifying human nature and emotion

Taiji as Supreme Ultimate

Self-Actualization/*cheng* as harmony/*he* and centrality/*zhong*

Figure 1: The basic Architectonic Vision

Reintegrating the Dao

Whitehead coined the phrase ‘concrecence’ to describe how an actual entity came to be actualized in this cosmic epoch. Each actual entity seeks to become fully real, to achieve some sense of balance between its inherited settled world from the past with its unique creative advance into novelty that characterizes its own contribution to the universe. According to Whitehead, the ultimate aim of such activity, at least for human beings, is the notion of peace. As noted at the beginning of the essay, much the same point can be made for Zhu Xi. The reason that I have not previously paid as much attention to the notion of peace or har-

mony in previous studies is that Zhu does not use this kind of architectonic language in his description of self-cultivation that he so often employs when he is working through his famous meditations on the intricate interconnections of principle and vital force. However, this does not mean that a sense of harmony, peace or value is not constitutive of his mature thought. Rather, the trait of harmony or peace, even when not explicitly invoked or mentioned, resides in the background of Zhu's thought in terms of his explanation of the value of the process and goal of self-cultivation. According to Zhu's interpretation of a text like the, *cheng*/self-actualization or self-realization finally leads to a state of harmony for the person.

In the 1991 article "Toward Constructing a Dialectic of Harmonization: Harmony and Conflict in Chinese Philosophy", Cheng Zhongying states:

For the Confucianist, harmony is the basic state and the underlying structure or reality whereas *conflict* does not have roots in reality, but rather represents an order of unnatural imbalance or a disorder of no lasting significance.²⁵

Cheng continues this essay on complementary or integrative nature of dialectic in Chinese thought by trying to show how harmony and conflict are kept in balance in various major Chinese philosophical traditions. One of Cheng's main points is that the pan-Chinese sense of integrative dialectic is one based on polarities, which can include modalities of conflict, but which never posit an absolute dichotomy between harmony and conflict per se. But my point remains: when we study someone like Zhu Xi we must pay careful attention to his understanding of harmony as a dialectical interaction of person and world.

In an earlier 1986 article, "Method, Knowledge and Truth in Chu Hsi [Zhu Xi]," Cheng notes that knowledge, as a search for truth, is always for Zhu a

²⁵ Cheng Chung-ying [Zhongying], *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 188.

query such that "...knowledge must produce freedom of action, self-attainment, and a sense, a power in transforming reality—centrality of organization and harmonization with all things".²⁶ In a chart on page 388, Cheng summarizes Zhu's method of searching for knowledge and truth within the general domain of Heaven and Earth, through awareness of the original mind-heart, down to exhausting the understanding of principle or *qiongli* by means of residing in one-mindedness or *zhuqing* such that a person finds the integration and reinforcement of self and world. Thus "truth for Chu Hsi [Zhu Xi] is totalistic and the evidence for such totalistic understanding is the fulfillment of the total function of mind[-heart] by way of the process of learning" (1986, 392). All of this, of course, helps a person achieve a sense of balance and harmony through the constant interaction with the world.

I stress that I am recruiting Cheng Zhongying's analysis for my own constructive effort to restate Zhu Xi's mature philosophy in contemporary philosophical terminology. But I am certain that arguments and exegesis such as Cheng bolster my confidence that anyone who studies Zhu Xi needs to take into consideration the trait of harmony or peace as critical traits of Master Zhu's mature philosophical reflections. As Cheng's work shows, even in the midst of Zhu's most technical considerations of epistemological issues, the constant concern for harmony as the outcome of self-cultivation resides in the mind-heart of the Confucian seeker after truth.

I have accentuated the point about the goal of harmony as the outcome of the process of self-cultivation that includes the traits of form (principle), dynamics, unification, and axiological outcome because I think that we need to pay very careful attention to the structure of Master Zhu's philosophical discourse. While it is completely true that Zhu often frames his discourse in the kinds of dyads so carefully and accurately described by Donald Munro (*Images of Human Nature* 1988), Zhu never stops with just the dyads when he is articulating

²⁶ Ibid., p. 380. See also Cheng Chung-ying [Zhongying], "Chu Hsi's Methodology and Theory of Understanding", in Wing-tsit Chan ed., *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

the full range of his philosophical vision. If I am correct, Zhu always finds, when operating with his fully developed and rhetorically robust philosophical vision, a way to expand the dyads to triads, and likewise to make the point that it is pointless to talk about the dyads and triads without recourse to asking the question of the outcome for the whole process of self-cultivation. For Zhu the outcome of education and self-cultivation is the harmony of authentic self-actualization for the emerging object or event. For the human person the preferred outcome for successful self-cultivation is the ultimate goal of the kind of ethical harmony embodied in the life of a sage or *junzi* as a profound or exemplary person. If we are to make sense of Zhu Xi's philosophical achievement we need to pay more attention to the structure of his rhetoric of education and self-cultivation (see Figure 2 for an outline of the structure of Zhu's project). Only by doing this kind of careful reading can we make sense of his entire philosophical project as a creative fusion of cosmological reflection and axiological commitment. And, only such a careful reading will help us to articulate what is of perennial fascination in Master Zhu's grand synthesis.

At the end of his typically analytic discussion of the nature and role of *cheng* in his philosophical glossary, Chen Chun provides us with the following observations. Chen's focus is on the activity of *cheng* that embodies or actualizes all the efforts in terms of the axiological quest to become a sage, or at least a worthy person. This strenuous effort is what a person strives to achieve in order to live according to the normative principles of the Confucian ethical system. "As to perfect *cheng*, it is on the level of the sage's moral nature. Only when all principles are perfectly true and real without one iota of insincerity can one deserve the description" (Chen, *Neo-Confucian Terms* 1986, 99). Just before describing the perfect harmony of realized *cheng*, Chen writes "In every flower or every leaf, the veins and grains have been the same for all time without the slightest error. Even with perfect arrangement by human effort, the organization and arrangement cannot be equal to them. All this is according to the concrete principle and is so naturally" (Ibid., 98). While a modern evolutionary microbiologist might quarrel with the notion that the leaf is unchanging over time, the

major point Chen is trying to make is that we need to find a way to conform to both the world and our moral disposition that allows us to achieve our ultimate axiological perfection without one iota of insincerity whatsoever.

Although this essay has simply outlined the beginning of an argument about the deep metaphoric structure of Zhu Xi's mature Daoxue, it is only fitting to give Master Zhu the last word about the axiological perfection of the state of harmony found when *cheng* is fully actualized. *Cheng*, while in close connection to the rhetorical world of principle or order for the formal trait of the emerging things and events of the cosmos, also manifests the need for each person to select the proper principle and then to actualize this specific principle in a concrete life.

Cheng is the Way of Heaven. *Cheng* is the principle which is self-determining without being falsely ordered. How to achieve *cheng* is the way of humanity. It is to carry out this real principle and therefore to make an effort to achieve it. Mengzi [Mencius] said: "All things are complete in us"—this is *cheng*. [There is no greater] delight than to be conscious of *cheng* upon self-examination"—this is how to have *cheng*. Self-examination is merely to seek [self-realization] in oneself. *Cheng* refers to the fact that all things are complete without any defect" (Li Yulei 1973, 4: 3287-3288).

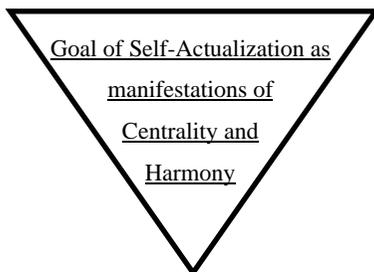
As Master Zhu explains, to strive for and then ultimately to be *cheng* is to achieve the value of being without defect, and is to be in harmony with the principle and dynamics of the world.

Li 理 as principle, pattern, order
Dao 道 as the Way

Qi 氣 as vital force, matter-energy
Shen 神 as spirit, function of feeling

Xing 性 as nature, dispositions, tendencies

Qing 情 as emotion, desire, passion



Unifying Traits:

Xin 心 as mind-heart unifying human nature/*xing* and emotion/*qing*

Yi 易 change/transformation as *xin*/mind-heart

Taiji 太極 as Supreme Ultimate/Polarity

Realization of the **value** of Self-Actualization/*cheng* 誠 as harmony/*he* 和 and centrality/*zhong* 中

Figure 2: Architectonic of Form, Dynamics, Unification and Value