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"Selfhood and Exteriority"

Book of Abstracts

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Li Zehou And Heraclitus: Hidden (Dis)Harmonies

Li Zehou's (d. 2021) philosophy of harmony (*he* 和) encompasses all aspects of existence, from the human body to the body politic and the natural world. Li contrasts Chinese (Confucian) harmony with Western concepts of justice, emphasizing emotional specifics over rational principles, and viewing harmony as superior to, but not exclusive of, rationality. Li's theory critiques classical Western philosophy for failing to appreciate harmony as the mutual inclusion of opposites (such as emotion and reason), instead viewing their relationship as one of strife. Consequently, Li dismisses Heraclitean philosophy–often seen as focusing on war (*polemos* πόλεμος) and harmony (*armonii* ἁρμονίη) as the unity of opposites in perpetual conflict–as part of the same inadequate Western paradigm. However, Heraclitus (Ἡράκλειτος, d. c. 480) represents a point of contention: while Li views him as an example of Western philosophy's shortcomings, Martin Heidegger sees him as a key figure to which Western philosophy should return. In examining these conflicting interpretations of Heraclitus's thought, I will explore various depictions of harmony in his work, drawing on readings that recognize the paradoxical nature of Heraclitean harmony. By focusing on the phrase "disagreeing with itself it agrees with itself" (*diaferomenon eoytoi omologeei*, διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῶι ὁμολογέει) and the imagery of the bow and the lyre in Fragment B51, I will draw on Heidegger's work on Heraclitus to argue that nuanced readings reveal dissonances as well as resonances between Heraclitus's and Li's visions of harmony.

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Intercultural Translation: Giorgos Seferis's Poetic Transformation of the Philosophy of the *Daodejing*

On January 8, 1940, in an unpublished manuscript, the poet Giorgos Seferis (Γιώργος Σεφέρης 1900–1971) began his in-depth study and translation of the *Daodejing* 道德經. This initial effort, translating the first fourteen chapters of a text that Seferis himself later described as one that "breaks bones", was followed later that same year by a second attempt, this time translating

chapters 1–21 and 70. This presentation looks into this specific instance of intercultural dialogue in translation, exploring the interplay between Seferis's poetic and aesthetic choices and his interpretation of the philosophical and religious dimensions of the *Daodejing*. It situates his translation efforts within the broader context of his other translations during this period, the first full Greek translation of the *Daodejing* by his niece, Mania Seferiadi, under his guidance, in the late 1960s, and the historical and cultural moment—Nazi-occupied Athens—that marked Seferis's first serious engagement with the Chinese philosophical tradition.

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Inhabiting the Earth as family reverence through *fengshui* 風水.

One of the most relevant issues in contemporary ecological discussion concerns a shift of humans from possessors to inhabitants of the earth. Inhabiting means 'living in' and 'living with' nature, without compromising habitability but rather participating in its constant maintenance. The post-human argument also makes us aware of how human beings themselves and their actions are spaces of habitability. Our organism is not the home of a brain but we are composed of vital elements, bacteria and other organisms for which our bodies are habitation, and whose habitability they participate in maintaining. This perspective, which combines instances of the post-human with relationalism, finds an immediate contribution in a cross-cultural reflection with Chinese Daoist and Ruist thought. In this talk, we will focus on the aesthetic-environmental contribution of a transversal phenomenon to classical Chinese culture: philosophical *fengshui* 風水, trying to conceive its cultural (not historical) impact on an aesthetics of dwelling. We will present *fengshui* as a moral technique-art (*jiyi* 技藝) for a correct habitability of the world, which can unite the living human to the soil, the deceased human to the living *human*, and the soil to the heaven-*tian*. For this, Cai Yuanding spoke of a *xiao* 孝 towards the earth that would have excellent effects in the environmental context.

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Air as qi. A reflection on co-breathing

Blue studies are now a frequent topic in the environmental humanities, but the same can't be said for "air studies," in fact, among the elements on which research is focused, air has certainly not received the attention it deserves. In this talk, we intend to present the contribution of Wang Fuzhi, the two leading *qixue* 氣學 thinkers, in defining a philosophy of air based precisely on the question of qi distribution. The fact that qi is at once energy, breath, flow, etc., gives us interesting insights into the very concept of air and its epistemic relevance. Parallel to this epistemological richness, Wang Fuzhi offers us a reflection on the different forms or transformation that qi takes as air, which provide different nutrients to living beings and thus define a different participation of the living beings to the energy flow. We will try to understand

and contest this hierarchy in order to suggest a theory of co-breathing which integrates Wang Yangming's one-bodyness with Wang Fuzhi's qi-oness.

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Reconceiving Agency: A Zoetological Reading of the *Daodejing*

I endorse Marcel Granet and Joseph Needham's insistence that, in order to allow the Chinese canons to speak on their own terms, we must locate them within their own interpretive context, an interpretive context that indeed has "its own causality and its own logic." Applying their same method of comparative cultural hermeneutics, I have in my recent work tried to formulate a "first philosophy" distinction between Greek ontological thinking and what I call early Chinese "zoetological" thinking, a distinction that has far-reaching implications for the understanding of both traditions. What I propose to do in this presentation then, is to first sketch out a contrast between ontological and zoetological thinking. I will then take the *Daodejing* as one concrete example, and provide an exegesis of Chapters 51, 25, and 42 as a way of clarifying some of the zoetological assumptions that must be invoked in order to allow the text its own interpretive context. How are we to understand and summarize the generative notion of *sheng* 生 as an activity ascribed to dao 道 — that is, *daoshengzhi* 道生之, conventionally translated as "gives birth to, engenders, begets, produces" — in a cosmogony in which *dao* and the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物) do not have the linear creator and creature causal relationship that we find as a commonplace in metaphysical cosmogonies?

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Does Confucian *Nei-Wai* Citizenship Demand Too Much?

Recently, some advocates of progressive Confucian political philosophy have argued for the inclusive nature of Confucian citizenship. In related ways, both Sungmoon Kim's "Confucian active citizenship" and my own "Confucian *nei-wai* citizenship" stress that such citizens have responsibilities that are not limited to a "public" realm that is sharply delineated from a "private" realm. Furthermore, these responsibilities may go beyond action to expectations about the attitudes citizens should hold toward the plight of their fellow citizens (and perhaps even further afield). It is natural to wonder whether such a conception of citizenship is too demanding. On the one hand, we might worry that such a conception of Confucianism will be normatively unattractive to the majority of citizens, or even push Confucianism in the direction of an elitist meritocracy. On the other hand, we might also worry that allowing public or political concerns to bleed into our personal and affective lives has problematic effects on democracy itself. For

example, Robert Talisse has argued that when we allow the categories, allegiances, and struggles of politics to overwhelm our social lives, it can undermine many of the most important social goods that democracy is meant to deliver. In this talk I argue that built into the very idea of *nei-wai* citizenship is an ideal of harmony between the interconnected-yet-distinct aspects of our inner, more personal persona and our outer, more public persona. This dynamic underlies the reasonably demanding and psychologically balanced conception that is modern Confucian citizenship.

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"No mind" with a Body: The Self in Cheng Xuanying's Expository Commentary to the *Daodejing*

Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 emphasizes throughout his Commentary to the *Daodejing* the notions of "self and things are both forgotten", "subjective cognition and external things are both rejected", and self and things are both empty and illusory". These describe the condition of non-intentionality – a state of oneness where the self as perceiving and cogitating individual is dissolved in a union with all things. This talk will present a discussion of Cheng Xuanying's conception of self, with a focus on the following questions: How does this conception of dissolving the subject-object distinction play out in regard to Daoist ideals of bodily cultivation and government? What function does a body have when there is "no mind"? Is there a self after the subject-object distinction in cognitive processes is dissolved? How is agency of a self with "no mind" conceived?

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Greek and Chinese Perspectives on Communal Synchronization as a Basis for Normative Engagement

This paper explores how classical Chinese thought and Aristotelian philosophy offer a shared foundation for creating enduring frameworks of modern normative engagement through the concept of communal synchronization. In Chinese thought, the concept of "knowing the tune" (*zhiyin* 知音) of another person serves as a powerful metaphor and recurring motif for interpersonal and communal harmony in proximity, with the latter being reinforced by ritual. Aristotle, on the other hand, introduces in the *Nicomachean Ethics* the concept of political synchronization, where communal consciousness develops through consistent human interaction, laying the foundation for enduring partnerships. He identifies a shared space as being essential for fostering concord (*omonoia* ὁμόνοια), the "primitive" form of friendship characterized by alignment in practical concerns and values. Both traditions support the idea that sharing normative space and time is critical for achieving positive mutual feelings, higher coordination and improving the quality of institutions. Can such a space be integrated into today's political frameworks? Both philosophies would argue not only that it can, but that it is

absolutely necessary, because norms, much like music, are a collective human endeavor that arises from gradually coordinated, bottom-up communal practices aimed at shared goals.

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The "True Self" (*zhen ji* 眞己) According to Wang Yangming

This contribution focuses on Wang Yangming's (1472–1529) understanding of the cultivation of the "true self" (*zhen ji* 眞己) not only as the source of consciousness and morality but of life itself. Starting from the related idea of an equiprimordiality of *xin zhi benti* 心之本體 and the "source" (*yuan* 原) of *tianli* 天理 in the *Chuanxilu* 傳習錄, I reflect on Yangming's use of the terms *benti* 本體, *quqiao* 軀殼, *xu-xi* 嘘唏, *tongti* 同體, *xingti* 形體, *lingming* 靈命, etc., in relation his understanding of "true self." All of those terms in some way or the other relate to the question of the "embodiment" of this "true self" as well as to the problem horizons of interiority and exteriority, self and other, etc. This exploration of Yangming's ideas is unfolded against the background of earlier Chinese notions, such as that of the *ti* 體 body, *qu* 軀 body, *da ti* 大體, etc., as well as the more common ancient Confucian understanding of "self" (*ji* 己) in this context. I argue that Wang Yangming has elevated the whole conceptual field around the notion of "self" onto a new level that matches his general philosophical approach. Finally, I will provide an example to show as to why and how this is also of relevance for the (post)comparative discourse between Chinese and other traditions of thought.

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Validation by versification in Early Chinese philosophical prose

While the Western label of *zhelishi* 哲理詩 "philosophical poetry" is sometimes applied not only to medieval Confucian and Buddhist poetry, but extended to pre-Qin works like the *Daodejing* in literary studies since the end of the 19th century, there has been little sustained interest in Early Chinese "poetic philosophy" so far. The proposed paper will show

   (a) how some poetic devices such as rhyme, alliteration, *figura etymologica*, chiasmus and parallelismus membrorum, emerging in the oldest layers of Chinese poetry since the *Shijing*, have been reincorporated into Warring States philosophical prose. There, they typically support powerful arguments with the "archaic force" of quotation, harnessing poetic form along with traditional "wisdom".

   (b) how masters' texts of the late Warring States to Early Han periods creatively integrated new versified passages into their philosophical discourses to construct validity claims and arguments, sometimes consciously transgressing the models of the poetic tradition inherited from the Chunqiu period. Thus, phonological forms of repetition develop into argumentative paronomasia and persuasive punning; etymological figures into tropes which generate

figurative meaning; and chiasmus and *parallelismus membrorum* prepare the ground for "interlocking parallel style" (Wagner 1980).

Examples tracing these developments – and their Warring States ruptures – will come from "masters' texts" like *Zhuangzi*, *Guanzi*, *Wenzi* and *Hanfeizi*, including systematizing collections like the *Lüshi chunqiu*, as well as from texts included in excavated collections like the Guodian, Shanghai Bowuguan, and Qinghua corpora.

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Selfhood, Technology, and the "External" (*wai* 外) in Daoism

One of the features of *Dao* 道-practice is that ends must not be "external" (*wai* 外) to natural activity. In other words, ends should not be done "for the sake of" (*wei* 為) something outside of their own execution. This immediately raises questions with respect to technology, which by its very nature involves "ends" that are projected as external to the instrumental "means" by which they are reached. On this basis, it is often suggested that Daoist selfhood is thus "anti-technology" in orientation. In this paper, I challenge such a reading by considering how "ends" might be understood within *Dao* 道-practice not as "external" to the self *per se* but as superimposed by cultural, societal, and economic forces that lie outside the free execution of the self in its "natural" (*ziran* 自然) expression. The Daoist self, accordingly, is always "externalized." Thus, the question becomes not whether technology *itself* violates the self, but rather *which* technologies violate the self and *how*.

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"Far Indeed is this from Dao!" Neo-Daoism as the Self-critical Critique of Preferences

A common way to characterize Daoist texts is as involving a critique of desires and deliberation, or preferences. This invites an obvious problem; how can one critique preferences without undermining one's position by harbouring the preference for non-preference? Indeed, how can one become completely equanimous and ambivalent to the world's cares without thereby becoming escapist regarding its injustices? The fanciful "Biography of Master Great Person," (大人先生傳) written by the *Wei* Dynasty poet and philosopher *Ruan Ji*, provides a blueprint for dealing with these problems. It presents us with a 3-fold critique in which one starts with a critique of counterproductive socio-political values, moves to a radical critique of any possible value, and finally realizes that absolute ambivalence must include the preferences implicit in the first two critiques. Using this blueprint, I characterize the *Wei-Jin* philosophical movement of *Xuanxue* ("Neo-Daoism") that Ruan was situated in as providing various perspectives on such a critique of preferences (欲) and partiality (偏) in order to be 內聖外王, "sagely on the inside and political on the outside." My account thus seeks to explain how Neo-Daoist thinkers could embrace Lao-Zhuang ideals of non-deliberation and impartiality as powerful tools for

political engagement by advocating policies of non-desire to harmonize or simplify rather than deny the ubiquity of desire. It is also my hope that their insights can help us engage in cross-fertilization between renouncing partiality and remaining socially-engaged in our own contexts.

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Aliens, Heavens, and Transhuman Sagehood: A Philosophical Analysis of Kang Youwei's *Zhutianjiang*

The last book written by Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), the *Zhutianjiang* 諸天講 ("On Heavens"), completed in 1926 and published posthumously in 1930, has been long overshadowed by its author's other posthumous *magnum opus*, the *Datongshu* 大同書 ("Book of Great Concord"). And yet, in this complex and rich history of astronomy in China and in the West, Kang injected a multiplicity of topics, from selenography to Buddhism, including descriptions of Martians and an appendix reviewing Einstein's theories on the limits of the universe, making it into a vivid testament to his holistic interests, global philosophical ambitions, and transcultural explorations.

Recent studies have highlighted the book's contribution to our understanding of early Chinese science-fiction (Andolfatto 2024), and the *Zhutianjiang* has been mentioned in the concluding pages of most general outlines of Kang's thought, often presented as a bizarre form of escapism, a sort of philosopher's "farewell to Earth" after the reformer's disillusionment (Hsiao 1975).

In my paper, I will adopt a philosophical-historical perspective to address the *Zhutianjiang* as an indispensable piece in the definition of Kang's intellectual trajectory. Through the translation and comment of selected excerpts, the book's surprising "transhumanist" horizon and its innovative conceptualization of the "planetary" will be revealed, concurrently shedding light on its anticipation of later dialogues between physics and mysticism (Capra 1975) and postmodern reflections on "political ecology" (Latour 2004).

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What Heaven Begins, Man Completes: Selfhood, Work, and Cosmology in Western Han Thought

This paper explores the interconnections between selfhood, labor, and cosmology in Western Han thought, addressironng key questions: How did human activity shape conceptions of the self? What role did work play in positioning individuals within the cosmic order? How were these ideas influenced by the historical, social, and philosophical contexts of the first stable Chinese empire? Drawing on foundational texts such as *Xinyu* (*New Discourses*), *Huainanzi* (*Masters of Huainan*), and *Chunqiu fanlu* (*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*), I argue that work was conceived as a uniquely human endeavor (*specifica humana*), a means through which individuals actualized their cosmic role and affirmed their place in the natural

order. This perspective positioned the self as both a product of and an agent within the ongoing processes of Heaven and Earth. By framing labor as a site of self-formation, Western Han thought offers a nuanced vision of the self as dynamic and relational, shaped through engagement with the world. The philosophical discourse on work in this period thus provides profound insights into early Chinese understandings of selfhood, forged at the intersection of cosmology, human activity, and historical change.

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Selfhood and Confucian Role Ethics: Reclaiming a Self.

Given the fact that a self arises out of, and functions only within, a web or infrastructure, the question arises whether this self can then be reduced to that infrastructure? Confucian Role Ethics, as espoused by Roger Ames, asserts this is the case. This paper seeks to challenge that assertion. While in the *Zhuangzi* it is famously asserted that "I have lost my self", I now want to claim some form of Self back in spite of relationality. The fact that the other is partly constitutional for the self (I say partly, because my point will be exactly that no individual or group "other" is wholly constitutive for any other individual other, and I believe, contra Ames, that the self cannot be exhaustively constituted by others or roles) does not mean there is no self. A self is indeed always constituted, and ever changing, but it is, in the end, a self that cannot be reduced to roles or relations or others. Related to this, this paper also takes aim at the notion of flourishing through roles. In Confucian Role ethics, conflict appears to be avoided mostly. Ames talks about flourishing relations, but I argue that first, that is highly idealistic, and second, many of the relations we encounter in life are antagonistic, and not conducive to flourishing. Yet they are equally a part of my interdependence with all things/processes. I claim that a more solid notion of self not reducible to relations is more conducive to conflict resolution.

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Ren and Kapwa: A Comparison of Chinese and Filipino Core Concepts

In this paper, I aim to compare *ren* (仁) and *kapwa*, which are recognized as core or fundamental concepts in Chinese and Filipino thought, respectively. *Ren* is usually translated as humanness, goodness, or benevolence, emphasizing the essential quality in interacting with others. According to Virgilio G. Enriquez (2004), the father of Filipino psychology, *kapwa* refers to "the unity of the 'self' and 'others'…[it] is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others." My discussion will compare these two concepts across two domains. First, as moral concepts, I will demonstrate how both are onto-ethical and represent general or inclusive virtues. Second, I will explore how *ren* and *kapwa* have influenced the political thought and events of the Chinese and Filipino peoples. Comparing *ren* with *kapwa* is valuable because *ren* has been extensively studied in various contexts, and these discussions can offer insights into how to approach the study of *kapwa*, which still requires further exploration. This

is partly because *ren* has a much longer history, whereas *kapwa* has only been articulated relatively recently. Additionally, *kapwa* has often been analyzed in relation to Western philosophical concepts but rarely in comparison with Chinese philosophy. In one of his periodical columns, Fr. Ranhilio Callangan Aquino notes that Filipinos are "strangers to the Asian [or Chinese] soul." By comparing these two concepts, I hope to create an avenue for fostering mutual familiarity, understanding, and appreciation between these two cultural traditions.

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Philosophizing with Swords and Hammers: Nanquan and Nietzsche

In the contemporary literature, Chan (禅, JP: Zen) Buddhism has been criticized for a variety of ethical shortcomings. From the well-documented support of Imperial Japan by Zen Buddhist leaders (the Japanese historical and ideological counterparts to Chan) to the claim that Chan has no independent, robust ethics of its own, criticisms of Chan ethics question not only sporadic historical misappropriation or misuse, but potentially the very foundations of Chan ethics when considered as philosophy. In this paper, I examine a Chan gōng'àn (公案, JP: koan) which, on its face, clearly exemplifies one such ethical shortcoming. Specifically, I focus on Case 14 of *The Gateless Gate* or *Wúménguān* (無門關, JP: Mumonkan), Nanquan Cuts the Cat in Two. I then provide an interpretation of the gōng'àn which a sympathizer of Linji (臨濟宗, JP: Rinzai) Chan could use to respond to such charges. To support this interpretation, I compare what I take as the primary message of the gōng'àn with an interpretation of Nietzsche's overarching philosophical project. Through this comparison, I clarify the meaning of Nanquan Cuts the Cat in Two, provide historical precedent to this meaning, and lay out a philosophically plausible pathway towards defending it. Central to its meaning is the possibility of being deceived or ignorant of one's true nature or state of being. Furthermore, the pathway out of such ignorance, when viewed from *within* that ignorant state, may appear both rhetorically violent and lacking systematic structure.

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Subjectivity and Subjectality: Li Zehou and Kant on Anthropology and Transcendentality

The *Pipan zhexue de pipan* (批判哲学的批判, Critique of Critical Philosophy) (1979) represents one of Li Zehou's (1930-2021) most famous and influential works. Here he makes an operation of re-elaboration and thoughtful commentary of Kant's *First Critique*, which proves essential for Li to set up his own philosophical project of anthropological-historical ontology. Such project vehemently refuses transcendentality, while at the same time embracing the idea of subjective constitution of objectivity so to contrast that of *adequatio rei et intellectus*.

The present contribution deals with one of the most famous and most controversial concepts elaborated by Li, namely that of subjectality (*zhutixing,* 主体性), as opposed to subjectivity (*zhuguanxing*, 主观性). The idea of subjectality is expounded through a thorough critique of Kant's epistemology, with a special focus on the contestation, on Li's part, of the concepts of space and time as forms of intuition, of categories, and of the transcendental schemata as the production of the faculty of imagination. The present contribution is devoted to the exegesis of and the comparison between Kant's and Li's notions of subjectivity. Moreover, such an exegesis provides the basis for tentatively confronting Li's anthropological and historical critique and re-contextualization of Kant's transcendental philosophy with Kant's own views on anthropology as expounded in the *Lectures on Anthropology* and the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.

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How Finite Subjects Can Be "Infinite": Assessing Mou Zongsan's Confucian Revision of Kantian Metaphysics

Mou Zongsan posits moral subjectivity to lie in the "infinite heartmind" (*wuxian zhi xin*), which he further identifies as the heavenly bestowed human nature inherent in all of us. Mou intends this to capture and convey a Kantian insight into the nature of humanity as free will; but he also intends it to critically revise the Kantian formulation of that insight. Kant conceives human intelligence to be purely subjective, limited by the transcendental structures of human experience. Mou, in contrast, insists that the finite human subject has direct access to reality-in-itself, and thus can be "infinite."

This paper/presentation explicates and evaluates two ways to understand Mou's seemingly self-contradicting claim that we can and should we see finite subjects as infinite. To do so, it first highlights the significance of Mou replacing Kant's identification of goodness as the purely rational will with his own account of the intuitive and affective capacity of "good knowing" (*liang zhi*). The former establishes absoluteness through generic rational abstraction, while the latter affirms it via situated affective identification with cosmic reality. It then compares the concrete and sensible exercise of this capacity to the "systematic metaphysics" that Robert C. Neville advocates, which connects the finite and infinite through a model of situated deliberation. Finally, on this basis of the above, it outlines two distinct ways of interpreting and applying Mou's normative framework, intuitionist and sentimentalist, and considers their respective strengths—motivational and intentional—as modes of "infinitude."

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Li Zehou's Rejection of Neo-Confucianism

Li Zehou offers a distinctive version of Confucianism that locates value in the continuous "extension" of the dynamic processes of flourishing human life in its "totality." To do so, he

vociferously rejects the influential Neo-Confucian investiture of value in cosmically absolute and quasi-transcendent moral "principle" (or "pattern," *li* 理) along with the modern New Confucian inheritance of that axiology, wherein the transcendent ideals govern the constitution of concrete things in the world. Li's denial of Neo-Confucians' ontological dualism is part and parcel of promoting his own monistic vision of value, which inverts that relationship between the ideal and the concrete. Li here develops and promotes an alternative and compelling Confucian value theory: a humanistic monism wherein lived and felt human life should determine the proper rational principles, not vice versa. Therein, we seek ultimate value—and ascertain what is good or bad, right or wrong—in and through our actual, lived and felt relations; we cannot seek metaphysical sources of moral knowledge beyond these.

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Wang Ji's Poetics of Drunken Self-Liberation

Drinking wine is one of the most popular motifs in early-medieval Chinese poetry. Seen as an act of hedonism, drunkenness in Chinese poetry also symbolizes an escape from the pain and sorrow of the world. In the Wei-Jin period, Ji Kang, Ruan Ji, and Liu Ling were notorious for their drunken behavior, which helped them avoid the political intrigues of their day. For the Tang poet Wang Ji 王績, drunkenness was more than a pastime; it was a means of illustrating the Daoist emancipated self. Unlike occasional drunkenness, which merely allows one to escape from their own misery, a state of constant inebriation allows one to attain the spiritual heart-mind of the sage. Wang Ji thus believes genuine drunkenness is a form of self-cultivation whereby one achieves mental purity and spiritual detachment from the body.

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Challenging Reading *wuji* (无己) as Forgetfulness in the Opening Chapter of the *Zhuangzi*

The term "wuji" (literally: no-self) is used to characterize a stage of sagehood in the opening chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. It has historically been translated as a sort of forgetfulness, i.e., having no thought of the self. In this paper, I will argue that this interpretation is inconsistent with the passage it is situated in. More specifically, in section 1, I will set up a minimal inconsistent pair, namely that a) *wuji* is characterized by a conscious distinction between the self and others; and b) *wuji* is characterized by the forgetting of oneself. In section 2, I will defend (a) by explicating the passage characterizing *wuji*, showing that it specifically mentions for a person to attain wuji, they will have an intentional awareness of the self and its essential properties. In section 3, I will consider and reject two possible rejoinders. To be more precise, the imagined rejoinders attempt to distinguish the notion of "self" in (a) and (b) by appealing to fine-grained theories of the self in the *Zhuangzi*. One of the theories considered is Wu's (1993) Kantian reading of the self as a thing-in-itself which lacks any specific identifiable properties, the other theory is Hu's (2019) Strawsonian reading of the self as a minimal subject of experience that lacks any

thoughts or complexities. In section 4, I will discuss the impact of this challenge with regards to sagehood in the *Zhuangzi*, calling for an updated interpretation which does not ground sagehood upon psychological negligence.

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Personal Relationship Roles and Personal Identity

Many scholars, myself included, conceive of Confucian ethics as an account of role ethics, specifically personal relationship role ethics. While there are many discussions on how relationship roles contribute to and constitute an ethics, there seems to be little discussion on how these roles constitute personal identity. It may be a widely shared assumption that for most people relationship roles like being a parent, daughter, or wife are *de facto* constituents of a person's identity. While this assumption may be true, we still need to analyze and understand the meaning of that constitution. In my paper, I aim to focus on analyzing two relationships that are central to the Confucian role ethics, namely the parent-child relationship and the husband-wife relationship for that purpose. I am especially interested in looking at people who proactively seek to affirm these relationship roles. Hence, I aim to research on narratives of the adoptees who make substantial efforts to find out and connect with their birth parents, and their reflections on their relationship with the adopted parents. I will also examine accounts of people who are/were engaged in the fight of the legalization of same-sex marriage. To further inform our understanding, I will also look at the narratives and writings of new parents on their anticipation and meeting of the newborns, and the self-written marriage vows by the newly-weds.

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Educating about and Coping with Climate Change: A Role for Myth in the *Zhuangzi*《莊子》

This paper wishes to provide an in-depth analysis of the use of the mythical figure of the legendary sword Moye 鎮鋣 found in the "Dazongshi 〈大宗師〉" chapter of the Zhuangzi《莊子》. Their mention in a conversation about transformation (hua 化) between Master Lai 子來 and Master Li 子犁 helps us to understand what a Zhuangzian environmental philosophy entails. This paper proposes three main axes that require examination: (i) the Zhuangzian stance on environmental protection, (ii) the text's approach to teaching in the context of environmental education, and (iii) the Zhuangzi's ways of coping with situations we have no control over. The myth-making of the text pertains to the kind of "indirect" teaching it proposes, which is especially salient for environmental education. Indeed, myths are particularly suited to this task, since their ever-transforming shape matches the ever-transforming nature of the *wanwu* 萬物

("ten-thousand things"). Additionally, the text emphasises that being fixated on a specific set of valuations (e.g., utilitarian, economic, etc) can only lead to a less adaptable and less adept behaviour. The mention of the Moye sword gives us an insight into this critique and its link to the general operation of the *wanwu*: constant transformation. Through the use of myth and myth-making, the text's points about fixed *shifei* 是非 or *bici* 彼此 distinctions become more poignant, but also more palatable. Through this critique, a properly Zhuangzian environmental philosophy can be articulated.

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Discussion of the Issue of "Moral Motivation" in Zhuism by the Korean Confucian Scholar Jeon Woo 田愚

The purpose of this paper is to explore the problem of "moral motivation" in "Zhuism" (Zhuzi xue 朱子 學) through the famous theory of "*xing* as the Teacher and the *xin* as the Disciple" (*seongsasimje* 性師心 弟) proposed by the Korean Zhuist scholar Jeon Woo 田愚 (1841–1922). The problem of moral motivation in Zhuism refers to the question of how to ensure that a judgment of moral right and wrong by the agent necessarily leads to concrete moral action, when there is a disconnection between such a judgment and the act of practicing morality. In other words, we often recognize what is right and wrong, but recognizing it does not necessarily mean we are willing to abide by it. How can we account for the necessary connection between "judgment of right and wrong" and "the practice of this judgment"? In Zhu Xi's formulation of "the mind and the principle being two" (心與理為二), the principle serves only as a criterion for judging right and wrong and does not give the necessary means to enforce the mind to practice it. If so, what is the motivational force that must arise in the mind after recognizing the principle to lead to its practice?

Jeon Woo raised similar questions, while still adhering to Zhu Xi's stipulations that "the mind and the principle are two," "the principle is merely a criterion for judging right and wrong," and "the mind is the one that practices." This paper argues that utilizing Jeon Woo's theory of "*xing* as the Teacher and the *xin* as the Disciple" and its underlying concept of "reverence" (*jing wei* 敬畏) can help solving the issue of moral motivation inherent in Zhuism.

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Self-Other Distinction as a Possible Solution to the Fracture between Metaphysical and Moral Accounts in Xiong Shili's New Treatise

There has been a fracture in Xiong Shili's metaphysics that has not been adequately explored: where does morality come from, given that Xiong's description of fundamental reality as transformation – a constant alteration of contraction and expansion – seems to have no moral significance? In this paper, the author seeks to argue that self-other distinction is crucial to

understanding Xiong's metaphysics and to establishing how a nonmoral metaphysics can serve as a basis for morality: on the one hand, it is a nonmoral perception of self and other, and, on the other hand, it is the origin of the private-public distinction that gives rise to evil desires. The paper is divided into three parts. First, the author distinguishes between metaphysical purity and phenomenal goodness by analyzing Xiong's "constant transformation" in order to clarify the meaning of his use of "goodness." Second, the author argues in detail how self-other distinction is formed and how it leads to evil desires – through the recognition of the body and followed by an obsession with the self, desires and afflictions arise. This is evidenced primarily by Xiong's explanation of "habituated tendencies" and "mind." Last, echoing the first part, the author argues that, in Xiong's view, the self-other distinction is only a provisional statement that does not extend to the metaphysical realm – there is no such distinction in the metaphysical sense. But it is only by living in the phenomenal world – by living in this self-other distinction – that one can realize the fundamental reality, and the means is moral practices.

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Zhuangzi On the Right Life

"There is no right life in the wrong one" is a famous aphorism left by Theodor W. Adorno in *Minima Moralia*. This statement suggests that the so called "autonomous" of moral agents still depends on the premise of a just society, this is most apparent when examining cases in modern society where individuals are repeatedly forced to face moral antinomy. If we take this aphorism as a foundation for understanding Adorno's moral philosophy, it is not difficult to see the trajectory of his theoretical development, which takes society as a whole as the object of critical reflection. In contrast, Zhuangzi, who also maintained a critical stance toward his era, seems to bypass concerns about social philosophy in his depiction of an ideal state in his writings. Instead, I suggest, Zhuangzi conceives precisely what it means to live a "right life in a wrong one."

If the vivid descriptions in the chapter "Equalizing Assessments of Things" — "Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, plans and regrets, transformations and stagnations, unguarded abandonment and deliberate posturing" —can be seen as Zhuangzi's reflection on how rites and education alienate people from their finite lives, then we might assert that its critical potential long anticipates the evolving and increasingly concrete concept of alienation throughout the history of civilization. In this essay, I will outline Zhuangzi's depictions of the alienated characteristics of his contemporary society and his proposed ideal, aim to sketch an image of what it means to live a "right life in a wrong one," providing a new interpretation of the legacy Zhuangzi leaves in discussing the tension between individual and society.

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The Relational Self in Mengzi's Sentiment-Based Moral Theory

This paper examines the concept of the relational self within Mengzi's sentiment-based moral theory, proposing that Mengzi advances an introspective version of the Confucian relational self. While Confucius emphasizes shaping self-identity through fulfilling social roles and participating in communal relationships, I argue, Mengzi prioritizes relationships as a means to activate and actualize inherent moral potentials. Relationships, in Mengzi's framework, provide the context in which moral sentiments are more properly and frequently aroused.

Drawing on Hume's theory of personal identity, I argue that Mengzi's moral self can be understood as a bundle of accumulated sentiments, rather than a product of predefined social roles. As Mengzi's Four Sprouts as innate moral tendencies are not only expressed into sentiments of compassion, shame, respect, and approval, but also represent the four inherent virtues, we can assume that frequent and appropriate arousal of these sentiments through relational experiences facilitates their refinement. The arousals of morally approvable sentiments are accumulated to contribute to the cultivation of virtues.

This view clarifies two key aspects of Mengzi's thought. First, it connects Confucian relational ethics with Mengzi's introspective cultivation. The process of "turning inwards to examine oneself (反求諸己)" to seek inherent virtues (M 2A7, 4A4) aligns with Confucian relational ethics because it relies on a pre-established empirical basis of sentiments developed through external relationships. Second, it supports the moral desirability of preserving self-dignity over maintaining relationships, suggesting that it is permissible to discontinue relationships or roles if they undermine one's moral integrity. This interpretation bridges Mengzi's introspective approach with the broader framework of Confucian relational ethics, emphasizing the dynamic balance between external relationships and internal moral cultivation.

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Transformative Experience: A Confucian Perspective

Transformative experience is a philosophically rich and deeply existential concept that has emerged from Anglophone philosophy in the last decade. According to L.A. Paul, transformative experiences are both *personally* and *epistemically* transformative, in that they both give us new knowledge and change our core beliefs and preferences. Having a first child, going to medical school, switching careers in mid-life – such experiences, according to Paul, raise significant challenges for our ability to plan our lives rationally and authentically.

At the same time, the discussion of transformative experience bears all the marks of what the late Henry Rosemont, Jr., called "foundational individualism." Paul herself acknowledges that values such as rationality and authenticity are common to well-off people living in Western societies. For this reason, critics have argued for broadening the category of transformative experience to include the lived experience of much of the world's population. In this paper, I hope to further expand the category by developing a perspective based on Confucian relational ethics. In the first half of the paper, I examine the parameters of Paul's discussion of transformative experience, focusing especially on her concept of "subjective value" and its limitations. In the second half, I turn to some resources from the Confucian tradition, setting up a parallel set of concepts drawn from early Confucian texts that can give us an alternate perspective on transformative experience.

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Disability in Light of the *Zhuangzi*

This article explores Zhuangzi's philosophy in relation to disability. I argue that a Zhuangzian approach to disability would require understanding disability fundamentally as a result of how society is structured. In other words, the badness of being disabled is fundamentally due to societal constraints rather than any inherent problem with disability. Central to my argument there are four critical ideas. Firstly, Zhuangzi's metaphor of the "useless tree," which I contend suggests that perceived disabilities may hold hidden strengths. Secondly, the concept of *jiren* implies valuing individuals beyond physical characteristics. Thirdly, I argue that Zhuangzi's critique of societal conventions implies that societies tend to marginalise those who deviate from the norm and that, in fact, deviating from the norm is not something necessarily bad. Fourthly, in his passages about the equality of things as well as the ones about friendship, Zhuangzi encourages us to look at individuals equally. I will argue that this view offers us a better approach to disability than its alternatives and will answer some objections.

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Unity Before Unification: Covenant Culture and the Contractual Dimensions of Mohist Philosophy

This paper explores the contractual dimensions of Mohist thought, focusing on Mozi's 墨子 (ca. 480–390 BCE) vision for reuniting the fragmented world of his time. While earlier interpretations, notably by Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), have argued for the contractual nature of Mozi's philosophy, this study shifts attention to parallels between Mozi's proposals and contemporaneous covenant practices. Drawing on a particular version of the "Promoting Conformity" (*Shang tong* 尚同) chapter, the paper examines Mozi's emphasis on reuniting the world from the lower strata of society bottom-up and situates it within the broader historical context of contemporaneous covenant culture, highlighting how transmitted lore surrounding alleged covenants of the past like the *Great Oath* (*Tai shi* 太誓) informed the Mohist vision of unity. It demonstrates how Mozi adapts and reinterprets these precedents to propose a bottom-up approach to societal order, advocating for the identification and promotion of collective interests across hierarchical levels. Furthermore, the analysis underscores Mozi's reliance on covenantal principles to substantiate foundational doctrines such as impartial care, meritocracy, and divine justice.

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Chinese Feminist Philosophy: A Philosophical Reflection of the Relationship between Chinese Feminism and the State

This paper provides a philosophical reflection of gender issues in contemporary China. It is commonly accepted by scholars who study Chinese feminism that Chinese feminists' concerns are fundamentally with the relationship between (individual) women and the state. Therefore, a philosophical reflection of the relationship between individualism and collectivism is necessary to examine gender issues in China. This is also an exploration of the relationship between Chinese feminism and the state within a larger context of global neoliberal capitalism. Due to the complexity of Chinese socialism, I focus on China's state feminism and the influence of China's socialist legacies (the liberation of women) on Chinese feminism. Some scholars doubt the preeminence of women's liberation and state feminism in China. They challenge the theoretical assumption that gender issues can be addressed by the socialist liberation that claims to end class struggles. Others, however, examine how historical and sociopolitical contexts shape the characteristics of knowledge production in women's studies in a dynamic interplay of Chinese Marxism and feminism. I scrutinize what it entails for Chinese women who are somewhat mobilized as individuals in the neoliberal capitalist framework, but simultaneously they need conform to a collective narrative. I argue that Chinese feminist scholars' reexamination of China's socialist feminism as a "legacy" and "resource" adds a new strand to an already pluralized field of Chinese feminism, but Chinese feminism acts as an example of larger issues such as the implications of standardizing international feminism (making feminisms in other cultures part of the standardized international feminism).

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Protect the Self! A New Perspective on early Chinese Conceptualization of Interiority and Self-cultivation.

The investigation of in-betweeness in early Chinese correlative thought reveals a gradation in degrees of perviousness between outside/inside (*wai*/*nei*) and a complex, ever-changing interrelations between complementary opposites, such as chaos/order. What stands out within this web of relations is a constant fear from the outside and its potential damaging (and chaotic) impact – which necessitates, as is evident in diverse pre-Qin philosophical texts, a relentless safeguard of the body-mind and its vital essence/energy. This proactive protection is achieved through the blockage of the openings and orifices of the body – a mechanism that resembles a biological membrane that constantly open/closes its gates so that the cell's interiority stays alive. This Chinese perspective significantly differs from Western body and mind conceptualization, such as Lakoff and Johnson's body metaphor as a "closed container bounded off from the rest of the world" (1980). If anything, the Chinese model suggests that the inside is too open – to the extent that its mere existence is an achievement and not a given! If so, does Chinese self-cultivation ensure its very existence? How did the various schools of thought see the self in the midst of the concentric circles that surround it? I intend to use the limited time available by concentrating on extracts from early Daoist and humanist sources, and to suggest that this ancient Chinse awareness to the openings of the body-mind is as relevant today... as a mental skill of self-protection and cultivation.

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Can Zhuangzi Teach Us How to Be a Conservative Liberal Socialist?

In his reply to Peter Wagner's critique that there might be skeptical and conservative undertones in Jóhann P. Árnason's work, the criticized author answered: "I am untroubled by the suggestion that there are conservative undertones in my theorizing. Sometime in the 1970s, Leszek Kolakowski wrote an essay called 'How to be a conservative liberal socialist'; his thesis was that it is possible to imagine a coherent position drawing in selective ways on the three traditions mentioned in the title. The argument can be taken seriously without accepting the particular combination that Kolakowski had in mind; if we look for examples of thinkers fitting the general description, Emile Durkheim and Jan Patočka may be the first who come to mind."

Similarly, Fabian Heubel criticizes Axel Honneth's arguments based on his own experiences with the "Chinese modernity." Heubel mentions a normative paradox that is constitutive of modern politics, pointing out both the positive and negative aspects of the major political ideologies – liberalism, socialism, conservatism. The point is that the Great French Revolution sought the equal realization of all three principles (liberty, equality, fraternity), and yet, they competed against one another and tended not to be realized reciprocally, but unilaterally, immediately.

Although Heubel admits that it was Honneth who drew his attention to investigating the normative paradoxes of the present, unlike Honneth he refuses to "pathologize" these paradoxes, nor does he believe that they can be definitively overcome. He therefore stresses the necessity of leaving enough room for equality, but especially fraternity in both philosophical and social and political thinking, which Honneth does not do sufficiently. Heubel prefers the term "paradoxical communication" to "social freedom" and suggests we learn to "think and act paradoxically," leaning heavily on Zhuangzi. The problem, according to Heubel, is not the "paradoxical constellation" itself, but the inability to respond to such a paradox.

In my talk, I will comment on Heubel's work and attempt to develop out of it a sort of pedagogy stimulating a relational understanding of selfhood, and a kind of cross-cultural agency searching for "middle position" – not only in political issues.

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The New Concepts of "Emotions" in Warring States Chinese Philosophy

Several scholars have noted the increased attention to emotions and the inner life in Chinese philosophy in the 4th century BC. While earlier texts such as Confucius's *Analects* and the *Book of Songs* are also full of emotional descriptions, the 4th century saw new concepts emerge that not only designate individual emotions but emotions as a general and clearly delineated category. The most famous – and also most controversial – of these concepts is *qíng* 情, which is highly polysemous and links emotions not only to human nature but to anything that

constitutes unadulterated reality. In addition comes the occasional use of *zhì* 志, which usually refers to long-term goals or aspirations, to cover the short-term fluctuations of emotional life. A different type of concept comes with antonym compounds such as *xǐ-nù* 喜怒 (lit., joy and anger) and *āi-lè* 哀樂 (lit., sadness and pleasure), both of which are frequently used to refer to emotions in general, not just the specific emotions that are explicitly mentioned. These new concepts change much of the discourse surrounding emotions and place it within larger philosophical frameworks. Moreover, each of the new concepts does so in a different way, for though all of them can be roughly translated as 'emotions', their connotations and philosophical implications differ. This talk will discuss the contributions of these concepts to the philosophy of emotions in the Warring States period.

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Dao as liberating potential: Entering Christoph Menke and Daoism into a dialogue.

In his recent book *Theorie der Befreiung* (*Theory of Liberation*), Christoph Menke asks how we can make a new start. The classical form of liberty as self-determined action cannot achieve this: It is limited to repeating habitual patterns of actions. A new start, Menke argues, can only come from an "esthetic experience", from a fascination by something outside of us.

There are at least two aspects where Menke's philosophy comes into close contact with Daoism. (1) Spontaneity can only happen receptively, by determination from the outside. This is to some degree parallel to *wuwei*, where our behaviour is determined by Dao. (2) The object of fascination is for Menke the Indeterminate in opposition to the Determinate. The Indeterminate is that which has the potential to be determined. This gets very close to the idea of Dao as the shapeless which generates all shape. (There is a third parallel that the talk will have to skip: the very Daoist concept of Force (Kraft) that Menke establishes in his writings on esthetics.)

Menke's theory of liberation enables to link the Daoist concepts of Nothingness and of *wuwei* with the classical Western question of liberty. If he is right, then subjective liberty is based on conditions that it cannot provide itself as it is unable to make a new start. Can the concept of *wuwei* provide insight into these preconditions which liberty itself is unable to explain or provide? Can we understand the experience of Dao as liberation?

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Reconciling Contradictions: Desires as Both Integral to and Detrimental to Human Nature in the *Wenzi*

While the *Wenzi* 文子 asserts that desires are part of human nature, it simultaneously contends that they are a source of harm to human flourishing. I examine this contradiction through a careful reading of the text, considering its philosophical implications for understanding selfhood in Chinese thought. The first part of my talk analyzes the argument that desires are

intrinsic to human nature, drawing from key passages that emphasize their role in motivating action and thus shaping the human experience. The second part addresses the text's critique of desires as detrimental to human well-being, leading a person to stray from the self. By comparing this tension with other Chinese philosophical frameworks, I argue that the *Wenzi* offers a nuanced conception of selfhood, where desires both shape and threaten human nature.

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The Actual and the Possible: Wang Yangming on the True Self

In this paper, I present Wang Yangming 王陽明's notion of the true self (真己). At least from a Western perspective, there seems to be an ambiguity pertaining to the notion of self in Wang and Confucian philosophy, more broadly construed. On the one hand, Wang describes the true self as a principle of (natural) life, that is, something that is always already going on. Here, the true self is explanatory of change or life activities. On the other hand, the true self denotes the way human life is characterized by a distinction between right and wrong, good and bad. Here, it denotes an inherent reality of the heart-mind (心之本體) that must still be put into practice. Hence, there seems to be a tension within the notion of the self, insofar as it is, at the same time, both something actual and something possible. It is both something that is already efficacious in us and explanatory of our life activities and something that requires our attentiveness to make it efficacious. Drawing on Wang's reflections, remarks by his disciple Wang Ji 王幾, and contemporary Neo-Aristotelian accounts of natural goodness, I examine the notion of self through a contrast between what I call actualism and possibilism.

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Are Emotions Superfluous? The Zhuangzi Meets Contemporary Neuroscience on the Study of Emotion

The Daoist text *Zhuangzi* is often interpreted as dismissing human emotions, particularly with its assertion that "human beings can be without emotions (*qing*)." At first glance, this perspective appears to conflict with contemporary neuroscience, which emphasizes that emotions are crucial for decision-making, rational thought, and psychological well-being. However, a deeper examination reveals that the philosophy of Zhuangzi may offer insights that complement, rather than contradict, modern scientific understanding.

This paper explores the tension between the *Zhuangzi*'s philosophical views on emotions and the findings of contemporary neuroscience. I argue that both the *Zhuangzi* and neuroscience recognize the close relationship between cognition and emotion, acknowledging that misguided cognition can lead to harmful emotional states. The *Zhuangzi*'s statement that "human beings can be without emotions" should not be taken to mean that emotions are superfluous or useless. Instead, it suggests that individuals can learn to avoid being harmed by emotions that arise from attachments to likes and dislikes.

Additionally, both the *Zhuangzi* and neuroscience highlight that emotions and our sense of self are actively constructed. Both the philosophy of *Zhuangzi* and neuroscientific research point to the potential for managing emotions more effectively by reshaping our self-concept. This paper provides practical strategies for integrating these insights, such as mindfulness and cognitive reframing, to enhance emotional resilience and overall well-being.

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礼之情文：论早期儒家如何塑造普遍自我

对普遍自我的认知与探讨，是早期儒家哲学突破的重要标志之一。以往研究多侧重于通过"心"与"性"来阐释这一主题，然而，早期儒家还通过"礼"的"情"与"文"两个维度，深入回应了"什么是真正的人"这一核心问题。"情"指人的内在真实情感，"文"则代表外在的礼仪形式。面对"礼"越来越流于表面功夫的礼崩乐坏之现实，早期儒家学者强调，"人"应该以礼的方式存在，但其外在表现（文）须符合其内在的真实情感（情），通过对礼之情文的讨论，早期儒家构建了一种既体现内在真实又融通外在礼仪的普遍自我观，其中圣人是理想典范。

The Emotional and Formal Dimensions of Ritual: How Early Confucianism Constructed the Concept of the Universal Self

The recognition and exploration of the universal self represent a significant hallmark of philosophical innovation in early Confucianism. Previous studies have largely focused on the concepts of "heart" (*xin* 心) and "nature" (*xing* 性) to explain the notion of the universal self in early Confucianism. However, early Confucians also addressed this idea through the dual dimensions of *qing* (情, genuine emotions) and *wen* (文, formal expressions) in the context of *li* (礼, ritual). This approach allowed them to deeply engage with the central question: "What defines a true person?" In early Confucian texts, *qing* refers to one's authentic inner emotions, while *wen* represents the external forms of ritual expression. Confronted with the disintegration of ritual practices (*li*) into superficial formalism during the chaotic era of *li collapse* (礼崩乐坏), early Confucian scholars emphasized a ceremonial being must transcend mere outward formalities (*wen* 文) and be grounded in genuine inner emotions (*qing* 情). By harmonizing *qing* and *wen*, early Confucians constructed a vision of the universal self that integrates authentic inner reality with the outward framework of ritual. The *sage* (*sheng ren*, 圣人) stands as the ideal exemplar of this integrated universal self.

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The Art and Dialectics of Recognizing Philosophy - A Case for Intercultural Philosophy

Recognizing philosophy or philosophizing is not easy, and the question of what philosophy or philosophizing is has been at its own center since its inception. This is especially true when we inquire about the possibility or existence of "non-Western" philosophies. What we call philosophy is, now more than ever, strongly dependent on our popular or academic education, the trends of our time, selected authors, and surrounded by disciplinary constraints. Rarely, however, are archives consulted on these questions; instead, more or less well-founded opinions or quotes are exchanged. But if philosophy could be reproduced in these opinions, it would probably not be philosophy at all. Since philosophy and its topics is still negotiated exclusively "in Western terms" today, a clarification from a Western perspective seems all the more important to me. Using examples from conceptual history and contemporary discussions, I will demonstrate which hermeneutical errors, doxographical cuts and narrowings, battlegrounds, mistranslations, and logical fallacies lead to certain conceptions of what philosophy is. When considering these problems from an intercultural perspective, the issue arises that "others" are confronted with conceptions, and they eventually either imitate them, accept them as fact, or differentiate themselves from them and enter into a dialectical relationship in and on Western terms. This lecture aims to clarify the pitfalls and aporias of our own conception of "What is philosophy?" and to provide outlooks on how a "global" concept of "philosophy" allows us to expand our understanding of "philosophy" in a way that is acceptable under the conditions of mutual understanding.

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Redefining the Agent in the Light of Early Chinese Excavated Texts

A recurrent theme in the philosophical texts of the Warring States period, both excavated and transmitted, is the search for the "locus of power"—the position enabling autonomous decision-making and the management of complex processes that cannot be controlled through force or sheer will. This locus, however, does not necessarily correspond to the notion of an individual subject. An alternative perspective involves engaging seriously with the processual and holistic worldview prevalent in early Chinese philosophical texts, and examining its implications for the categories of subject and object, as well as for knowledge and agency.

The presentation focuses on the application of this alternative ontology to the concept of agency. Drawing on both transmitted and excavated texts, it seeks to elucidate how the locus of power is conceptualised in strictly processual terms, including the "precursors" of action, namely qing (情, actual situatedness) and xing (性, general disposition). Specifically, the paper addresses the reformulation of the concept of the agent, with the aim of redefining conventional categories of subject and object as derivative of a unified process of intentional relationality.

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Intergenerational Responsibility: A Confucian Perspective

What insights, if any, can Confucian philosophy offer us to conceptualize an account of intergenerational responsibility? In this paper, I criticize Hourdequin and Wong's account and then provide my alternative theory.

Drawing on a relational conception of persons, Marion Hourdequin and David Wong argue that the Confucian conception of gratitude and reciprocity can forge a shared commitment towards a flourishing transgenerational community. In his earlier work on a relational conception of persons, Wong addresses two senses of relationality: the social conception of the self and the developmental sense of relationality. Both senses of relationality are construed in terms of the individual's identity formation. In the context of intergenerational ethics, Wong's analysis of relationality reflects the mechanism underlying "the immortality view" they criticized. Although they argue that their "relational view" points to a community-based sense of intergenerational responsibility, they do not explain how the relational conception of persons sustains such a transgenerational community.

By contrast, I argue that early Confucian thinkers' work suggests that a Confucian self has an acute sense of one's place in the time. This temporal way of understanding one's selfhood and place manifests in the juxtaposition between "the aged" and "the young," which is a prominent theme in Confucian texts. Moreover, the idea that a person always lives in time also looms large in Confucian thinkers' understanding of a flourishing life. Furthermore, Mencius' work suggests that the current generation is concerned with future generations because they have a direct sense of responsibility for them.

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Ethics of Participation in the *Xìcí Zhuàn* 繫辭傳

The philosophy of the *Zhōuyì* 周易 ("*Changes* of the Zhōu") and its traditional commentaries is widely regarded not only to provide fundamental insights into the metaphysics of change and transformation but also to engender a distinctively practical dimension that exerts a formative influence on the development of Chinese thought in the pre-Hàn period. In this talk, I aim to present a paradigmatic normative framework found in the philosophical explanations of the *Xìcí Zhuān* 繫辭傳 ("Commentary on the Appended Phrases"), an influential commentary to the *Zhōuyì,* in order to illustrate precisely how theoretical and practical dimensions of early Chinese philosophy of change interlock. This picture – which I call the *participatory account of normativity* (PAN) – centers on human beings' positionality and role within a cosmos driven by generative processes of change and transformation: it is the particular relation that human selves have to the world they inhabit that requires them to participate in the generative processes of the *Dào*. I argue that this account illustrates how early Chinese philosophy of change conjoins theoretical and practical concerns: the metaphysical and epistemological question of how human beings can relate to reality is fundamentally a practical matter, consisting in taking an appropriate role within the cosmic process.

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On the Soul as Self / 论作为自我的灵魂

根据宇宙大爆炸理论，宇宙是由奇点爆炸而成。据此，作为原始原子的奇点只是一个物质的存在，其本身不具有价值属性，因而由其爆炸形成的宇宙也不可能具有价值属性。因此，我们生存其间的世界是一个物质世界，可用"易有太极"的"易"来表达之。价值来自另外一个世界，可称之为"藏"。作为物质和生命本原的易与作为价值和意义本原的藏是两个相互独立的世界，灵魂则是沟通二者的桥梁。故易、藏和灵魂共同构成了道，而藏才是真正的价值本原。因此，生命乃灵魂之工具，灵魂才是真正的自我，而提升灵魂、成就灵魂才是人生的真正意义。

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Becoming a Sage: Self-Sanctification Through Lineage-Inscription in Gongyang Confucianism, Past and Present

Chinese philosophers have used various techniques to lend credibility to their theories, but this task becomes all the more complex in an esoteric tradition that was interrupted for over 1,500 years like Gongyang Confucianism (*Gongyangxue* 公羊學). Why should intellectuals and politicians during the Qing dynasty and contemporary times adopt the often radical ideas for reform proposed by scholars of the *Gongyang zhuan*?

With the help of three case studies spanning more than two hundred years, my presentation demonstrates how Gongyang Confucians, past and present, inscribed themselves into a formerly discontinued tradition to give weight to their ideas. These include Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776–1829), the first full-fledged Gongyang Confucian of the Qing, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), a late Qing reformer, and Jiang Qing 蔣慶 (1953–), one of the founding fathers of Mainland New Confucianism. Building upon the classical foundation of the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, Gongyang Confucians attempt to reread the Classics in search for legal precedents, a new political system, or a whole new world-view, inevitably impressing their own ideas onto tradition. In this process, none of them merely uses tradition as proof, instead they sanctify their own theories through self-inscription into the Gongyang lineage. By analyzing these scholars' cases, I shed a light on how lineage-inscription can create credibility for esoteric theories and turn scholars into sages.

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How to be Modelled on Heaven: Two Visions of Shangtong 上同 in Early Chinese Political Thought

In Mohist political philosophy, an essential way leading to an ideal society is to conform the above, namely *shangtong* 上同, which is commonly considered as an exclusive Mohist thought. However, *shangtong* is also proposed for ideal governance by the Huanglao 黄老 silk manuscript, which was buried around 168 BC and excavated from Mawangdui 馬王堆 in 1973. By investigating the two visions of *shangtong*, this article will illustrate an intimate yet overlooked relation between the two seemingly divergent philosophies concerning how to govern a society. First, this article suggests that both visions of *shangtong* can be considered as responses to the Confucian philosophy of harmony. Confucian harmony requires individuals to adopt particular ways to adjust varying conditions. In contrast, both Mohists and Huanglao silk manuscript focus on objective principles rather than individual judgements for governance. This article further suggests that all the objective principles proposed by the *Mozi* and Huanglao silk manuscript are essentially modelled on heaven. Heaven is the ultimate source to which both visions of *shangtong* require people to conform. Mohist modelling on heaven is by inference. For examples, the core principles "inclusive care" and "inclusive benefits" are inferred from heaven's features, broadness and selflessness. To formulate its *shangtong* theory, the Huanglao silk manuscript adopts crucial Mohist terms, but its modelling is by following heaven, in other words, the laws of nature.

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《周易》中的自我与物（提要）

《周易》是根源性的中国哲学，《周易》中的自我与物具有共同的物质-能量基础，同时它们是共同在场的。物各有性，并在观察中被归类确认。自我在意识-肉身的意义上与物具有共同性，同样是被观察的对象，但在意识的意义上是区分于物的。意识的自我的特性是在观察物性的过程中不断被丰富的，同时又以意识-肉身的自我参与到物的演化世界中。物性的确认既是一个客观的过程，也是一个意识自我在观察物的过程中建立的主观的过程。意识自我的观察包括了对意识自我的反观。观察是决定性的过程，无论是动态，还是静态，观察的基本形态是直观。直观是自我与物共同在场的前提，也是结果。直观决定了自我与物的关系。

The Self and the Object in the *Book of Changes*

The *Book of Changes* is a foundational work of Chinese philosophy. In the *Book of Changes*, the self and the object share a common material-energy basis, and they are both present together. Objects have their own natures and are classified and confirmed through observation. The self shares commonality with objects in terms of consciousness and the physical body, and it is also an object of observation. However, in the sense of consciousness, it is distinct from objects. The characteristics of the conscious self are continually enriched in the process of observing the nature of objects, while the conscious-physical self also participates in the evolving world of objects. The confirmation of the nature of objects is both an objective process and a subjective process established by the conscious self in observing objects. The observation of the conscious self includes introspection. Observation is a decisive process, whether dynamic or static. The basic form of observation is intuition. Intuition is both the precondition and result

of the mutual presence of the self and the object. Intuition determines the relationship between the self and the object.

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Zhuangzian Perspective on AI Alignment

Since the emergence of ChatGPT in 2022, discussions surrounding the philosophy of artificial intelligence (AI) have intensified, particularly focusing on AI alignment. These discussions often adopt a cautious stance, largely due to their reliance on traditional ethics, which are inherently anthropocentric. This article critically examines the prevalence of anthropocentric ethics in AI alignment debates, highlighting significant challenges posed by viewing AI as a new species. The aim is not to undermine the legitimacy of AI alignment concerns but to highlight the limitations of applying traditional ethical frameworks to AI-related philosophical questions. I then tentatively propose considering AI as a biological and autonomous technological species, suggesting that the *Zhuangzi* may offer alternative insights into AI alignment. A Zhuangzian approach acknowledges the moral status of AI and moves beyond human-centric perspectives, embracing a more comprehensive understanding of the roles of both humans and AI within the larger ecosystem.

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Self-Cultivation and Objectivity in Mathematics: On Liu Hui's Neo-Daoist Reception of the *Zhuangzi*

In the "Floods of Autumn" Chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, being without self results from the knowledge that the distinction between great and small is in itself ultimately petty. Since this distinction is closely connected to numbers (*Zhuangzi Yinde* 43/17/23) the passage gives rise to the question whether mathematicians can rise to an understanding of *dao*. I propose to look at the work of Liu Hui for an interesting approach to this problem. His *Commentary to the Nine Chapters on Mathematical Procedures* (263 AD) shows Liu Hui not only as a great mathematician, but also as an original Neo-Daoist thinker. I argue that Liu Hui sees himself as someone who has gone through a process of self-cultivation and thereby acquired a *dao*: the ability to go along perfectly with the patterns of things as cook Ding in the *Zhuangzi*. His "knife" are number words which he uses to cut up situations in ways which enable him to come up with new solutions. The reason he can do this is that each situation can mathematically described in many different ways, though still in accordance with objective features of the world. At the heart of Liu Hui's *dao* is the knowledge that numbers like other ways of drawing distinctions are man-made and can be changed. This understanding forbids master mathematicians to stick fastidiously to their own view, but allows for a positive sense of self as creative subject.

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Self-Cultivation, Breath, and Aesthetics: Reflections on the "Learning of Breath" developed by ZHANG Zai and WANG Fuzhi

This paper will address the following question: If one abandons the value hierarchy between immanence and transcendence, between the physical and the metaphysical world, thus undermining the metaphysical basis of spiritual cultivation, how can the relationship between self-cultivation, aesthetics and ethics be critically rethought? According to Mou Zongsan (1909-1995), there is a strong tension between the "learning of breath" and moral self-cultivation. Can ZHANG Zai and WANG Fuzhi help to develop a more positive relationship between self-cultivation, breath and aesthetics? I will focus in particular on an important but rather obscure phrase that appears in ZHANG Zai's work: "dual essencing without adherence" (兼體無累) and its meaning as an ascetic practice (工夫) within his "learning of breath".

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Being and Way: Between Daoist and Pre-Socratic Approaches

In this presentation, I will take up the concept of a "mutual mirroring of Chinese and Greek civilizations" and reflect it in the context of comparative and transcultural approaches to Daoist philosophy. I look into the relation between Daoist and pre-Socratic approaches to Being and Way (存在與道), commonly understood as paradigmatic positions that distinguish ancient Greek and Chinese philosophies respectively, and discuss the significance of a transcultural entanglement that allows to speak of *Being* in Daoist philosophy and the *Way* in pre-Socratic thought. An important link between the two is Martin Heidegger's attempt to work with pre-Socratic and Daoist sources at the same time. Because his "Daoist" readings of pre-Socratic texts have been intertwined with a far-reaching problematization of the metaphysical tradition in Europe from Plato to Nietzsche, and the controversial idea of "another beginning", Heidegger's approach is also helpful in reflecting upon the geopolitical ramifications of Chinese-Greek civilizational dialogue.

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The Social Dimension in Ji Kang's 嵇康 "On the Dispelling of Concealment" 釋私論

In the past, most scholars' discussions on Ji Kang's 嵇康 "On the Dispelling of Concealment" 釋私論 have approached the text from the perspective of virtue ethics or Daoist naturalism, focusing on the inner cultivation of the subject in "dispelling concealment and revealing true

feelings." This approach often leads to an interpretation that downplays the significance of "Confucian teachings 名 教." As a result, the importance of the external conditions supporting inner cultivation is frequently overlooked. In recent years, although research on "On the Dispelling of Concealment" has shown a tendency to extend the discussion from the "private" subject to the objective realm of the "public," it continues to analyse the text through the lens of the public- private or sincerity-concealment contrast. This prevents the previous studies from exploring the specific content of the "public" realm in detail. This paper will attempt to examine the social aspects of "On the Dispelling of Concealment" and argue that the text that considers these social aspects are the essential conditions for the individual's practice of "dispelling concealment and revealing true feelings." In doing so, this paper hopes to demonstrate how moving away from the public-private contrast paradigm allows us to have a more in-depth/holistic understanding of Ji Kang's philosophy.

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Wandering Far and Unfettered: On Immigrants, Fluid Borders, Transforming Identity, and the Unity of All Things in Zhuangzi's Philosophy

In an increasingly interconnected global environment, migration and its associated issues have come to the forefront of discussion. Migration is not exclusively motivated by warfare or oppressive conditions; individuals traverse borders irrespective of systemic support, often for varying durations and across diverse regions. Global politics, economics, and cultural policies are intricately linked to concepts of identity and territorial boundaries. What may initially appear as ideological or civilizational conflict fundamentally revolves around identity. Acknowledging and affirming one's identity has become imperative in global politics. In addition to contemporary thinkers such as Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington, the philosophy of "transformation" (*hua* 化) articulated by the *Zhuangzi* provides significant insights into identity issues that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. This paper is divided into four sections. The first section analyzes Zhuangzi's philosophy of transformation, positing that borders are fluid and that identities do not possess fixed essences. It significantly implies the equality of civilizations and contends that cultural development is a hybrid process. The second section examines the self-transitions of migrants, noting that Zhuangzi underscores the continuity of identity beyond mere national survival. The third section investigates attitudes towards the migration of others, advocating for mutual respect and the freedom for self-transformation. Finally, the fourth section discusses Zhuangzi's ideal political community, which transcends anthropocentric governance, embraces diversity and fluidity, and embodies the unity of all thing's existence.

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王船山「太虛之神」偶然之必然義

「偶然」常為衛道者所輕忽，以為其無普遍義。牟宗三先生晚年推薦王船山（Wang Chuan-shan, 1619-1692）的一思想特色曰「大來大往」，因而本文由「太虛」幽明往來為研究始點。研究方法為比較法、詮釋法，以船山晚年所著的《張子正蒙注》、《周易內傳》為主要文獻。主題及成果為：（1）氣「聚散」太虛，陰陽「感」而生「神」，此即「太和」之時。「感」為偶然，「太和」為必然。（2）「太虛之神」在宇宙亦在人。（3）康德（Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804）於《判斷力批判》處理「偶然」的問題，船山「和」之必然義裨益理解「審美判斷」。自然概念之界域沒有比「和諧」更接近道德者。

Necessity of Contingency by Wang Chuan-shan's "Shen of the Great Void"

"Contingency" is often ignored by those who defend morality, who think that it has no universal meaning. Mou Tsung-san recommended in his later years the ideological characteristics of Wang Chuan-shan (1619-1692): "Come large, go large", so the starting point of this article's research is "Great Void," "bend and stretch" and "go and come." The research methods are comparative and interpretive, with "Chang tzu cheng meng chu" and "Chou i nei chuan" written by Wang Chuan-shan in his later years as the main documents. The topics and results are: (1) Qi gathers and disperses in the Great Void. That Yin and Yang "interact" to create "Shen" is just the moment of "Great Harmony." "Interact" is Contingency, "Great Harmony" is Necessity. (2) "Shen of the Great Void" exists in the "universe" and also in "human beings." (3) Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) dealt with the issue of "Contingency" in *The Critique of Judgment*. The meaning of Necessity of "Harmony" in Wang Chuang-Shen's philosophy is helpful for understanding "The Judgment of Taste." Nothing in the realms of natural concepts is closer to morality than "harmony."

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An Exemplarist Reading of Mencius's Rhetoric

First theorized by Linda Zagzebski, moral exemplarism suggests that admiration for moral exemplars is the starting point of our moral inquiry. Amy Olberding has applied this theory to the *Analects*, identifying Confucius's "goodness" through the bibliographic and narrative details in the text. This article seeks to apply a similar approach to the *Mencius*, aiming to understand Mencius as a moral exemplar, not through his doctrines but through him as a person. Unlike Confucius in the *Analects*, however, the *Mencius* provides little direct information about Mencius's life, actions, or physical appearance. Instead, it offers a series of complex and dynamic dialogues, which are more varied in length, style, and content than those in the *Analects*. Mencius's rhetorical style, therefore, provides insights into his being an exemplar. This article analyzes Mencius's use of rhetoric, highlighting qualities such as assertiveness, directness, and eloquence, which portray him as a confident, unapologetic, and courageous defender of the Confucian Way. Additionally, his ability to draw on ordinary experiences and appeal to his audience's desires and emotions demonstrates his skill in reading others' intentions and adjusting his rhetoric accordingly. In other words, Mencius's speech reflects his practice of the doctrines in 2A2, specifically to "understand words" (知言 *zhi yan*) and to

"nurture flood-like qi" (養氣 *yang qi*). Ultimately, the consistency between Mencius's words and actions not only attests to his character but also explains the distinctive appeal of the text attributed to him.

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Deeper than the Skin?: A Humanistic Interpretation of Stories about Metamorphosis between Humans and Animals in Medieval China

Like many other civilizations, China uses nonhuman animals as the "other" to delineate the boundaries of the human world in order to establish the ethical order that defines the humanity. However, the desperate wish to distinguish between humans and animals often masks the underlying awareness of how thin the line that separates them is. To explore these blurry boundaries, this paper examines stories about metamorphosis between humans and animals in the *Taiping Guangji* 《太平廣記》. Beyond rationality and morality, the act of putting on or taking off fur or clothing often serves as a threshold for metamorphosis in medieval stories. This paper argues that fur patterns distinguish different animals from one another, just as clothes and decorum distinguish humans from the non-human. However, unlike animals' naturally grown fur, we, as naked creatures, become "human" in a civilized world through the socially woven "wen" (文), a concept that includes both decorative patterns on clothing (紋) and cultural patterns (文). These metamorphosis stories can be viewed as a thought experiment about "wen": if humans become "human" by donning "wen," what happens when they take on the fur of animals? What happens when animals shed their fur? And what if animals were to put on "wen"? By exploring "wen" as a manifestation of nature, a catalyst for metamorphosis, and a covering of nature, we uncover an alternative to the "human-animal distinction" and rethink what it means to be human through becoming non-human.

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Does Death Bring Friendship to an End? Loyalty and Duty in Confucian Friendship

Death has long been intertwined with friendship. In Cicero's *De Amicitia*, Laelius the Wise mourns his best friend with gratitude, believing that their friendship has made his life more complete (IV.15 & 13). Montaigne describes his life as "dragging wearily on" after the death of his friend Étienne de La Boétie, 17 years prior (Montaigne, 1993: 205-19). Yet, two questions remain: Does friendship persist after the friend's death and does the bereaved hold any duty toward the dead? This paper aligns with scholars such as Ratcliffe (2016), Campbell (2014), and Norlock (2017) in arguing that the relationship between the dead and the bereaved can be meaningful even though non-reciprocal. Such a relationship can be experienced through how the bereaved continue to think of and relate to the deceased (Ratcliffe, 2016: 210). Drawing on Confucian philosophy, this paper identifies two senses of loyalty in friendship. First, one's

loyalty to the living friend entails support and a commitment to their moral growth (*Analects*, 1.8, 9.25, 13.28). Second, the bereaved person's loyalty to the friend after their death involves honoring their will and carrying forward their aspirations in self-cultivation. It is well exemplified in Confucius's advice on Yan Hui's funeral (*Analects*, 11.11) and his praise for Yan's dedication to learning (*Analects*, 6.3, 6.11, 9.11, 9.21, 11.7). Both senses of loyalty require one's moral excellence as well as deep understanding of one's friend. Therefore, we not only owe loyalty to our deceased friend but also should make efforts to form a deep understanding of them while we can.

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Roles, Anger, and Resentment

In this presentation, I explore the ability to express anger in response to being wronged, focusing on the constraints imposed by certain social and familial roles within the Confucian tradition. I argue that these roles can hinder an individual's capacity to protest injustices committed against them. When avenues for blame—often understood as communicative acts—are limited, individuals may resort to resentment, potentially leading to traits commonly described as bitterness. The Confucian tradition regards the capacity to feel anger (怒) in the face of injustice as a defining characteristic of the exemplary person, with anger serving as a motivator for morally meaningful actions (e.g., *Mencius* 3A5). Resentment (怨), by contrast, is depicted as a response associated with "petty people" or women, reflecting a passive stance often shaped by specific social and familial roles. I argue that resentment reflects a passivity that undermines the capacity for anger and, consequently, the ability to protest injustice. Moreover, I contend that the inability to protest—either publicly or privately—constitutes an epistemic harm for individuals in such roles. Over time, the internalization of this inability may impair their capacity to recognize injustices or appropriately assign responsibility for wrongs. Ultimately, I argue that the ability to respond with anger, rather than resentment, should serve as a critical criterion for assessing whether social and familial roles align with the cultivation of robust moral agency.

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Empathy and the Self-Other Merging in Neo-Confucianism

Empathy is a phenomenon in which an agent feels (in contrast to feels about, as is the case with sympathy) what their patient feels and, when the feeling is negative, has an urge to help the patient to get rid of the cause of the negative feeling, the suffering or pain. In contemporary psychological and philosophical studies of this phenomenon, it is recognized that there is a self-other merging taking place through the empathy. There is a disagreement, however, regarding its nature. In this paper, I shall provide a neo-Confucian conception of this self-other merging and argue that it is preferable to those found in contemporary moral psychology and ethics. I

shall focus on the Song Neo-Confucian Cheng Mingdao (程明道) and his idea of a benevolent person feeling to be in one body with ten thousand things (仁者與天地萬物為一體), which has been regarded even by Michael Slote, who has done the most thorough philosophical studies of empathy, as the earliest philosophical conception of empathy. I shall show that, for Cheng, the self-other merging taking place in empathy is not one in which two originally separate being completely overlap into one, or two originally different beings becomes two identical beings, either like two identical cars produced by the same manufacturer or as two persons who think, feel, desire, and will the exactly the same. Rather it is a process in which the two originally separated persons are connected into one single body.

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The Forgetting and Non-forgetting (忘 不忘) Sequence and the Yinyang Reasoning

In early philosophical texts of the Chinese tradition, what we refer to as remembrance is more often than not expressed in negative vocabulary such as *buwang*, translatable as not forgetting. What does this say about the understanding of memory in these early texts? And what implications does this have on our understanding of the mnemic (memory-related) process? My study first couples non-forgetting with its antonym, forgetting, subjecting their sequence for further examination. Given the Chinese context and evidence from earlier research, I argue that the forgetting and non-forgetting sequence corresponds to the *yinyang* reasoning. One implication of this argument concerns the mutual relations between the two forms and the former's supportive role in the mnemic process. How does forgetting support non-forgetting or remembrance? In answering this question, I next demonstrate how, on the plane of awareness, in accord with the *yinyang* reasoning, forgetting and non-forgetting represent two complementing and intertwined dynamic factors rather than two polarities. Granted the *yinyang* reasoning and the narrative attribute of all mnemic processes, I introduce what I call the axis and margins paradigm for that purpose. The axis represents *buwang,* whereas the margins indicate *wang*. Furnishing my claim with textual examples, I submit that the translation of *buwang* should be modified to signify attentive awareness while *wang* more accurately corresponds to suspended awareness. My discussion concludes by showing how the application of the *yinyang* reasoning to our understanding of the mnemic process reveals the merit of consulting Chinese sources for comparative philosophy.

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A Comparative Study of Zhuangzi's Ethics and Care Ethics: From the Perspective of "Prioritizing the Other"

This paper investigates the ethical frameworks of Zhuangzi's philosophy and care ethics through their shared emphasis on "prioritizing others." I will begin by reconstructing Zhuangzi's ethical outlook, focusing on his critique of rigid normative systems, his

prioritization of the "other," and his dissolution of the boundaries between the self and others, as illustrated in the chapters "Worldly Business Among Men" 人間世 and "The Sorting Which Evens Things Out" 齊物論. The second section explores care ethics' foundational principles of particularism and relationality, drawing on key theorists such as Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and Sarah Clarke Miller to underscore the central role of the "other" in moral reasoning. The third section offers a comparative analysis, revealing significant overlaps and critical differences in how Zhuangzi and care ethics approach context-sensitive morality and challenge universalist ethical norms. Ultimately, I argue that the convergences between the two traditions far outweigh their differences. The final section introduces the care dimension of Zhuangzi's ethics, a synthesis that integrates Zhuangzi's notions of "fasting of the heart" 心齋 and his dissolution of the border of self and others to address care ethics' practical challenges, such as the emotional strain on caregivers. This synthesis not only deepens our understanding of these ethical systems but also provides a robust framework for addressing challenges faced by relational ethical systems.

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The Application of Zhuangzian Wúwéi 無為 to Skill and Spontaneity

Wúwéi 無為 is one of the key concepts for understanding agency in early Chinese philosophy and Daoism in particular. While the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 (or: *Lǎozǐ* 老子) proclaims *wuwei* as a political maxim exclusively for rulers, the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 extends its application to various Daoist sages and ordinary people. Although both texts share non-anthropocentric attributes, such as linking *wuwei* with *dào* 道 and water, the *Zhuangzi* strongly emphasises the human realm. Often translated as "non-action" or "effortless action," *wuwei* underscores the importance of harmonious existence with the natural flow of life and the world by following the *dao*. It signifies a state in which individuals act spontaneously and effortlessly in a *zìrán* 自然 way, without striving for or imposing desired outcomes. This paper has two aims: First, to explore the multidimensional nature of *wuwei* in the *Zhuangzi*, encompassing cosmic, political, and personal aspects that intertwine in the text. I will argue that unravelling the text's intricate web of multifaceted senses reveals the Zhuangzian conception of a uniquely human experience. Secondly, I will apply *wuwei* to the case of climbing. This will reflect and further clarify the usage of the term in the *Zhuangzi*. In this way, the case study will signify the application of Zhuangzian *wuwei* to climbing as a uniquely human experience. According to this, embracing *wuwei* enables climbers to cultivate effortless engagement, respond spontaneously to their environment, unlock heightened creativity, and feel at ease and content.

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"When Young Men Are Violent:" Mengzi on the Political Economy of Moral Vulnerability

In Confucianism, human persons are characterized as being some form of relational self. This paper considers how an undertheorized element of relationality, namely political economy, bears on Mengzi's account of material adequacy and moral agency. Much commentary assumes a generic comprehensive class of human beings when clarifying Mengzi's account of moral development—e.g. the extension of the four "sprouts". But I think it is clear that Mengzian moral development gets entangled with a politics of *min*/masses (民). Mengzi's commitment to feudal monarchy, and his complicatedly humane account of structural adversity created by such a political economy, generates a political moral psychology that is burdened by a hierarchically bifurcated class of human beings. The upshot, I argue, is that Mengzi recognizes two tracks of moral development, one for elites and one for the masses. But exactly how to characterize this two-track account is challenging and is the task of this paper.

The paper has three parts. First, for context, I sketch a three-part taxonomy of Mengzian moral development, including his notion of moral resilience. Second, I characterize the tension between Mengzi's notion of universal moral potentiality and his political conception of the *min*/masses, and I argue that this tension is deeper than it seems. Third, I consider Chenyang Li's effort at reconciling the tension in terms of statistical necessity and argue for an alternative reading.

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Non-Political Human Rights? On Confucianism and Political Rights

For the past several decades, one of the most heated debates in contemporary Confucian political philosophy has been on the compatibility between Confucianism and human rights. Scholars upholding the incompatibility thesis argue that Confucianism, given its role ethics, is critically at odds with human rights. In contrast, the proponents of the compatibility thesis often attempted to justify the Confucian conception of human rights by drawing from, among others, Mencian Confucianism and Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism with a special focus on their shared philosophical accounts of human nature, moral self-cultivation, or the tradition of remonstrance. In this regard, Joseph Chan's study on the subject is path-breaking, which understands human rights as a "fallback apparatus," a normative mechanism that is called upon when otherwise virtuous and affective social relationships collapse, seriously damaging the victim's basic interests. Interestingly, though, Chan makes a distinction between human rights and political rights, and presents human rights in terms of "non-political human rights," thus regarding political rights such as the right to political participation as incompatible with Confucianism. Raising a question about the assumption that political rights be separated from human rights in a morally non-controversial way, this paper makes two arguments: first, that the distinction between political and non-political human rights is arbitrary and, second, that the rejection of the right to political participation is inconsistent with Confucian virtue ethics properly understood.

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Concerned Consciousness and the Culture of Joy: Dichotomy or Synthesis?

The works of Xu Fuguan and Li Zehou are a clear and direct reaction to the shock that China suffered from the confrontation with foreign cultures. Xu's and Li's concepts of concerned consciousness (*youhuan yishi* 忧患意识) and the culture of joy (*legan wenhua* 乐感文化), respectively, are key elements of their theories on the origins of Chinese culture. My juxtaposition of these concepts is done through a comparison with Heidegger's concepts of *Dasein* and *Angst*, for Martin Heidegger was an important source of inspiration for both Li Zehou and most modern Confucians, including Xu Fuguan. In this presentation, I will question the relationship between the concepts of the culture of joy and concerned consciousness, and contrary to most authors who emphasise that these concepts are in opposition to each other, I will argue that we can speak of a synthesis rather than a dichotomy between them. I will highlight elements of Li Zehou's theory that I believe open up new aspects of Chinese subjectality through an interplay between Xu's and Heidegger's concepts. Finally, I will embed the analysed concepts in the socio-political spirit of their time and explain for whom and why Xu and Li talked about them in the first place.

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《老子》「柔軟化剛強」的自我轉化藝術

本文主題在於理解《老子》的「柔軟化剛強」（柔弱勝剛強）的自我實踐與轉化藝術。並透過底下幾個核心子題來展開：一，所有的存在只能放在渾然「抱一」的關係互聯網，而獲得理解。二，人的「自我」在關連性的進退之間，宜實踐迂迴柔軟之道，以豐富共在共生的相互關係。三，轉化自見、自是的「剛強」，為「不自見不自是的「柔軟」。四，「柔弱勝剛強」並非權術謀略，而是深度的自我轉化。五，柔軟是促成「兩極」為「兩行」的共生德性。本文希望闡述《老子》柔軟的自我轉化藝術，並非僅屬個體內在的修養，它總是考量到「非同一性」的力量共在，因此才具有了共生哲學的公共意義。

Laozi's Ego-Transformative Aesthetics: "Softness Reverses the Strong"

The theme aims to comprehend Laozi's ego practice and transformative aesthetics of "Softness Reverses the Strong (Softness Excels the Strong)" unfolding with the sub-issues: First, all existences could be observed within the relationship network of "Embracing Unity." Second, it should be adequate to implement the ambiguous soft course between proceeding and retreating within the relative "subjectivity" so as to flourish the co-becoming. Third, it is to transform "The Strong of Self-Display and Self-Justice" into "Softness of No Self-Display and Self-Justice." Fourth, "Softness Overcomes the Strong", far from powerful tactics but in-depth ego transformation. Fifth, softness facilitates co-becoming virtuosity of two ways rather than two polars. The article eagerly elaborates "softness overcomes the strong", the aesthetics of transformation and self-fulfillment, is anything but merely internal cultivation of individual,

rather it normally deals with the co-existing power of "non-identicalness", characteristic of the public consensus toward the philosophy of co-becoming.

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Zhuangzian Doubleness

According to one plausible way of reading the *Zhuangzi*, certain passages (e.g. from chapters two, four, and seven) recommends a mode of agency that is seemingly spontaneous, empty, selfless, or mirror-like, while another set of passages (e.g. from chapter six) views such a 'heavenly' responsiveness as compatible with the co-presence of the more quotidian, 'human' agency, which is telic, evaluative, and often deliberate. Taking both the recommendation and the compatibility view seriously, I attempt to address two reasonable concerns. First, it seems that even the ability to apply theoretical concepts or apply concepts theoretically presupposes the ability to consider alternative courses of action, which is a *practical* and *deliberative* power (see e.g. McDowell, "Two sorts of naturalism"). If so, to what extent is the seemingly spontaneous or mirror-like – thus seemingly reflexive – agency in itself really possible? Second — regarding co-presence and co-expression – how is it possible to embody both the mirror-like and the telic agencies at the same time? More specifically: How is it possible for both to manifest themselves in the same act simultaneously? And what happens when one needs to deliberate what to do, especially when something has gone awry? Through some imaginative storytelling, I suggest a solution to the two puzzles, which is modeled after a *poetic* intelligence of a kind that spontaneously reflects the salient aspects of reality.

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A Female Confucian's Trouble with Confucianism: The Case of Kang Jeongildang

This paper investigates the philosophical struggle of Kang Jeongildang, a female Confucian scholar whose Confucian commitment to moral self-cultivation is unsupported and even impaired by Confucianism itself, both socially and philosophically. This problematic split in moral development is attributable to Confucian androcentrism, which justifies moral and social hierarchy between female and male as one of the important pillars of the well-ordered society. While the Confucian tradition conceives of women as having a crude and unrefined character compared to their male counterparts, it seldom discusses ways in which a female can morally cultivate herself to become a sage, despite its advocation of universal moral perfectibility. This creates a profound dilemma for Kang, a female living in a Confucian society, as the Confucian model of moral cultivation, which centers on ancient "male" sages with roles and responsibilities distinct from her own, offers her limited relevance. What also troubles Kang is her marginalization within the philosophical tradition that she deeply values as moral truth. Caught in the conundrum, Kang expands Confucian moral principles, emphasizes the centrality of human dignity to moral cultivation, and puts them into practice in her daily life. Through this

philosophical endeavor to affirm her own sense of dignity, she aims to enable all individuals, regardless of gender or designated social status, to actively pursue moral self-cultivation and lead dignified lives as moral agents.

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Analyzing the concept of the subject in Confucianism, Daoism, and Mohism from the perspective of the school of names and dialecticians

This article will examine the concepts of subject in Pre-Qin Confucianism, Daoism, and Mohism from the perspectives of the ancient Chinese school of names and dialecticians—such as the concepts of wo (我), zi (自), ji (己), and wu (吾)—and analyze the relationship between the name and reality of these concepts. It also points out from the classics of various schools: the moral subject of Confucianism, the debating subject of Mohism, and the affective subject of the different realms of Daoism. It explores the interactive relationship between the relative subject, the conscious subject, the metasubject, and the transcendent subject. These interactive relationships include: the relative subject arouses the consciousness of the conscious subject, the metasubject evaluates, judges, and guides the changes of the conscious subject, the conscious subject can also influence the metasubject's metamethod, and the transcendent subject has a unifying effect. The four mutually influence one another in a dynamic relationship of tense conflict and reconciliation. Finally, it summarizes the dialectical, holistic, ideal, and transcendent nature of the concept of the subject in Chinese philosophy.

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On *Cheng* (誠) and Creativity in the Family: A Comparative Study of Contemporary Confucian and British Psychoanalytical Traditions

This paper engages with two distinct intellectual traditions in 20th-century thought—contemporary Confucianism and British psychoanalysis—and provides a comparative interpretation of how creativity is understood within the context of family. Despite the apparent differences in philosophical assumptions, linguistic expressions, and methodological frameworks, both traditions recognize (co-)creativity at the center of human experience and emphasize the family's active role in promoting creativity. One concept that captures the idea of creativity in Confucianism is *cheng* (誠), which enables self-consummation (自成) and activates individual integrity, ultimately extending to worldly transformation. The metaphysical creativity in *cheng* can be supplemented with British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott's empirical creativity, formed with meaningful actions performed by ontologically confirmed Self in relation to others. Winnicott's framework is heavily grounded in relationships within the family (e.g., child-parent and married couple), and this framework in turn resonates with the crucial role that family plays in the Confucian tradition.

This paper is divided into three sections. First, building upon the arguments advanced by Roger Ames, David Hall, and Li Chenyang, this paper examines the rationale of interpreting *cheng* as creativity and confirms its significance in building immediate social experiences. Second, it introduces Winnicott's approach to living creatively and compares it with *cheng* within the family setting. Finally, this paper discusses whether family is necessary for creativity, contrasting the case above with creativity in artificial intelligence. This paper suggests selfhood as a requirement for creativity and argues that family plays a significant positive role in fostering selfhood.

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Inner Confucian, Outer Colonial Subject: LIM Boon Keng's Prescriptions for the Straits Chinese in the British Empire

The Straits Settlements was of outsized political and economic interest for the British and Qing Empires at the turn of the 20th century. Here, we attend to how they were both hybridised by the Straits Chinese philosopher and physician Dr LIM Boon Keng—who was one of the only two non-European members of the Straits Philosophical Society in Singapore, as well as its final recorded president. We focus on Lim's attempt to cultivate a Confucian interiority for the Straits Chinese community within the context of British colonial governance and education. Perhaps surprisingly, Lim staunchly advocated for this interiority to be nevertheless exteriorised as British imperial subjecthood: the British Empire was *the* vehicle for the universal development of Confucianism.

We reconstruct Lim's *fin-de-siècle* prescription to the Straits Chinese for a hybridised identity as well for expunging the superstitions that allegedly haunted *both* source cultures. This, according to him, was achieved with the light of scientific reason, which he identified with Confucianism and understood primarily with his training in Scottish Medicine: thus did British expansionism lack adequate moral guidance, while the Qing was pathologically compromised. Situating Lim's efforts within the political crises faced by both Britain and China at the time, his background in Scottish Medicine, and encounters with Late-Qing Confucianism, helps us better appreciate his woefully neglected efforts to modernise Confucianism and prefiguring contemporary discussions between Confucian and liberal political theorists. Furthermore, it mirrors to us hopes and worries that we might otherwise risk overlooking for similar hybridising undertakings today.

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两种儒家关系主义的道德动力：角色伦理学与关怀伦理学的比较

以关系主义解释儒家的理论可以儒家角色伦理学与关怀伦理学为代表。儒家角色伦理学认为在关系中自然生成价值，人在各种不同的关系中应充分扮演好自己的角色，发

挥自己的功能。儒家经典教人如何在关系中成为一个有道德的人。关怀伦理学认为在关系中，关心者对于被关心者产生"关心"的自然情感，两者的关心关系共同构成道德行为。这两种理论均反对以原子式的个人作为道德主体，反对普遍的道德规范与天生的美德，而注重特殊且具体的道德情境。然而，两者的道德动力有别，使得在解释儒家时，道德是否有必然有保证的论证强度也有所不同。

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On the Caring Dimension of the Concepts of "Xu 虚" and "Qi 氣" in the *Zhuangzi*

This article explores the imagination and connotation of "subjectivity" in the *Zhuangzi* through the concepts of "Xu 虚"and "Qi 氣", focusing on the ethical thinking of "relationality" and "care," an area less addressed in previous research. "Xu 虚" often evokes notions of nihilism, while "Qi 氣" leads to the homogenization of all things, erasing differences, and potentially resulting in a form of violence rooted in sameness. These interpretations present challenges for contemporary *Zhuangzi* studies, as both concepts seem to lack a positive ethical discourse.

However, this paper argues that the *Zhuangzi* requires these two concepts to uncover its distinctive ethical thought and the deep-seated implications of "care" within it. Using the concepts of "Xu 虚" and "Qi 氣" as analytical lenses, this study delves into the *Zhuangzi*'s notion of "subjectivity." On the one hand, it responds to the current state of cross-cultural *Zhuangzi* studies, proposing a new understanding of "subjectivity" in the text. On the other hand, it clarifies the ethical thinking of the *Zhuangzi* through the relational framework established by "Xu 虚"and "Qi 氣", The "care" implied within this framework can further be referenced and compared with the principles of care ethics, addressing some theoretical challenges within the latter. These two goals constitute the primary aims of this study.

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Zhuangzian Perspective on AI Alignment

Since the emergence of ChatGPT in 2022, discussions surrounding the philosophy of artificial intelligence (AI) have intensified, particularly focusing on AI alignment. These discussions often adopt a cautious stance, largely due to their reliance on traditional ethics, which are inherently anthropocentric. This article critically examines the prevalence of anthropocentric ethics in AI alignment debates, highlighting significant challenges posed by viewing AI as a new species. The aim is not to undermine the legitimacy of AI alignment concerns but to highlight the limitations of applying traditional ethical frameworks to AI-related philosophical questions. I then tentatively propose considering AI as a biological and autonomous technological species, suggesting that the *Zhuangzi* may offer alternative insights into AI alignment. A Zhuangzian approach acknowledges the moral status of AI and moves beyond

human-centric perspectives, embracing a more comprehensive understanding of the roles of both humans and AI within the larger ecosystem.

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Women's Empowerment in Song Confucian Context: A Comparative Study of Different Types of Textual Materials in the Song Dynasty

In discussions of idealized female images, scholars in Song dynasty frequently emphasized the importance of a strict division between the inner (*nei* 內) and outer (*wai* 外) spheres. However, the official histories and women's epitaphs—also written by Confucian scholars—praise instances where women actively interposed in outer affairs. How can these contradictory images of women be explained? This paper first examines how Song scholars used statements from traditional sources, in particular from the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) and the *Nüjie* 女誡 (*Admonitions for Women*), to craft an ideal female role within the societal framework of "rectifying women—harmonizing families— stabilizing the state" (*zheng nü, qi jia, ding tianxia* 正女，齊家，定天下). It then uses passages from the *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (*Biographies of Exemplary Women*) and epitaphs for women written by Song scholars as case studies to explore how women were in times of crisis sometimes compelled to cross the boundary between the inner and outer realms to help preserving this order, which caused scholars to reinterpret the Confucian classics in order to legitimize women's involvement in outer affairs. This form of "empowerment" may have been indirect, limited, or even unconscious for women, but it undeniably reflected genuine expectations and recognition of women's capabilities and roles in Song society.

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Explanatory Confucian Perfectionism: Constructing a Framework for Coexistence Between Confucianism and Individualism in a Pluralistic Era

Classical Confucian thought, often characterized by **collectivism**, emphasizes hierarchical social and ethical order through concepts such as the Three Cardinal Guides and Five Constant Virtues (三纲五常). Historically, Confucianism supported governance structures rooted in kinship and centralized authority, prioritizing collective obedience. However, modern pluralistic societies and growing awareness of **individualism** challenge its relevance. For instance, Franz Mang (2017) identifies a tension in adapting Confucianism: the intelligibility condition, requiring Confucian values to remain integrated and collectivist, and the liberal accommodation condition, which demands respect for individual autonomy and pluralistic values.

This tension poses a dilemma for contemporary Confucian political philosophy: it must balance the collectivist narrative central to its identity with the recognition of individual agency

in modern societies. Joseph Chan (2014) proposes **Political Confucian Perfectionism**, which confines Confucianism to the political domain, allowing coexistence with individualism in non-political spheres. In contrast, Kim Sungmoon (2016, 2021), considering the intelligibility condition, advocates for a **comprehensive Confucian perfectionism**, rejecting the separation of political and non-political realms, even if it limits compatibility with individualism.

I propose an alternative, which I refer to as **Explanatory Confucian Perfectionism**. It aligns with the intelligibility condition while accommodating individualism that upholds fundamental human values. This framework reflects Confucian relational selfhood by maintaining substantive neutrality in political domains while preserving collectivist characteristics. By reframing political Confucian perfectionism rather than a rigid doctrine, it fosters coexistence between **collectivism** and **individual autonomy**, ensuring its relevance in modern pluralistic contexts.

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仁者自爱与仁者爱人--荀子仁说再议

承继孔孟仁爱思想，荀子重视爱人并做了进一步阐发，提出仁者自 爱。仁者以得人心为本，是在广泛意义上既能安民身、也能安民心，如此才能 全面、深入地"得人之爱"，这是实行仁的最终目标。仁者自爱，并非不爱己， 而是注重"爱己"与"爱人"的协调统一，这是践行仁的基本原则。仁者自 爱，并非不重视师道教化;在明道、知理的前提下，发挥心知的主体作用，才 能使民群居和一、使民化于善，如此才是真正完全的爱人之道，这是推行仁的 根本途径。"仁者自爱"是荀子对先秦仁爱思想的集大成思考，而其强调制礼义 以成仁的思考路径，则彰显了仁的实践品格面向，值得进一步深入研究。

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Freedom in Potentials of Life: Fulfillment of *Ming* (命) in the *Zhuangzi*

Ming (命) in the *Zhuangzi*, generally translated as fate, is often viewed as a constraint on freedom. Two prevailing views concerning conception ming in the *Zhuangzi* are *mingding lun* (命定论), a form of determinism, and *anming lun* (安命论), contentment with fate. Both views imply that *ming* (命 fate) poses a threat to or sets limitations for freedom in the *Zhuangzi*. *Ming* in the *Zhuangzi*, however, carries multiple meanings. Apart from fate, it also encompasses life, which is fundamental and holds the potential for realizing freedom. I argue that fulfillment of ming (*zhiming lun* 致命论), which implies making full use of the life potential, is essential in the *Zhuangzi*. In this conception, while *ming* (命) is unpredictable, individuals only become aware of it when they "reach the ultimate state" (*zhi* 致) of it. Fulfillment of *ming* entails fully maximizing the potential of *ming*. As a result, *ming* should not be viewed as sheer constraints

but as infinite potentials in life. With the new interpretation of *ming*, I suggest an alternative translation of a key concept *wudai* (无待) in the *Zhuangzi* as "waiting for nothing", rather than "depending on nothing," because the suggested version contains the implication of unlimited freedom in contingent *ming*.

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"Becoming Animal" or "Becoming Human": Techniques Concerning the Self in *Zhuangzi* and *Xunzi*

A famous story in *Zhuangzi* (莊子) tells of Zhuangzi dreaming he was a butterfly and felt joyful. However, one might question whether Xunzi (荀子) would feel the same if he is transformed into a nonhuman being in his dream, given his emphasis on distinguishing humans from animals through the uniquely human capacity of yi (義). According to Xunzi, humans are born as petty persons (小人) that are indistinguishable from other animals, and only become genuine humans through learning and practicing rituals (禮). On the contrary, Zhuangzi advocates abandoning human habits and keeping the Heavenly (天) within us, akin to the way of animals.

This paper examines this fundamental difference between Zhuangzi and Xunzi by exploring the relationship between self and technique. Xunzi argues that most people can become genuine humans only through the ritual—the technical object created by humans. Thus, humans are distinguished from animals not by their nature, but through techniques that shape the human world. Unfortunately, the deliberate method to become humans through techniques is viewed as misleading in *Zhuangzi*. Zhuangzi contends that humans are fettered by the very technical objects they create and should instead develop a different kind of technique to recover the heavenly within themselves. This approach can be viewed as a practice of becoming animals who act spontaneously without human deliberation. In comparison to the framework of cosmotechnics concerning the relation between cosmos and moral order (as discussed by Yuk Hui), this paper argues that early Chinese thought provides richer insights into the interplay between self and techniques, as well as the dynamic between humans and animals.

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Resisting Technology Addiction through Mencian Ethics

We are living in the age of attention economy, whereby technology companies derive their primary profits not from direct content consumption but from capturing users' attention. This relentless pursuit of attention has led to widespread issues of technology addiction across the world. Unlike substance addiction, technology addiction cannot be resolved through complete abstention, as modern life and work are deeply intertwined with digital technologies. Moreover, this problem cannot be addressed by individual willpower alone, as advanced technologies and design techniques—rooted in cutting-edge psychology and neuroscience—are deliberately

crafted to exploit human psychology. To address this issue, we must move away from both rugged individualism and oppressive patriarchy. Mencius' principle of "don't forget, don't force 勿忘勿助," offers a valuable model. According to this approach, we should focus on collectively creating environments that foster healthy digital habits, rather than placing the burden solely on individuals. One fundamental environment is the family. A healthy family environment benefits not only teenagers but also adults, who are particularly susceptible to social media addiction. This environment must be nurtured by all family members. Beyond the family, we must also work to cultivate a healthy digital culture in society at large. This includes, above all, imposing restrictions on irresponsible, addictive design practices by technology companies and providing education on the healthy use of digital technologies. By applying "don't forget, don't force," we can collectively create environments that better equip people around the world to resist technology addiction.

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On the Philosophy of Action in Zhuangzi's Concept of "Riding Things to Roam the Mind"

In the chapter "In the Human World" 人間世 from *Zhuangzi*, the concept of "riding things to roam the mind" (乘物以遊心) describes how individuals can act smoothly and effectively in challenging situations while maintaining an inner state of freedom and tranquility, untroubled by external constraints. This chapter also provides an in-depth explanation of how one can achieve such a state. For *Zhuangzi*, it is difficult to avoid encountering challenging circumstances, and resolving such difficulties requires effective action. However, the actions we take often fail to resolve the problem and instead exacerbate the situation. In other words, our actions frequently create a paradox of action: they fail to fulfill our good intentions and instead lead to outcomes contrary to those intentions. Based on this, *Zhuangzi* explores the main causes of the paradox of action to avoid its formation. At the same time, it discusses the principles and foundations of effective action, linking them to inner freedom and peace of mind. The concept of "riding things to roam the mind" mentioned in "In the Human World" addresses how to act effectively and avoid the paradox of action. It also illustrates how individuals can not only act effectively but also maintain a free and unconfined mind simultaneously.

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How Can Shun Live Happily Thereafter?: A New Reading of *Mencius* 7A35

In *Mencius* 7A35, Tao Ying poses a dilemma to Mencius: Suppose Shun's father had committed murder—what would Shun have done? Mencius famously answers that Shun would have "cast aside the world (*tian-xia* 天下) as if discarding a worn shoe. He would have secretly carried the old man on his back and fled to the edge of the Sea, living there happily thereafter and forgetting about the world." This answer has sparked intense debate among Confucian scholars throughout

history. Despite the wide range of views on this issue, however, scholars generally construe this case as a classic conflict of values, where the Mencian Shun would have chosen filial piety over justice.

In this paper, I offer a different reading of this case, one that emphasizes Shun's transformation as a person — from a widely revered emperor to a fugitive who cut himself off from all but one significant relationship in his life —and asks this question: How is it possible that after undergoing such a change, Shun is still able to live "happily thereafter"? By shifting our focus, I argue that what Shun would have done is far more morally demanding than simply letting his father face his due punishment. In my view, if Shun had chosen the latter, he would have been a just emperor, but fallen short of being a sage king by Mencius' standards.

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"A Saying Has Something To Say": Personal Names in the *Zhuang zi*

The *Zhuang zi* presents an array of personal names that may or may not adhere to traditional naming conventions. These names are highly relevant to the narratives and philosophical debates within the text, leading to extensive efforts to interpret them. Two distinct viewpoints have emerged in these interpretations: one links the names with historical figures, while the other views them as fictional and allegorical. The latter is notable for freeing readers from the need to attribute a real-world identity to each name, instead emphasizing the use of names as a formal strategy.

What fall under "allegorical names" (Yu Yue 1880) often exhibit phonosemantic correlations that are bespeaking of the story and the arguments. While these "functional" names were sometimes regarded as *figura etymologica*, this study argues that more are at play for these sound-meaning pairings to take effect. It preliminarily distinguishes between "sound- symbolic" names, which convey the role of their bearers through their phonetic qualities; and "sound-correlated" names, where the sounds of the names mirror the relationship between the characters in juxtaposition. The phonetics of both types of names are tailored to mimic the story line and instantiate the philosophical concepts in the aural dimension, making them particularly effective in a culture where orality played a significant part in philosophical argumentation and textual transmission.

This study suggests that personal names in early Chinese philosophical texts serve not only as a form of a shared lore, but also as a philosophical and rhetorical device.

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道家自然的三种含义及当代道家哲学如何可能

如何在现代哲学思潮下对传统道家哲学创新改造，以解决当下社会存在的问题？本文提出的思路是从"自然"出发，以重构道家哲学。

通过追溯学术史以及概念分析可以得到"自然"有三种含义，分别是："非人为"、自主、本性。三种含义源自意识主体的自主性，通过自主决定"我之为我"的本性，同时反思自主对物质实在的干涉与扭曲。由此，我们得到反思人为、顺应自然之性、追求自由三原则，推演出真性情、精神自由、政治自由、安于生死四种主张。这四种主张是道家哲学在现代社会最有价值的部分，对当代社会存在的种种问题作出了回应。

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Qi, Emotion and Transformation: Zhuangzi and Wang Fuzhi

Zhuangzi's philosophy, particularly his insights on Qi and emotion, offers a profound framework for understanding diversity, communication, and transformation. I will interpret Qi as the "internal plural force" to highlight the characteristics of Zhuangzi's thought on Qi. In the article, I will quote Wang Fuzhi's annotations on Zhuangzi's thoughts on Qi, and will also use the aesthetics of force by Frankfurt philosopher Christoph Menke to elucidate the transformative force contained in the philosophy of Qi. By discussing the Qi-based philosophy of Zhuangzi and Wang Fuzhi, I hope to explore from the perspective of aesthetic politics how the philosophy of Qi can engage in the public domain, addressing the issues of emotion and communication in a divided democratic society.

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Beyond Non-Self: Rethinking Narcissism through Chinese Poetic Tradition and Phenomenology

This article reinterprets narcissism through a dialogue between Chinese poetic tradition and phenomenology. Moving beyond its contemporary reduction to a symptom of capitalism and individualism, this study uncovers a deeper form of narcissism rooted in both Chinese poetry and phenomenological thought.

The first part examines the subtle paradox of narcissism in Chinese thought. While traditional Chinese philosophy, particularly Taoism, emphasizes "Non-self" [無己], classical Chinese poetry presents a distinctive form of narcissism—not as ego-affirmation, but as a cosmic resonance between self and world. Through analyzing works of Li Bai, Su Shi, and Mao Zedong and others, this section demonstrates how their "narcissistic" expressions emerge from a holistic understanding of human-nature relationships. For example, Li Bai's verse, "Heaven bestowed me with talents—I must employ them; I spend a thousand gold pieces, they return again," exemplifies a cosmic and holistic perception of personal destiny, aligning with the Taoist principle of "Tao follows its own nature" [道法自然].

The second part establishes a theoretical bridge through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, particularly his assertion that "there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision." This section argues that Merleau-Pontian narcissism, characterized by the dynamic "back-and-forth"

between human existence and nature, provides a philosophical framework that illuminates the ontological significance of Chinese poetic narcissism. This phenomenological perspective helps articulate the Chinese poetic experience of self-world unity in Western philosophical terms, thereby contributing to broader discussions about subjectivity and nature in comparative philosophy.

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身心和合的"原日身体"：明代心学家罗汝芳对儒家身体观念的新理解

身体观是近年来哲学研究的重要主题。阳明心学罗汝芳的身体观富有创造性，并可与西方身体现象学互相鉴照。一，罗汝芳扭转了传统的"心灵身拙"观念，回到人的生命整体去思考身心关系，提出"身心灵妙"说，此不同于身心二元论；二，罗氏提出"原日身体"或"初生身体"，揭示了身的形上之维以及身与世界之间的意向性结构，此相当于梅洛·庞蒂的"身体意向性"；三，"原日身体"所具有的源初意识就是赤子之心所具的孝、弟，世界是一个孝弟慈的世界，这与现象学在宏大范围内谈论世界不同。

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Constructing a World-Model without Self-Reference: Wang Fuzhi's Critique of Ego-Centric Perception

This paper examines Wang Fuzhi's (1619–1692) epistemological critique of human judgments about reality, which are constrained by the limitations of human perception and its inherent self-referential tendencies. Focusing on his commentary on the "Xiaoyaoyou" chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, I analyze how Wang challenges the reification of relative properties and the substantivization of self-consciousness. He argues that dichotomies such as "much-little," "long-short," and "big-small" are not absolute opposites but relative and interconvertible values. Their mistaken treatment as independent entities arises from the positioning of the self as an absolute reference point.

Also in other writings, Wang critiques the human mind's propensity to artificially demarcate continuums through self-reference, leading to misguided classifications that are erroneously perceived as real. By deconstructing these self-imposed boundaries, he proposes a world-model that transcends subjective limitations and the ego-centric viewpoint. However, Wang recognizes that constructing a non-self-centered system is not achievable merely by eliminating the self, as even the act of elimination requires a self. This paradox highlights the complexity of transcending self-reference in epistemology.

The paper explores how Wang confronts this challenge by redefining the role of the self in the construction of knowledge and reality. Through an analysis of Wang's philosophical arguments, I will elucidate how he envisions a mode of understanding that overcomes the constraints of self-centered perception. This study contributes to a deeper comprehension of

17th-century Chinese thought and offers insights into alternative epistemological frameworks that question the primacy of the individual self as the point of orientation.

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"Individual" and "Group": The Efforts and Dilemmas of Chinese Intellectuals in Constructing Modernity during the Late Qing and Early Republican Periods

The concept of "individual," a key idea in the Western Enlightenment and the rise of liberalism, received a "cold reception" when introduced to late Qing China. It was occasionally associated with concepts such as "rights" and "liberty," reflecting efforts by Chinese intellectuals to embrace modernity. However, more frequently, interpretations of "individual" were linked to notions of "egoism" or "selfishness," which were rejected by Confucian ethics. Moreover, the term was often used to describe an individual lacking political capacity, unable to mobilise collective strength to drive national modernisation.

At the time, Chinese intellectuals were more concerned with "group" or "collectivism," as the urgent goals of national survival and the establishment of a modern nation-state made the idea of "group solidarity" particularly compelling. For them, only by "uniting as a group" could China resist foreign powers and compete on the international stage. However, during the "New Culture Movement" in the early Republic, the tension between "individual" and "group" shifted to the opposite extreme: the former became a weapon to challenge Confucian traditions, while the latter was criticised for suppressing individuality.

How did the concept of "individual" enter China? How did the relationship between "individual" and "group" evolve from the late Qing period to the early Republic? What were the reasons behind? By addressing these questions, this paper seeks to give a better understanding of the difficulties in constructing modernity in modern China and the social trends of thought inspired by the concepts of "individual" and "group" over a century of Chinese history.

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The Zhuangzian Benevolence

Early Chinese texts associated with the Confucian and Mohist traditions centrally espouse values like *ren* 仁 (benevolence, love, humanness) and *yi* 義 (righteousness, appropriateness) as attributes of or criteria for the right action. In the *Zhuangzi*, normative attachment to these values is often criticized as misguided on the charge of alienating human agency from the Dao 道, or the Way things are. And yet several passages in this anthology clearly imply that what is misguided are not these values *per se*, but only the distorted way Confucian and Mohist thinkers conceive of them. This paper explores the possibility of a coherent and compelling Zhuangzian account of *ren*. To arrive at such an account, it takes to answer two following questions. First, what does it mean that "the perfect *ren* is without discriminating affection" (*zhi ren wu qin* 至

仁無親)? Does this leave us with the conclusion that the Zhuangzian *ren* must be construed either in Mohist terms, as a kind of undiscriminating benevolence, or else as an externally benevolent conduct without genuine internal affection? Second, how is any answer to the first question compatible with Zhuangzian passages that embrace "discriminating affection" (*qin* 親) as something natural and "fated" (*ming* 命) and thus commendable?

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Thinking Through Relational Selfhood in Contemporary Ruism

Selfhood and personal identity have been and continue to be particularly tricky and hotly contested areas of debate in contemporary philosophy, being situated close to where the rubber of philosophical theory meets the road (or *dao*) of human practices such as abortion, euthanasia, criminal sanction, and so forth. This is true also of debates in contemporary Chinese philosophy. Consider, for instance, that the picture Ames and Rosemont have painted of the relationally-constituted self – while it certainly captures some true sense in which relationality is critical to Ruist selfhood – has incited a certain degree of concern amongst Ruist scholars in mainland China regarding the extirpation of individual selfhood. Building on a forthcoming paper which argues that consciousness is important for Ruist selfhood, in this paper I seek to push on further in brokering a philosophical compromise in this particular debate, laying the groundwork for a contemporary Ruist ontology of selfhood which preserves the salutary features of Ames' picture, but also assuages the concerns of his critics. Specifically, I examine the differences between Buddhist and Ruist discourses on selfhood, and conclude that only the former is conducive to an ontology in which individual selfhood is merely "conventionally" real. I consider the legitimacy and implications of strategies of "individuation" which seek to stake out the boundaries of an individual self, and prosecute various clarifying thought experiments. Ultimately, I show how a certain qualified notion of the individual self is viable in contemporary Ruism.

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"Flexible at the outside, firm at the inside 外圓內方": A philosophical guideline for harmoniously performing different selves.

Deeply embedded in ancient cosmology and the traditions of Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism, the concept of "flexible at the outside, firm at the inside (*wai yuan nei fang* 外圓內方)" serves as a cornerstone of Chinese philosophical thought. The saying knows many variations, all referring to being "round", accommodating and easy-going in interpersonal relationships, while being "square", clear and determined in one's inner life and intentions. As such, its wisdom advocates for a dual approach to self-conduct: resolute clarity and integrity in one's inner values and intentions, balanced by adaptability and harmony in external

interpersonal interactions. This dialectical wisdom is not merely a theoretical ideal but a practical framework for managing and performing different dimensions of the self – the small self 小我, the greater self 大我, the private self, and the public self – within the broader scope of continuous self-cultivation 修身. In this paper, drawing from primary texts and Chinese indigenous psychology, I illustrate how this principle functions as a moral and behavioral model across various domains of performing the self. I investigate how this philosophical guidance continues to resonate in contemporary Chinese society, navigating the interplay between individual ambition and social and moral responsibility. Historic, literary and contemporary examples are employed to demonstrate effective and ineffective applications of *wai yuan nei fang*, ultimately offering insights into its enduring relevance as a philosophical guideline for personal and societal conduct, and as a tool for navigating complex social realities.

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Teaching Chinese Philosophy in a Public University in the American South

In this presentation I share some resources related to teaching Chinese Philosophy in my current context, an R2 public research university in the American South. I consider not only some details of my pedagogy for courses like Chinese Philosophy relating to issues like selfhood and agency, but also how we as a program have structured our program of study for the philosophy major to include and require the study of philosophy beyond the Euro-American context. I conclude with some remarks about the uncertainty of these efforts in light of the current political situation in the state of Florida.

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A Confucian Conception of Loyalty

This essay delves into the Confucian concept of loyalty and its intricate relationship with political authority. Although Confucian loyalty is commonly misunderstood as mere obedience, this essay demonstrates that it does not equate to unconditional obedience. Instead, it requires a nuanced discernment in deciding when to uphold or challenge authority to maintain one's moral standards. One aspect of Confucian loyalty is that ministers are obligated to critique their rulers when necessary, as loyalty involves guiding the ruler toward righteousness, even at personal risk. The Confucian teaching also warns against the dangers of absolute obedience, as unchallenged authority can harm both the state and the ruler. In comparison, Han Feizi also recognizes that disobedience can be justified to some extent, but such dissent must align with the established rituals and hierarchical roles.

Hence, Confucian loyalty embodies a moral duty to correct and guide superiors while maintaining respect for established social structures. This understanding of loyalty is crucial for ensuring virtuous governance and preventing the abuse of power, reflecting the broader Confucian commitment to morality within political institutions. However, a significant

challenge arises: Confucian ministers are obligated to critique their superiors when necessary, yet the lack of institutional protection often compels them to remain silent. To address this, it is essential to justify and propose institutional reforms and protections that safeguard the rights and obligations of ministers to dissent without fear of retribution. Such reforms would strengthen virtuous governance and uphold the true essence of Confucian ideals.

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Knowing Heaven and the Completion of the Self: On the Question of Immanent Transcendence in the Analects

Focusing mainly on the Analects, this presentation examines early Confucian notions of selfhood and questions whether they announce different kinds or different levels of self, some (己) lodged within the temporality of everyday life, and others (自) available by way of a self-reflection on itself that is not oriented by time. Starting from the everyday self that is grounded in the heart-mind (心), which is recognized as deficient and incomplete, this presentation then turns to the nature (性) endowed by Heaven that is replete with the basic substance (質) of virtues that remain potential. It goes on to examine Confucian notions of self-cultivation (修己) that function to bring the heart-mind into union with nature by bringing those potential virtues into full expression in thought and action, thereby effectuating the realization of a higher level of self that Confucius refers to as "knowing Heaven" (知天) in the production of exemplary persons (君子) or sages (聖人), which is captured in Qian Mu's modern expression, "The Merged Unity of Heaven and Human" (天人合一). This presentation closes with a brief comparison of immanent transcendence (內向超越) in the thought of Yü Ying-shih and Mou Zongsan, and it concludes that this higher level of self is not best considered a transformation in kind of the everyday self, but rather its completion (成).

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Gender as Exteriorized Complementarity

This paper continues the author's exploration of contemporary, progressive Confucian views of gender. Here, she articulates a Confucian theory of gender informed by the *yinyang* heuristic of "complementarity" among role-related persons. She argues that the primary principle of relationships among gendered persons is complementarity. Gender essentialism, such as the association of *yin* with women/femininity, need not play a role in the formation of gender-attendant roles. Rather, complementarity *precedes* the qualifications of masculine and feminine and the socially constructed and institutional formulations of gender roles.

Complementarity, notably, is **not** the mutual expression of interiorized individuality, each individual in search of reflexive self- authentification. Gender is performed for the sake of relationships and is fully exteriorized. Gendered relationships and the socially informed role

scripts attendant to them (such as husband and wife) rest not on essentially determined gender characteristics (or on a limited set of gendered role scripts) but on the complementarity of gendered persons. Complementarity does not prescribe roles or role scripts, so gendered relationships are not limited to historically and socially defined relationships. In other words, the matrix of relationships among gendered individuals is open to all forms of gender expression.

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Li Zehou and Kant

Immanuel Kant, along with Marxism and Confucianism, formed the philosophical foundation for Li Zehou's thought. Much of his work draws, either implicitly or explicitly, on Kant's first and third *Critiques*. In this chapter, I critique Li's manuscript, which is dedicated to his analysis of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, titled *Critique of Critical Philosophy*. I focus on two questions. First, how does Li's theory of sedimentation explicitly relate to Kant's a priori concepts of reasoning? Second, how does Kant's theory of mathematics and the mathematical sublime implicitly influence Li's thinking? I probe Li's condemnation of Kant's theory of mathematics as merely an example in his theory of transcendental deduction rather than a practice rooted in sensible experience. While Li does not abide Kant's theory of the a priori or the mathematical theory it grounds, he endorses Kant's theory of the dynamical sublime. Li also states that Kant's dynamical and mathematical sublimes are one and the same. Li provides Marxist mathematical theory as a stopgap for generating the dynamical/mathematical sublime, but does it work?

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Exploring Different Ways of Inhabiting the Earth: Confucianism and Aesthetic Engagement

In the recent decades environmental philosophy has emerged as one of the most promising areas of applied philosophy. There are numerous studies from different philosophical traditions which propose approaches to create sustainable societies. However, despite the proliferation of publications, this field has made little contribution to solving environmental problems. The very concept of sustainable societies remains too anthropocentric and continues to place humans in a privileged position.

   This presentation attempts to explore the contributions of classical Confucianism to develop alternative paths for the future development of environmental philosophy. Particularly, it focuses on the anthropocosmic view which can promote ways of living that improve a healthy and balanced relationship with nature. First, it analyses how sustainable philosophy is based on an anthropocentric approach which gives our species the power to shape the planet. In contrast, classical Confucianism emphasizes that human beings are part of an ongoing world of making. Second, it considers aesthetic cosmology proposed by classical Confucianism following Li Zehou's analysis. According to Li, the Confucian ontology explains the great triad of heaven, earth and humans in aesthetic terms, and takes emotions as the starting point. This approach

can provide guidance by helping to reform our relationship with our environment and promoting different discourses focusing on harmony rather than sustainability.

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Self and Other: Divergent Paths to Freedom in Zhuangzi and Lacan

This paper examines how Eastern and Western perspectives on the self and the other shape the understanding of freedom, focusing on self-transcendence and holistic freedom, through a comparison of Zhuangzi's Daoist philosophy and Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. Both thinkers critique the illusory nature of the self and explore its relationship with the other, but their approaches to transcendence diverge significantly. Lacan's view of freedom faces an internal contradiction, as the self remains dependent on the Other, making self-transcendence unattainable. In contrast, Zhuangzi assumes absolute freedom as a fundamental premise, enabling de-individualized freedom by transcending self-boundaries. By analyzing how each thinker frames the self-other relationship, this paper highlights their divergent conclusions and argues that, in both traditions, the question of freedom is inseparable from understanding this relationship.

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The Ambiguous Self: Dyadic Identities in the Gongyang Scholarship of Dong Zhongshu and He Xiu

One of the most conspicuous aspects of early Chinese thought is its tendency to discuss philosophical issues via nested series of interrelated conceptual dyads. While this habit is so ubiquitous that it has sometimes been taken as typical of the classical language itself, it is often unclear precisely what role these dyads play in individual philosophical texts. My talk will begin by tracing some of the long-term rhetorical and philosophical developments of pre-Qin and Han discourse, arguing that the equivocal mélange of "transcendent" and "immanent" elements that we find in the texts of this period can best be characterized as "ontologically ambiguous". From here, I move on to discuss the role of conceptual dyads in the Gongyang scholarship of Dong Zhongshu and He Xiu, in particular, the interrelated series of *qinqin*/*zunzun* 親親/尊尊, *ren*/*yi* 仁/義, *zhi*/*wen* 質/文 and *nei*/*wai* 內/外. Dong and He use these categorical dichotomies to theorize the basic moral, ontological, political and cultural structures at the root of individual and social identity. By situating their interventions in the historical context of an "ontologically ambiguous" discourse, I hope to show that their conceptualization of selfhood is fundamentally determined by the dyadic rhetoric of "inside" and "outside", a rhetoric that is, in turn, characterized by "ontologically ambiguous" imbrications of "transcendent" and "immanent" elements.

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Zhu Xi's *Gewu* 格物 as Body-Engaging Practice

For the Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹, *gewu* 格物 is a crucial practice for self-cultivation. This practice is usually understood as a form of intellectual investigation, commonly rendered as "investigation of things." However, scholars like Ivanhoe, Virág, Peimin Ni, and Norman Y. Teng 鄧育仁 have recently highlighted the body-engaging aspect of Zhu's gewu, asserting that the practice cannot be purely intellectual and must involve the engagement of the body.

Inspired by this perspective, this paper explores the legitimacy of understanding Zhu Xi's gewu as a practice involving the body. We systematically examine Zhu's texts to support this interpretation. How does Zhu interpret the verb "*ge* 格"? Can we justify the body-engaging interpretation when Zhu often emphasizes the heart/mind (*xin* 心) over the body? Additionally, we incorporate findings from related studies to elucidate Zhu's discourse on *gewu*. This includes works within the context of Chinese philosophy, such as Weiming Tu's study of embodied knowledge (*tizhi* 體知) and Ott's recent research on embodiment, as well as studies aimed at renewing our understanding of the mind, such as Clark and Chalmers' "The Extended Mind" and Radman's work on the mind-hand relationship.

Through this discussion, we may further reflect on the Confucian view regarding the relationships between (1) the self and external things and (2) the mind and the body.

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Confucian reading of Buddhist texts: Self-cultivation as seen in Lê Quý Đôn's Miscellaneous Record of the Seen and Heard (見聞小錄)

In the eighteenth century, Vietnamese Confucianism was deeply influenced by the orthodox Confucianism prevailing in China. While Confucianism reigned supreme, Buddhism and Daoism were often marginalized. This does not imply that Buddhism and Daoism had no influence on the elite and their intellectual framework. On the contrary, numerous scholars, to varying degrees, actively incorporated Buddhist and Daoist concepts into their Confucian systems. However, the ways in which Vietnamese Confucians engaged with these two traditions during this period remain understudied.

Lê Quý Đôn 黎貴惇 (1726–1784) was one of the most important Vietnamese Confucian figures of his era. In his work *Miscellaneous Record of the Seen and Heard* (*Jianwen Xiaolu* 見聞小錄, 1777), Lê dedicated one volume, titled "Meditation and Reclusion" (Chanyi 禪逸), to explicitly demonstrate his interest in Buddhist teachings. In this volume, Lê Quý Đôn cited various sutras, including the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經), *Diamond Sutra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經), and *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (*Ru lengqie jing* 入楞伽經), providing extensive discussions on the key Buddhist concepts in comparison with teachings in the Confucian

tradition. His commentaries presented a positive view of Buddhism, recognizing it as a valuable guide for self-cultivation.

This contribution therefore investigates how Lê highlighted the similarities between Buddhist teachings and Confucian concepts such as filial piety, benevolence, and self-cultivation, thus provides a deeper understanding of his syncretic approach and contributes to a broader discourse on Confucian-Buddhist interactions in eighteenth-century Vietnam.

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A Confucian Response to Context Collapse: Being "Attentive to One's Continuity" (*Shen du* 慎獨) as a Means of Living with Social Technology

Over the past two decades, scholars have pointed to the difficulties inherent in using Confucian philosophy to speak of ethical activity in the internet age. These scholars argue that if the Confucian self is taken to be relationally constituted, and Confucian ethics to be a kind of role ethics, then the philosophy is incompatible with internet and social media technology, which have been characterized as embedded with an ideal of absolute individual autonomy, collapsed social contexts, invisible audiences, or the blurring of public and private. This article responds to these arguments in two ways. The first is methodological and questions the validity, from a Confucian perspective, of attaching a set of values to the internet or social media and thereby asserting theoretical incompatibility with Confucianism. Secondly, this article presents a specific lens through which Confucianism can be viewed as an ethical guide where social contexts have collapsed and interactors, or "audiences," have become indistinct. This is done my means of being "attentive to one's continuity" (*shen qi du* 慎其獨), a concept drawn from Confucian classics including, most notably, the *Daxue* 大學 and the *Zhongyong* 中庸. Through practicing this attentiveness, the cultivated person (*junzi* 君子) retains an awareness of their "continuity" along with an awareness of their interconnectedness with others. When applied to social technology, we find that the *junzi* focuses their attention on their own cultivation regardless of social circumstances, whereas the petty person requires distinct knowledge of their social interactors.

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Self in the Demonic Environment

The relation between the subject and its other in premodern China is sometimes described in a stereotypically harmonious way, in which the system of social roles normalizes the subject and integrates the other by means of culture and civilization. The social hierarchies – usually associated with Confucian ethics and state bureaucracy - are inscribed within human bodies; the domain of the ruler has its mirror image in the human body, as it is described by medicinal texts and Daoist literature. On the other hand, the stereotypical picture of harmonious society does not always work in practice. People often find themselves within or in touch with the

liminal spheres beyond and betwixt the roles and categories. Demonic elements invade not only the community but also the human body. The order reacts by isolation or violent subjugation. Martial arts and civil virtues are the yin and yang sides of the same coin. How is this practical necessity reflected in the image of the human body? What does it say about the pre-modern Chinese subjectivity which is often described as processual in terms of becoming-human?

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Fractals and Chinese tradition

Fractals are self-similar structures through several levels of magnitude. It is based on repetition with difference: you repeat on a smaller or larger scale. Fractals can be found in Chinese art (e.g., landscape painting, garden planning, architecture) and they are related to *yinyang* thought (there is *yinyang* inside both *yin* and *yang*, and it repeats indefinitely). Also, sages are fractal in that they are able to feel fractal progressions, and to know when some small and incipient change in a fractal's tail will have big, non-linear consequences for the whole system. We need such non-linear and fractal sensitivity in the changing world.

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The Surreality of the Genuine Person 真人: Humanity and Freedom beyond Memory and Dreaming in Daoist Sources

The value given to the human element in classical Daoist sources has been at the centre of non-univocal sinological interpretations: Daoism has been defined as a "non-humanist" philosophy (H.-G. Moeller, *The Philosophy of the* Daodejing, 2006); as a tradition imbued with a "humanist spirit" contrary to any exclusivism or absolutism, and as a guarantor of the union between man, the natural world and Heaven (Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Daojia de renwen jingshen* 道家的人文精神, 2012; English translation: *The Humanist Spirit of Daoism*, 2018).

The proposed intervention attempts to overcome this opposition by focusing on the well-known concept of the Genuine Person (*zhenren* 真人). Classical Daoist sources (*Zhuangzi*, *Liezi*) and also other textual references (such as the *Lunheng*) seem to show the close connection between two aspects typical of "ordinary man," proper to the state of awakeness and the state of dreaming, two phases in which everyday human experience is encompassed: the preservation of mnemonic impressions (combined with emotional reactivity expressed by the term *qing* 情 and implying a relational selfhood) and dream activity. Both of these aspects must be extinguished through a process of reduction of selfhood in order for the transformation into Genuine Person to be realised.

We can define the reality of the Genuine Person as a "surreality": I borrow the term employed by André Breton exactly one hundred years ago in his *Manifesto of Surrealism* to

indicate the "future confluence of both these apparently contradictory states, which are dream and reality, into a kind of absolute reality, surreality, if you will."

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Harmony Between Humans and Nature in Zhu Zaiyu's Music Theory

Zhu Zaiyu (朱載堉 1536–1611) became the pinnacle of Chinese music theory with his discovery of the 12-tone equal temperament. His discovery was a clever combination of the traditional Chinese musical pitch system (*lü* 律) and mathematical calculations (*shu* 数). More remarkable is the underlying philosophical concept of the "unity of heaven and man" (*tian–ren he yi* 天人合一). In it, man as the connector, interpreter and performer of Heaven and Earth expresses the ultimate understanding of the harmony between Heaven and Earth in music from a rational and emotional perspective. I will unfold this theme in between the perspectives of philosophical backgrounds and their application or manifestation in theoretical foundations of Zhu Zaiyu's system of imperial music, ritual and calendar.

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自我與社會: 人間佛教的理念與現代實踐——以太虛、印順和星雲為中心

現代學者們對現代化進程中產生的諸多社會問題進行了深刻批判，認為現代社會的嚴重病態和精神最大的痛苦源於"自我的失落"與"自我的擴張"。本文以民國以來人間佛教的發展為線索，聚焦太虛、印順和星雲等三位大師，探討他們跨越近百年的關於"自我與社會"命題的思想闡釋和現代實踐。太虛大師首提"人生佛教"，以人間社會為基礎，強調以大悲大智的群眾化大乘佛法，契合現代社會需求。印順法師從原始佛教的理論研究出發，確立人間佛教的理論原則，提倡"自利與利他"的合一。星雲法師則著重於現代化的佛教實踐，強調弘法利生，以平等心去認識自我與眾生，突破分別與執著，克服自我與他我、個體與群體、人類與自然之間的分離和對立，融自我於他我、群體之中，以解決當代"自我之失落"和"自我之擴張"帶來的問題。三位大師的思想和實踐共同構建了人間佛教應對現代社會病態的路徑，即通過融自我於他我和群體，實現個體的解脫和社會的和諧。

"Self and Society" in Humanistic Buddhism: Insights and Modern Applications from Taixu, Yinshun, and Xingyun

This paper examines the evolution of Humanistic Buddhism in contemporary China, with a particular emphasis on the philosophical interpretations and practices of the "self and society" paradigm as articulated by three prominent masters: Taixu, Yinshun, and Xingyun. Master

Taixu introduced the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism," which is rooted in human society and emphasizes the adaptation of Mahayana Buddhism, characterized by compassion and wisdom, to meet the needs of a modern, organized, and collective society. Building upon the conceptual foundations of early Buddhist thought, Master Yinshun articulated the tenets of Humanistic Buddhism, which posits the integration of self-interest and the well-being of others. Master Xingyun placed an emphasis on the practice of modern Buddhism, advocating for altruistic engagement and spiritual equality as a means of transcending dualistic perceptions and attachments. He sought to resolve the divisions between the self and others, individuals and communities, and humanity and nature, with the ultimate goal of integrating the self into a harmonious collective. Collectively, their ideas and practices provide a framework for Humanistic Buddhism to address the crises of modernity. This framework enables the attainment of individual liberation and societal harmony through the reconciliation of self and society.

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Self and the Relevance of Life After Death in Early Chinese Thought

In the *Lunyu*, Zilu asks Kongzi (Confucius) about serving ghosts and spirits. Kongzi replies "Not yet able to serve people – how could you be able to serve ghosts?" Zilu then asks about death and Kongzi says "Not yet knowing life – how could you know death?" (11.12). Kongzi's reply assumes that whatever happens after death has no relevance for how we should live and serve others in this life. That assumption is most plausible if Kongzi did not believe in an afterlife—how could one believe there is an afterlife and yet think it has no relevance for how we live? In this presentation, I will raise doubts about this explanation. On some issues, the possibility of an afterlife was a live and relevant question. For example, there were arguments that people who were wronged in life will exact vengeance after their death (in the *Mozi*) and about the dependence of sacrifices on spirits to receive them (among the Ru). Both issues concern the relationship between those currently alive and those dead. What is consistently absent is a concern with the relationship between my current living self and my future existence after I die. This silence suggests that the irrelevance of what happens to me after my death did not depend on whether or not there was an afterlife (since that would have been open to debate). In this paper, I consider why that might be the case and what implications it might have to how we think about the self.

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Is Xiong Shili's Philosophical System Non-Dual? An Inquiry into His Epistemology

Xiong Shili's 熊十力 (1885-1968) philosophy is often encapsulated by means of the slogan *tiyong bu er* 體用不二 [non-duality of Reality and Function]. Xiong employs this formula to articulate the core of his cosmology (*yuzhou lun* 宇宙論), which is defined by its rejection of a

transcendent principle. In other words, the absolute and unconditioned realm (*ti*) is not considered transcendent or separate from the relative and conditioned realm of experience (*yong*).

Building on Xiong Shili's assertion that "epistemology and cosmology should be combined in a unity" (*Yuan Ru* 原儒 [*To the Origin of the Ru*]), this study seeks to elucidate – and potentially test – Xiong's fragmentary theory of knowledge. It aims to define the conceptual framework through which it is expressed and to determine whether this theory is systemically coherent with his ontology of non-duality (*bu er* 不二).

The preface to *Yuan Ru* 原儒 [*To the Origin of the Ru*] serves as the starting point for this analysis, as it offers a preliminary outline of Xiong's unfinished *Lianglun* 量論 [*On Epistemology*] chapter from his *Xin Weishi lun* 新唯識論 [*New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*]. By engaging with these materials, this study aims to explore how Xiong integrates epistemological and ontological concerns into his broader philosophical framework and to investigate whether, and to what extent, Xiong's theory of knowledge can be described as a non-dualistic epistemology.

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"Self," "other" and external world in Daoist and literati (*wenren*) philosophy of friendship and aesthetics

China's current youth's growing loneliness gave birth to the unique subculture of seeking out "temporary partners" (*dazi* 搭子), or various forms of payed companionship. Of the particular interest is a search for "guaranteed chat partner" (*guliao* 固聊), evident in the dramatic increase of hashtags such as #lookingforguliao and #waitingforguliao, which demonstrate people's desire for meaningful connections. Last year, another hashtag with the name of the famous Song Dynasty literati Zhang Huaimin – a friend of an even more famous literati and politican Su Shi (Su Dongpo) – went viral on most popular Chinese internet platforms. Why and how did the famous short story about Zhang's friendship gesture – his readiness to join Su Shi on a midnight walk to enjoy the moonlight together – become so attractive today? How does it unite various Chinese traditional forms of friendship, based on different understandings of "self" in relation to the world and other people? To answer those questions, the paper will focus on Daoist and literati (*wenren*) philosophy of friendship, as based on "no-self"/"free self" and "responding/sympathetic self," respectively, and expressed in traditional and modern Chinese literature of leisure (*xianqing wenxue* 闲情文学) or "aesthetics of everyday," which was (paradoxically) related to the particular ideals and forms of reclusion.

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Tradition as a Buzz of Individual Voices. The Self-Reflection of Zheng Xuan and He Xiu in Writings on the *Chunqiu* Traditions

Canonical traditions are often perceived of as monolithic, resulting in global findings on the classics and cementing a rigid view of their meanings. But in fact, traditions often consist in a cacophony of antagonistic individual voices each professing expertise. How did these idiosyncratic voices relate to one another? And how did they conceive of the role their personal readings played within the line of a textual tradition? Conceptions of authorship and selfhood may be studied as foundational hermeneutic premises to their approaches.

My presentation will trace how two scholars of similar age and background, He Xiu 何休 (129–182 CE) and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), accessed the Chunqiu tradition. Through their writings, it becomes evident that in their lifetimes in the Han period, the notion of authorship was becoming more prominent. Writing was now tied to personal thought. He's and Zheng's scholarly dispute reveals the self-assertiveness of two authors who related to the same textual canon from seemingly irreconcilable vantage points, reflective of different methods as well as self-perceptions. A series of writings on the *Chunqiu* traditions by these scholars reveals how they plotted themselves against predecessors' opinions and established individual claims to truth, for example by means of re-contextualisation or logical deduction. The conscious self-positioning of authors vis-à-vis other scholars highlights the broad spectrum of meaning and personal significance of the classics. I argue that this necessitates a more pluralistic research approach taking the habitus, methods, and even style of its various authors into account.

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How to Read a Text – in Early China and Early Greece, For Example

Over the course of the classical Greek and Chinese traditions, a rich and complex set of debates emerged surrounding the art of interpretation, focusing on how to understand the past and interpret texts from earlier times. These traditions grappled with questions of meaning, context, and authority, shaping the methods and goals of interpretation in distinct ways. The aim of my paper will be to explore these debates, examining the theories and practices that evolved in each tradition. Additionally, I will discuss the comparative implications of these developments, considering how they illuminate broader cultural and intellectual differences and shared challenges in interpretation.

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Aligning Individual Right and the Common Good – The Political Philosophy of Su Shi

How can what an individual thinks is right also contributes to the common good? This paper presents Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037-11010) solution to this longstanding issue political philosophers around the world have been grappling with. I first reconstruct the eleventh century context Su was responding to – the unprecedented monarchical absolutist reform designed by Wang Anshi, implemented by three successive monarchs to counteract the growth in literati moral autonomy

under developments of the Ancient Prose 古文 movement. Then I spell out the content of Su Shi's political philosophy as formulated in his commentaries on the *Analects*, *Change*, and *Documents*, a project he undertook when exiled for criticizing the reform. In contrast to Wang Anshi's statecraft designed to transform self-centered individuals into subjects thinking unreflexively in line with state interest, Su proposed an approach to governance that guides individuals to cultivate their ability to do what they think is right while according with the way things work. This way, one's own moral judgment follows the inherent pattern of things in the world, thereby bringing about greater common good. That is, a state can increase its power by letting citizens be who they are. And, because it follows the natural way, it can last. This "cultivated" spontaneity has, I argue, deep shared grounds with Kant's idea of categorical imperative.

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Roles, Archetypes, and Exemplars: Character in Classical Confucian Thought

Those interested in moral character, whether in the context of classical Chinese thought or more broadly, have examined it through numerous lenses: virtues (Sim 2015; Van Norden 2003; 2013; Cua 2014), roles (Rosemont 1991; Ames 2011; Ramsey 2016), and exemplars (Olberding 2012). There is a distinctive class of moral terms, however, that are often lumped into those extant categories: archetypes. Archetypes concepts (which include examples such as the jerk, saint, snake, mensch, creep, gadfly, or troll) play a distinctive role in our evaluative lives. In this presentation, I sketch some important differences between the related concepts of *virtue*, *role*, *exemplar*, and *archetype*. I then argue that taking archetypes as a distinctive class of characterological concept is particularly helpful in the context of classical Confucian thought and especially role ethics. Archetypes and (normative) roles are clearly closely related. (I will treat roles as a subset of archetypes defined by a highly *particular* social function or relation). Certain key Confucian characterological concepts are best understood as roles (the scholar-official (士 *shì*), and the lords, ministers, parents, and children of *Analects* 12.11), while others are best understood as archetypes (most obviously the small / petty person (小人 *xiǎorén*), but probably the village worthy (鄉原 *xiāngyuàn*) and the sage (聖 *shèng*) as well). Then, there are archetypes such as the *jūnzǐ* (君子) that perhaps began as roles but evolved into broader archetypes.

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Action Is Easy, Knowledge Is Hard: The Legacy of Sun Yat-sen's Criticism of Wang Yangming's Unity of Knowledge and Action (知行合一)

Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the founder of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the first (provisional) president of the Republic of China (ROC), is not regarded as a (Neo-)Confucian

philosopher. However, in the autobiographical section of his *General Plan for National Reconstruction* (建國方略), written in 1919, Sun challenged the principle of the unity of knowledge and action (知行合一) of renowned Neo-Confucian thinker Wang Yangming (1472–1529). Contrary to Wang's assertion that knowledge and action are inseparably linked, Sun argued that action is easy while knowing is hard (行易知難).

Sun illustrated his argument through several popular examples, ranging from the lack of formal grammar in the Chinese language ("yet it works") to the construction of the Panama Canal ("almost nobody involved knew what they were doing"). Although this was the only instance when Sun prominently engaged with Wang Yangming's theory, similar notions reappeared in his 1924 version of the *Three Principles of the People* (三民主義) when Sun categorized the Chinese population into three groups according to knowledge.

This contribution elucidates the connection between Sun's critique of Wang and his later political formulations, shedding light on how Sun's ideas on the "unknowing" Chinese shaped his political strategies and influenced later political generations in the ROC (Taiwan).

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Listening to the Breath of History: On Wang Fuzhi's Historical *Qixue*

Wang Fuzhi's unique philosophy of history is built upon the idea that the patterned (*li*) flow of vital energy (*qi*) has a propensity (*shi*), which is manifested through political events. It is the weakness or strength of qi that makes certain complexes of human reactions, that is events, unavoidable; but since the former is fully controllable until some critical point, no externally imposed necessity nor transcendent teleology is implied in Wang's view. In this sense, as I shall argue, Wang offers a strikingly non-Hegelian approach to history – the point that was debated in the interpretations of his philosophy of history offered by, i.a., Mou Zongsan, Zhang Dainian, and François Jullien, all of which will be referred to in the paper. One of the central arguments for such a reading is showing that Wang Fuzhi gets rid of a causal mode of thinking about political time, inviting us instead to listen to (rather than gaze on) the secret waves of the unfolding breath of history.

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A Sense of Self: Bodily Experience and Selfhood in Early China

This paper argues that exploring the role of the body (in its various iterations as *shen* 身, *ti* 體, or *xing* 形) as a sensory organ may significantly enhance our understanding of early Chinese epistemology and notions of the experience of self vis-à-vis physical and social environments. Previous studies (arguably culminating in Raphals, 2023) have investigated the interrelationship between body, heart-mind (*xin* 心) and spirit as constituting different versions of the "self" in early Chinese thought. The body as a reflection / counterpart of state and cosmos,

too, is a topic widely studied (most lucidly in Sivin, 1995). However, while its presence within sensorial taxonomies has been pointed out, there remains much to be said on the role of the body in the early Chinese sensorium. Somewhat parallel to the heart-mind, the early Chinese body plays a dual role in the sensorium: on the one hand, it functions as the physical container of all sensory organs; while on the other (and less emphasised in existing scholarship) it is a sensory organ in its own right, which is responsible for proprioception (i.e., the sense of self in space, motion, etc.), seeks physical comfort (*an* 安), and capable of differentiating between sensations of "pain, itch, cold, warmth, slipperiness, sharpness, lightness, and heaviness" (*Xunzi* 22). Touching on issues of function and malfunction, sense and sensory impairment, I will offer that the body, even removed from the body-politic, is crucial in early Chinese notions of both selfhood and exteriority.

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Diverging Paths: Fate and Individual Agency in the *Liezi* and Guo Xiang's *Zhuangzi*

The idea of going with the flow and accepting things as they are, or "being at peace with one's fate" (*an ming* 安命) has proven to be one of the most powerful and influential notions embedded in the *Zhuangzi*. But what is this "fate" that the text talks about? What does it entail to become aware of one's fate? How does one realize, manifest one's own fated path? And what does the Zhuangzian concept of fate imply for one's individual agency? Does such an agency even exist? Or are our "selves" merely playthings of external forces?

These questions seem to have guided already the authors of some of the earliest extant interpretations of the work. The approaches and answers, however, differed widely. This paper will tackle two of these interpretations that became exemplary for later developments in Chinese thought and still find applicability today: Guo Xiang's *Commentary on the Zhuangzi* and the *Liezi*. The former employs *an ming* as a tool to promote some sort of naturalistic social conformity, making the *Zhuangzi* more palatable for an audience that wants to apply their ethical viewpoints in socio-political decision making. The latter, on the other hand, takes on a far more individualistic, soteriological approach. It first takes the concept to its fatalistic extreme, only to then liberate the individual reader from any dogma, any preconceived societal ideal how to live one's life, and ultimately offers them complete freedom of choice.

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Giving an account of oneself: pragmatic-linguistic approaches to personal identity

In the sacrificial hymn *Shēng mín* (生民) to the ancestor god Hòu Jì (*Shī jīng*, no. 245), the people express not only gratitude and respect, but also their existential identity with the ancestor, which is based on a complex network of relationships: the genealogical ancestral lineage, the continuation of life, the cultural knowledge, the life-securing blessing. Consistency runs

through the various forms of connection: without performing the identity in the sacrificial ritual, consistency is in danger of being lost.

In this hymn, identity does not emerge by itself, but only together with the request to give an account of it. Giving an account of it brings about a performative change in the configuration of reality.

Embedded in the context of performative acts, the pragmatic linguistic concept of identity that emerges here differs from other concept of individual identity according to which identity is grounded in a substance (e.g. that personal identity is grounded in memory) or in fixed social relationships or from ontological and epistemological concepts that ask about certain conditions. Based on this pragmatic linguistic concept of identity, linked to the performative act of giving an account of oneself, this paper analyses self- reports from ancient literature primarily in relation to extreme situations: in the face of death, in the experience of suffering and in punishment.

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Emotions, Motivations, and Thoughts of Desire (*Yu* 欲) in Classical Chinese Philosophy

In Chinese philosophy, *yu* 欲, generally translated as desire, covers affective and motivational states of the mind that play important roles in moral psychology. This paper discusses the broad and interactive notions of *yu* in classical Chinese philosophy and compares them with the notion of desire in Western philosophy, which focuses on a psychological state with the world-to-mind direction of fit. There are at least three forms of *yu* in classical Chinese philosophy. First, *yu* means an affected state of mind that prompts positive feelings toward its objects. In this sense, *yu* is comparable to liking. Second, *yu* also means innate inclinations of humans to fulfill specific needs such as food, shelter, wealth, and power. Often this type of *yu* can be disruptive and even dangerous to individuals and their communities, because it often comes with the self-centered, short-sighted, or blind pursuit of its objects. For an ideal society and virtuous life, people need to regulate their *yu* through self-discipline, to avoid chaos and anarchy. Third, however, *yu* also means an inclination toward moral cultivation. Thus, when guided by the mind of deliberation and thinking, *yu* can be transformed to motivate moral cultivation. With these three meanings, *yu* combines thinking and feeling, motivation and deliberation, and moral psychology and moral teleology, and constitutes a unique psychological category that includes several aspects of feeling, liking, wanting, thinking, and evaluating.

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Aesthetic Feeling in Confucian Rituality: Li Zehou's View

In Confucianism, emotions (*qing* 情) are central to the framework of rituality, serving as both the foundation and guiding force for ethical and social conduct. Emotions are interpreted through five dimensions, each providing a distinct perspective on their nature and function. As

"innate instinct," emotions are intrinsic cognitive attributes and physiological responses forming the natural basis of human behavior. Interpreted as desires, emotions emphasize the necessity for regulation and restraint, aligning individual impulses with social harmony. The dimension of Qi (氣) situates emotions within a broader cosmological context, viewing them as dynamic forces with specific origins and paths. The most pivotal interpretation is that of emotions by nature (性), harmonizing emotions with human nature and embodying unity and the potential for ethical cultivation. This allows Confucianism to seamlessly integrate "nature" and "emotion," while sometimes subordinating emotional impulses to rational principles. Additionally, emotions are understood through Yin (陰) and Yang (陽), linking emotional experiences to cosmic principles and the order of heaven. Within this complex framework, ritual（禮）is deeply rooted in emotional psychology, designed to cultivate and express appropriate emotions, reinforcing ethical norms and social order.

Thus, the foundational emotional psychology of ethical life becomes the premise for Confucian social rituals. Emotions serve as both the raw material for moral development and the medium for achieving and sustaining ritual propriety. This interplay between emotion and ritual underscores the holistic nature of Confucian ethical practice, where cultivating emotions through ritual fosters a harmonious and orderly society.

Li Zehou's unique interpretation of emotions in Confucianism, emphasizes the historical and cultural evolution within the ethical framework. He highlights the dynamic interplay between emotions, rationality, and cultural-historical context, stressing the importance of integrating emotions into the broader ethical and social framework. Li underscores the role of rituals and self- cultivation in achieving emotional and moral harmony, providing a nuanced understanding of emotions in Confucian thought.

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"Diminishing every Day": Minimalist Teachings in Daoism

In chapter 48 of the *Laozi*, a contrast is made between increasing through the practice of learning and diminishing through the practice of *dao* (為學日益，為道日損。損之又損), the latter of which ends up in non-coercive action (*wuwei* 無爲) bringing success (nothing will be undone). Minimalist teachings of this kind abound in the *Laozi*, they are frequent in the *Zhuangzi* and can also be found in the *Sunzi bingfa*. Methods directly opposed to what most of us would think of are recommended for intended success. Can we make sense of these counterintuitive teachings and how so?

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Self-Cultivation and Ethical Conduct: Responsiveness towards other Agents

In this paper I ask to reexamine the process and goals of self-cultivation described in Pre-Qin Daoist philosophy through inquiring into the notion of *de* from its minor and limited position in the Guodian Laozi editions to its extension into an entire "canon" as a *dejing* in the textual tradition of the *Laozi*. At the same time, I ask to examine the descriptions of cultivation which emphasize reducing one's imposition of their self onto the world. While the process of self-cultivation leads to an extension of one's *de* from the interior self to the exterior world, it also demands a diminishing of the self. Dao, as the ultimate model for order along with *de* as the obscure nourishing power whether in cosmic, political, social, or internal notions order, models itself on the *self-so* of all things, not on the self of a constant modeling agent.

By forgetting morality and forsaking knowledge, by diminishing the self, self-cultivation is directed towards an ethical existence rather than self-improvement, and further demands the treatment of every being and thing as an agent in their own terms. Ethical conduct in Daoist terms, is essentially conduct based on a *de* that does not possess *de*, and thereby bestows full respect to the *self-so* of others – whether living entities or inanimate objects, as agents in their own terms.

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Inner Confucian, Outer Colonial Subject: LIM Boon Keng's Prescriptions for the Straits Chinese in the British Empire

The Straits Settlements was of outsized political and economic interest for the British and Qing Empires at the turn of the 20th century. Here, we attend to how they were both hybridised by the Straits Chinese philosopher and physician Dr LIM Boon Keng—who was one of the only two non-European members of the Straits Philosophical Society in Singapore, as well as its final recorded president. We focus on Lim's attempt to cultivate a Confucian interiority for the Straits Chinese community within the context of British colonial governance and education. Perhaps surprisingly, Lim staunchly advocated for this interiority to be nevertheless exteriorised as British imperial subjecthood: the British Empire was *the* vehicle for the universal development of Confucianism.

We reconstruct Lim's *fin-de-siècle* prescription to the Straits Chinese for a hybridised identity as well for expunging the superstitions that allegedly haunted *both* source cultures. This, according to him, was achieved with the light of scientific reason, which he identified with Confucianism and understood primarily with his training in Scottish Medicine: thus did British expansionism lack adequate moral guidance, while the Qing was pathologically compromised. Situating Lim's efforts within the political crises faced by both Britain and China at the time, his background in Scottish Medicine, and encounters with Late-Qing Confucianism, helps us better appreciate his woefully neglected efforts to modernise Confucianism and prefiguring contemporary discussions between Confucian and liberal political theorists. Furthermore, it mirrors to us hopes and worries that we might otherwise risk overlooking for similar hybridising undertakings today.

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The Dialogue and Interchange between Pre-Qin Confucian Philosophy and Chinese Neo Scholastic Philosophy: Taking "Anger" as an Example / 先秦儒家哲學與中華新士林哲學的對話與會通：以「怒」為例

先秦儒家認為情感是人之本性，「怒」可理解為一種原發情緒，具積極的力量，促使人做出行為。但在表達情感時要考慮他人的感受，因此要學會克制。先秦儒家哲學與中華新士林哲學龐迪我的《七克》對「怒」的處置方式略有不同，透過兩者的交談，期許從中國哲學中學到如何調和自我，善待他人與眾生、外在環境和世界的方式。依序探討（一）「怒」的來源：不悅慍忿怒 VS. 私欲；（二）破除方式：克己 VS.克私；（三）衍生弊端：自我與身體解離 VS. 含忍傷己；（四）解決之方：內誠外知﹝智﹞VS. 中庸之道；（五）結語：先秦儒家哲學與中華新士林哲學會通處。

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Practical Reflections on Intellectual Wisdom and Governance Principle in the Huainanzi: A Study on Discussions of "Tianxia"(天下) in the Chapters "Yuandao"(〈原道〉) and "Chuzhen"(〈俶真〉) / 《淮南子》智性與治道的實踐性思考─以〈原道〉、〈俶真〉對「天下」的討論為例

《淮南子》視「天下」為治道的實踐場域，智性與治道的實踐便是把握「天下」、「他者」、「自我」三者的關係，並將這份理解帶人我關係之中。「天下」由「自我」和眾多「他者」組成。〈原道〉、〈俶真〉對於智性與治道的思考，在於「同理每個涉及他者的情境中，自己會希望如何被對待與回應？」。實踐上，將有助於轉化成溫和地進入「自我」與「他者」交會的情境之中，放下自我對「天下」有限的認知，轉化自身的主觀意識，展現客觀識才、用眾的能力，進而走向開放與容受「他者」之中，與「天下」形成共生、互為整體的理想關係。

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Harmony and Solitude: A Comparative Study of Confucian and Metzian Relational Ethics

By introducing Confucian relational ethics, this essay engages critically with Metz's deontological relational moral theory from a comparative perspective. It first points out the similarities that Confucianism and Metz's African ethics share in emphasizing relationality and harmony. Then, this essay reveals the theoretical deficiency in Metz's relational moral theory compared to Confucianism; that is, the former lacks the concern for solitary cultivation which is essential for one's cultivation and development. This essay is also less optimistic about a

universal ethical system as suggested by Metzian African harmony; instead, it proposes a method for the harmonious coexistence of multi-ethical systems inspired by the Chinese Confucian-Daoist complementarity model.

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"Heaven", "Justice", and the "Self" – Sound Arguments in Han Dynasty Moral Discourse

Han dynasty texts are notorious for the frequent use of punning. Thus, both the *Xinshu* and the *Chunqiu Fanlu* invoke the sound similarity between *mʕi[n] (瞑, 瞑, 'dormant'/'asleep') and *mi[ŋ] (民, 'people') to suggest that the king's duty to "wake up" his people to goodness is inherent in these very names. This use of punning reflects a practice of sound-related suasion and clarification which is explicitly discussed in CQFL. This text uses the sound of names to define fundamental concepts for understanding the self in their relation to the world: At one point, the text bases its discussion of 'justice' (*yì* 義) on the phonetic relationship between this term's pronunciation (*ŋ(r)aj-s) and the first-person pronoun 'I' (*ŋʕajʔ 我). At another, it establishes conceptual ties on the basis of rhyme groups: the anthropological and psychological properties of humans are discussed based on the phonetic similarity between terms such as shen 'body'/'self' (*ŋ̊i[ŋ] 身), *tian* 'heaven' (*l̥ʕi[n] 天), *ren* 'human' (*ni[ŋ] 人), *zhen* 'truth' (*ti[n] 真), etc. My talk sketches the interrelation of phonetic and argumentative structures at play here to then address the broader significance of these patterns. It shows that improved phonological knowledge of Ancient Chinese allows to better understand the role of sounds in argumentation, but it also points out the difficulties of assessing its overall significance and generalizability.

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Rethinking Self-Care: A Confucian Perspective

Amidst a global mental health crisis, the concept of self-care has gained renewed attention, yet simultaneously faces criticism for its perceived self-centeredness. This paper explores early Confucianism as a valuable resource for re-approaching self-care, understood as actions undertaken "in the interest of maintaining life, healthy functioning, continued personal development, and well- being" (Doran 2011).

Although alongside the development of care ethics in Western philosophy (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984; Held 2005), there has been an ample discussion about the place and role of care in Confucian philosophy (Li 1994; Herr 2003; Pang-White 2009; Lambert 2016), not much attention has been given to the idea of self-care. However, the concepts of *li* 禮 (ritual propriety) and 孝 *xiao* (family reverence) can provide a framework for understanding self-care as a part of a shared continuum with care for others.

Xiao, as exemplified in *Analects* 2.6, highlights the intrinsic motivation for self-care stemming from familial and societal obligations. *Li*, with its emphasis on cultivating

dispositions, trains "cognitive and emotional capabilities to produce emotional sensitivity, social acuity, and good judgement" (Epley 2015). Combined with the physical aspect of strengthening the body through structured physical routines and its self-transformational dimension (Nylan 2001), *li* establishes the link between the care for oneself and the care for others.

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Narrative strategies in *Mozi* "Ming Gui Xia"

What purposes does storytelling serve in early Chinese philosophical texts? In this talk, I argue that, in the "Ming Gui Xia" (*Mozi* 31), storytelling serves highly differentiated purposes of clarification and persuasion. Through readings of passages from the text's main sections, presenting respectively the realities of the eyes and ears of the many (眾人耳目之實) and the service of the sage kings (聖王之事), I describe how narrative is employed in ways that are tailored to these sections' subject matter and that require different forms of engagement from the addressee. In the 'realities'-section, visual detail dominates, as well as careful accountings of who saw these things and how they transmitted what they saw. In the 'service'-section, we are first presented with a series of decisions about ritual and policy made by the sage kings, emphasising the importance of the activities organised around the spirits and the value of the things given to them. We are then presented with the many efforts taken by the sage kings to make sure that these policies were transmitted, emphasising the sage kings' fear that the materials might fail. These stories include simple and complicated lessons: the 'realities'-section, famously, puts on display the promise of decisive retribution for bad behaviour; the 'service'-section shows how a variety of inherited practices are in fact organised around ghosts and their interest in the conduct of the living.

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Authority and Strategy: Power Dynamics in the Jing-Shuo Structure of Han Feizi

This paper investigates the *jing-shuo* 經-說 ('Canon'-'Explanation') structure in the 'Nei Chushuo' 內儲說 (Inner Strategies) chapters of Han Feizi 韓非子, with a particular focus on its role in elucidating the power dynamics between ruler and minister. In this structure, the jing (canon, guideline, principle) sections present authoritative guiding principles in concise statements, establishing an abstract and logical framework for governance centred on the ruler's need for unchallenged authority. The *shuo* (commentary, illustration, story) sections, by contrast, supplement these principles with vivid illustrations, often employing fictionalized historical stories to resonate emotionally with readers and reinforce the consequences of adhering to—or neglecting—the prescribed principles.

Through a close reading of key passages from the 'Nei Chushuo' chapters, this paper argues that the *jing-shuo* structure serves not only as a rhetorical strategy but also as a practical

pedagogical tool, making complex *fajia* 法家 principles accessible and applicable to governance. This dual structure combines abstract authority with concrete exemplification, striking a dynamic balance of intellectual rigour with emotional impact. Moreover, the *jing-shuo* structure reflects a deeper tension in the ruler-minister relationship: a contrast between the ruler's public power, representing the state's collective authority, and the minister's private interests. In this context, the ruler's authority is not merely personal power but represents public authority, as a safeguard against the self-serving inclinations of ministers. This underscores the need for vigilance and control within the political power dynamics.

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Daoist Wisdom: An Account of Epistemic Humility

This paper draws from Daoist thought in order to argue that epistemic humility is not only a necessary pre-condition to wisdom, it is also sufficiently constitutive of wisdom. Additionally, I argue that going beyond that sufficiency undermines the genuineness of said wisdom. More specifically, both Zhuangzi and Laozi argue that going beyond epistemic humility assumes a context-transcending truth, epistemic justification, or metanormative value which exists, and can know. In contrast, genuine wisdom understands that no knowledge, truth, or epistemic claim transcends any given context.

Thus, epistemic humility in this context is to accept that our epistemic convictions have no inherent metanormative justification outside of its context, and is to admit to the contingency of epistemic norms. As such, genuine wisdom is to practice such epistemic humility that allows to learn to unlearn norms that are epistemically contingent.

To make this argument, I first go through extant conversations on wisdom and the role of epistemic humility in being wise, demonstrating that while humility is often considered necessary, it is not generally considered to be sufficient because wisdom is often defined as doing well epistemically in some domain X (such as living well, or in terms of being rational), where one must first be humble to be able to learn about/to X. I then show what wisdom as epistemic humility looks like for Zhuangzi and Laozi. Finally, I argue for the plausibility of epistemic humility is constitutive of wisdom, both as necessary and sufficient condition.

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Pain, Suffering and the Heart-mind of Ce Yin 惻隱 in Mencius's Thought

In Mencius's thought, the heart-mind of *ce yin* 惻隱 is one paradigmatic mode of the heart-mind of *bu ren* 不忍. It manifests itself as primarily negative affective states such as pain and suffering. Within the Philosophy of Pain, approaches to the nature of pain are dominated by pain biology and pain science, and pain is first and foremost construed as sensual experience that is conceptually localizable in the body. This gives rise to the issue of the paradox of pain,

the fact that pain seems to bear both physical characteristics, such as a location in the body, and mental characteristics, such as being mind-dependent. With commentaries provided by Neo-Confucian scholars, the feeling of the heart-mind of *ce yin* is indeed localizable in the body; moreover, the contents and meaning of the feeling straddle the separation of body and mind in such a way that both physical and psychic aspects of negative states are involved, ranging from physical pain, psychic pain, psychic suffering and even physical suffering. It is my attempt to develop an account of the heart-mind of *ce yin* that is able to incorporate all the mentioned aspects of its affective states with the hope to illuminate the structure of pain experience in Mencius's thought.

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The (Non)Active Accompany of Forces: A Deleuzian Reading of the Affected Agential Self in "Boundless Wandering" in *Zhuangzi*

If we admit that our relation with other forces is the condition for any agential self to be established, what can we do besides being determined by the contingency of encountering other forces? How does the necessary relation and the selves coexist? How can we neither resist nor dominate the forces that are different from ourselves? Connecting "Boundless Wandering" (逍遙遊) in *Zhuangzi* (莊子) and the theory of affects Deleuze develops from Nietzsche and Spinoza, this paper explores the relation between non-self forces and the formation of self. Through the resonating but different questioning of Zhuangzi and Deleuze, this paper not only analyzes the subtle relations of forces inside and outside the self in *Zhuangzi* but also imagines a practice of self that Deleuze might have pointed towards but has not reached. This paper reads the agential self in affective relation through the three pairs of characters in "Boundless Wandering": 1) the formally dissolving and affective connective self in the contrast between Song Rongzi (宋榮子) and Liezi (列子); 2) the activeness of self that affirms the activeness of other forces in the story of Yao (堯) and Xu You (許由); 3) the power to both create relations and be one of the forces in the conversation between Zhuangzi and Huishi (惠施). This paper hopes to develop a practice of self in the mutual affirming of forces that non-action accompany (無為其側) points toward.

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Why Does Xunzi Critique Zhuangzi?

In Xunzi's "Undoing Fixation 解蔽", Xunzi 荀子 critiques Zhuangzi 莊子 for being "fixated on the Heavenly and not understanding the value of the human," reflecting a fundamental

divergence between Confucian and Daoist perspectives on interiority and exteriority. Zhuangzi's principle of "following Heaven as the ultimate way" prioritizes an ontology of interiority, advocating a return to the Dao 道 through emptiness and stillness to transcend the constraints of human affairs. In contrast, Xunzi rejects this inward-focused approach, arguing that Heaven alone cannot account for human realities. Instead, Xunzi emphasizes external ritual(*li* 禮) practices that transform external norms into internalized moral values, achieving harmony between Heaven and humanity. Xunzi's concept of "emptiness, single-mindedness, and stillness 虛壹而靜" exemplifies this interdependence of interiority and exteriority, where the mind's function is to achieve clarity, enabling the correct understanding of external principles and categories. Through ritual practice, internal moral values are integrated into the external world, forming a dynamic interplay between internal cultivation and external realization. This interdependent structure aligns with Husserl's phenomenological framework, wherein interiority is constituted through intentional acts directed toward the external world, highlighting its reliance on exteriority. In contrast, Zhuangzi's "emptiness and stillness 虛靜" seeks to sever intentional ties with exteriority, pursuing a pure state of interiority that transcends external disturbances and returns the mind to the infinite Dao. By examining these contrasting positions, phenomenology reveals the philosophical debate between Confucianism and Daoism regarding the interplay of interiority and exteriority, highlighting their distinct approaches to ethical cultivation and cosmic order.

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Self and Other in Confucian Thought

The relational self is a widely discussed topic in Confucianism, yet it has not been fully accepted in either English and Chinese academia. Two main issues concern the relational self: its individuality and the problem of the other. This article attempts to respond to these two concerns by exploring the Confucian self in its relationship with the other. On the on hand, it focuses on the concepts *ren* 仁 (care, humanity) and *li* 禮 (ritual propriety) to delineate the limits of Confucian discourse on self and other and, on the other hand, it will introduce a horizontal/vertical bidimensional framework to interpret the self-other relationship. It will argue that this relationship unfolds horizontally in the self's relationship with particular others and vertically in the self's relationship with its communal, social, and cultural contexts, what George Mead calls the "generalized other." This article will argue that the Confucian relational self is produced through its interactions with particular others and with the generalized others in a process of mutual production and reproduction where self and other are mutually identical and mutually interpenetrate (*xiangji xiangru* 相即相入). Through this explication, this article will show that Confucianism retains the individuality of the self while at the same time inserting it into a social ontology as the ground for its emergence.

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KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

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Irreductionism as a Framework for Ontology, Epistemology, and Agency

The principle of irreductionism holds that all relations are equally constitutive of a thing. While everything can be reduced to something else, nothing is ultimately reducible, since there's nothing more real, primordial, or fundamental from which to derive or explain other things.

In this talk, I present two forms of irreductionism: Bruno Latour's in his reading of Tournier's rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* and a more radical form in the *Zhuangzi*, which results from applying a perspectivist approach. I'm interested in mobilizing the notion of irreductionism to offer a fruitful framework for ontology, epistemology, and agency.

Irreductionism follows from *ontological ambiguity* (Brook Ziporyn), which we approach through the yin yang 陰陽 model (Robin Wang). Here, things aren't this or that, but simultaneously this and that, acquiring a provisional quality or distinct identity through relative position, context, and framing—the function of a particular contextual reduction. The boundaries of the human emerge from prioritizing certain relations over others.

We then turn to the *Xunzi*'s call to "eliminate fixations" (*jie bi* 解蔽) on reductive properties or relations—a practice called emptying (*xu* 虛). Selecting one fixation comes at the cost of others that are equally constitutive. Emptying enables attending to things in their full range of potentiality and affordances. Epistemological irreductionism also calls for perspective-shifting (Tim Connolly) as an epistemic virtue (Thi Nguyen).

Finally, irreductionism shifts focus from the individual human as the locus of agency to the network of human-nonhuman actors that collaborate in the emergence of actions. The concept of *shi* 勢—the power emergent from localized interactions between actors in an assemblage—helps us understand how effects arise and how to promote or discourage them. Instead of asking who is responsible for an action, we ask how to co-shape desirable trajectories.

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Harmonious interface: playing the roles in the web of *qing*

The notion of roles in Confucian society has been debated for some time now and sometimes has been put into sharp contrast with virtue ethics. I would like to depart from the ongoing schism and focus on the problem of *qing* 情 and how it relates to the issue of roles and virtues mainly in Confucian normative texts – namely what is the relation between roles and virtues and *qing* and how does it convey the desired effect, the harmony. Roles in Confucian texts are inherently relational and those relations are conveyed by *qing*, a notoriously problematic world to translate and understand. Q*ing* refers to both overall disposition as well as the content of one's mind (rational and emotional alike), but it is not exclusively tied to the subject, and it could be grasped rather as an interface or cybernetic system of exchange. In such a system, the relations are realised, and things are set in motion either by desire *yu* 欲 or by intention *zhi* 志 (being mainly a shared vector rather than only an individual ambition). In the Confucian worldview, relations (and by extension the roles) serve as normative guidelines *along with* the virtues. Properly playing one's role entails harmony. If the system of *ganying* 感應 (a

cybernetic loop) is supposed to be harmonious, the *qing* needs to be without extremities and then it stays within proper limits. Drawing from the Confucian texts I would like to offer an alternative concept of societal exchange not based on positivistic historical worldview but deriving from the challenges of ancient Chinese rationality and language.

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Making use of what is beyond human control in early Chinese texts

The early Chinese texts employ various terms or concepts to place perfect (effective, moral…) human action in ontological / cosmological context. The paper explores the ways the term *tian* 天 is used in several early Chinese text to accommodate human action within natural processes. The paper focuses on those instances in ancient Chinese texts where *tian* apparently means "nature" - processes and forces that are beyond human control and not accessible by sacrifices or other ritual/religious practices, taken from the *Xunzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Guanzi, Huainanzi* and a few other texts. This paper addresses the question of the ways in which the processes referred to as *tian* are accessible to human use (the ways in which human agents can "tap" natural processes and use them for their own ends) and explores changing frameworks in which *tian* appears in various texts to form different arguments concerning effectiveness of human action. The analysed texts are read as various attempts to offer a solution to the riddle: How to put to human use what is essentially beyond human control (without resort to established ritual practices).

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Emotion, Sensitivity, and Self-Cultivation: Reframing Human-Nature Relations Through Confucian and Aristotelian Traditions.

Nowadays, several authors (Huang Yong & Li Yong), work at the intersection of Aristotelian and Confucian ethics, focusing on the role of emotions, moral bonds and sensitivity. Developing an aesthetic approach to dwelling within emotions and sensitivity offers indeed a way to reframe the relationship between humanity and nature while supporting the mediations of self-cultivation and character formation that are crucial in the context of the *Anthropocene*. The challenges of the ecological transition require responses that encompass not only scientific and theoretical knowledge but also emotional and moral knowledge (Pierron).

   In the Confucian tradition, from the *Analects* to contemporary interpretations of Confucianism, learning classics, rituals and music are considered essential for self-improvement and emotional regulation (*Analects* 8.8). Similarly, in Aristotle's thought, moral cultivation is understood as a social process, where habits shape inner dispositions and prepare individuals to assume public responsibilities in connection with their context. The dialogue between Aristotelian and Confucian ethics and aesthetics has historical roots, particularly through François Noël's *Philosophia Sinica* published in 1711 in Prague, which integrated these traditions. Unlike other modern naturalistic approaches, which emphasize dichotomies and

foster exploitative attitudes toward nature (like Descartes), François Noël's work offers insights for constructing an anthropology that emphasizes continuity—between the soul and the body, as well as between human beings and other living entities.

This contribution seeks to build on Noël's approach to dialogue between Western and Chinese ethical and aesthetic traditions, exploring ways to address the ecological crisis and discovering new approaches to inhabiting and dwelling within emotions and sensitivity.

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An Analysis of the Causes of Sima Guang's Thought of "Governing the Family with Rites"

Family plays a bridging role between individuals and society. The task of family norms is to preliminarily complete individual socialization. Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), a scholar of the Song Dynasty, attached great importance to family norms and advocated "governing the family with rites" (以禮治家). His approach can be divided into two parts: (1) discussing the abstract principles of rites and (2) regulating the etiquette of individual behavior. In terms of the abstract principles of rites, Sima Guang advocated the "homogeneity of family and country" (家國同構). In his view, individuals constitute families, and families constitute society and the state; self-cultivation, family harmony, and governance are progressive steps. His principles of rites can be summarized like this: the way of parents, the way of children, the way of husband and wife, and the way of brothers. There are three reasons why Sima Guang advocated "governing the family with rites": Firstly, Confucianism places great emphasis on the family, as recorded in classics such as *the Book of Changes, Analects, Book of Rites, Mencius, Classic of Filial Piety, and Book of Documents*. As a Confucian scholar, Sima Guang was undoubtedly influenced by these texts. Secondly, the Song Dynasty established the country and moved from chaos to unity, placing great emphasis on rebuilding the rule of ritual. The rise of the commoner class made it necessary to promote the practice of "courtesy to commoners". Sima Guang noticed this and attempted to stabilize social order through "governing the family with etiquette". Thirdly, Sima Guang had strict requirements for himself and his descendants, which was the practical foundation of his "governing the family with etiquette" ideology.

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Inspired by early Confucian texts, defenders of Confucian role ethics argue that persons are constituted by their social roles and relationships. This view leads to intriguing questions about the metaphysics of personhood. But it also has normative implications, for role ethicists argue that a person's social roles and relationships are the source of ethical normativity. However, a problem arises once we consider that some social roles and social expectations, like that of a thief, are bad. There must be some constraint on which roles and expectations are adequate for grounding ethical normativity. Critics of role ethics argue that this shows that virtuous dispositions are more fundamental than roles.

This paper explores a response on behalf of the role ethicist that locates the source of ethical normativity in a socially constructed notion of *rén* (仁), the highest virtue. Being *rén* is not an intrinsic quality that persons can exemplify independently of others; it is partly constructed by social roles and successful social relationships with others, where the relevant norms are encoded in ritual (*lǐ* 禮). This model provides an alternative to recent accounts of social normativity in feminist metaphysics, e.g., Charlotte Witt's artisanal model, which takes the craftsperson as its central example. The resulting discussion will outline new ways in which early Chinese philosophy and contemporary metaphysics intersect.

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On Zhu Xi's Concept of "Sufficient Belief Reached"

Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) distinguished two types of "sufficient belief reached" (*xin de ji* 信得及): one before and one after self-cultivation. Reaching sufficient belief before self-cultivation is the realistic prerequisite to cultivate oneself, requiring learners to study Confucian ideas with an objective and respectful attitude, free from bias or prejudice. The reaching of sufficient belief after self- cultivation is the ideal state learners can achieve after sufficient practice of the "investigation of things" (*ge wu* 格物), which empowers them with adequate moral motivation to engage in moral behaviours. This state is essentially equivalent to another state where people attain so-called "real knowledge" (*zhen zhi* 真知), but with an additional sense of emotional and moral belief, which addresses the commonly cited problem in Zhu Xi's philosophy regarding the lack of source for moral motivation. Zhu Xi's dualistic understanding of "sufficient belief reached" is based on his personal experience of self-cultivation, making it an important concept in Neo-Confucianism as it describes the ideal goal for learners to pursue. It also offers an opportunity for us to examine whether there are any elements in Confucianism that bear certain similarities to religious belief.

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Yu and Ke in Xunzi's Correcting Naming: How Do We Approve Things?

In his *Correcting Naming*, Xunzi gives us one of his most detailed and profound discussions of what we now call moral psychology. His formulations of heart-mind ("*xin*" 心), desire ("*yu*" 欲), and approval ("*ke*" 可) generate great controversy among scholars. Some scholars regard *yu* and *ke* as two independent motivational forces in our mind, which can move us to act on their own respectively (Van Norden 2000; Kline 2000 & 2006). But others think otherwise. Winnie Sung argues that *yu* itself cannot motivate us to act, because only *xin* - and thus *ke* - has motivational power, and *yu* merely serves as a consideration in our deliberation (Sung 2012). David Wong argues that *ke* is a kind of evaluation based on our long-term desires, in other words *ke* is a motivation akin to desire rather than a moving force in its own right (Wong 2000).

To resolve this controversy, we must seek an accurate understanding of the terms *yu* and *ke*. What is relatively less controversial is that *yu* refers to desires related to our senses and includes people's basic needs for drink, food and clothing. The way in which we should understand *ke* is more controversial. Some think that *ke* is something closer to decision or choice than to the judgement of reason, since *ke* arises not only from our rational thinking, but also from our emotions ("*qing*" 情). (Hutton 2016) In this essay, I will clarify the status of *ke* in cognition through textual analysis, and thereby explain the relationship between *yu* and *ke*, so as to settle the above debate.

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"Deeper Learning": On the Relevance of Pre-Qin Chinese Philosophy in the Age of Generative AI

As generative AI reshapes education by automating content delivery and personalizing learning experiences, this paper explores how Pre-Qin Chinese philosophy offers critical insights to reorient teaching as a practice of *deeper learning*—rooted in ethical cultivation, relational pedagogy, and holistic human development. Drawing on Confucian, Daoist, and Mohist traditions, the study argues that ancient Chinese thinkers prioritized qualities irreducible to AI's algorithmic logic: moral introspection (*Analects*), adaptive dialogue (*Mencius*), harmony with nature (*Dao De Jing*), and equitable community (*Mozi*). These principles challenge the transactional efficiency of AI-driven education, which risks reducing learning to data-driven outcomes and passive knowledge consumption. By contrast, Pre-Qin philosophies emphasize teaching as a transformative, context-sensitive process that nurtures critical autonomy, ethical discernment, and social responsibility—skills urgently needed to navigate AI's ethical ambiguities. The paper proposes a synthesis: leveraging AI's analytical capacities while grounding pedagogy in Pre-Qin humanistic values to foster learners who are not merely technically proficient but ethically engaged and reflectively sovereign. Ultimately, it contends that integrating these traditions into modern education can counteract AI's dehumanizing tendencies, recentering teaching on the cultivation of wisdom (*zhi* 智) and virtue (*de* 德) in an age of technological disruption.

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Exhibiting Fragmented Forms: Rethinking the "Abnormal People" in the *Zhuangzi* through the Spatiotemporal Lens of Landscape Painting

This study intends to rethink the image of the"abnormal people" discussed in the Zhuangzi through the perspective of landscape painting. Similar to the strange mountain and rock formations emerging in three-distance (三遠共現) method of landscape paintings, the abnormal people represent the impossible coexistence of multiple perspectives within a single spatial and temporal structure and is therefore considered to be an nonhuman being. This paper proposes

that the dynamic exhibition of this multilayered view is based upon two foundations: The first is the spatial dimensions of becoming, for example, Shi Tao (1642-1707) emphasizes the circumfluent surroundings in which mountains and waters flow into each other. Second, becoming can only be discussed in the sense of time, Shen Kuo (1032-1096) clarifies in *Dream Pool Essays* (《夢溪筆談》) that when an artist returns to one's own duration which is distinct from actual time of cultivation, one's perceptions are heightened, and the towering heights and winding bends of the walls can generate the dynamic images of a flowing landscape of mountains and rivers. The layered landscapes that can all be seen are in fact the time-image of the artist after combining one's body and memories. If we rethink the Zhuangzi with such a dynamic spatiotemporal perspective, the abnormal people can be viewed as an exhibition of the principle that guides one towards redemption (天) embodied in the duration of a human

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Self-Cultivation in the Concept of "Sincerity" (*cheng* 誠)

Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) statement that sincerity (*cheng* 誠) means "being real without falsity" (*zhenshi wu wang* 真實無妄) can be considered as his primary definition of "sincerity", building on the discussions of the Cheng 程 brothers and their students. However, from the Northern Song to the Southern Song dynasty various interpretations of sincerity emerged, shaping diverse approaches to self-cultivation. Cheng Yi's 程頤 (1033–1107) idea that sincerity means "without falsity" (*wu wang* 無妄) was developed in the context of some less well-known perspectives: Li Qingchen 李清臣 (1032–1102) proposed that sincerity means "not deceiving" (*bu qi* 不欺), while Xu Ji 徐積 (1028– 1103) defined sincerity as "never stopping" (*bu xi* 不息). Furthermore, Li Qingchen's interpretation of "not deceiving" was not unique to him, but also shared by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) and his followers, drawing deeply from the *Great Learning*, which emphasizes avoiding self-deception and maintaining the purity of one's intentions. Conversely, Xu Ji's "Never stopping" was inspired by Hu Yuan's 胡瑗 (993–1059) teachings, rooted in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, emphasizing the continuity of moral cultivation. When compiling the *Jinsi Lu* 近思錄 together with Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–1181), Zhu Xi sought to address the limitations of earlier interpretations. He noted that an exclusive focus on "not deceiving" could lead to excessive rigidity, while a focus on effects alone might compromise the very essence of self-cultivation. Zhu Xi's approach combined the *Great Learning* as a step-by-step guide with an emphasis on enduring sincerity, concluding that only truth free from falsity can be genuinely persevering.

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Non-self in the *Guan Yin Zi*

The *Guan Yin Zi* (關尹子) is a Tang dynasty apocryphal text found in the Daoist Canon *Daozang*. It fuses Daoist thought with Buddhist philosophy, resulting in nine chapters of aphorisms, whose terse insights and unusual charm have provoked multiple commentaries spanning Song and Ming dynasties. No English translation of the text is available at the moment, and very little attention has been given to it.

This paper is an effort to bring the *Guan Yin Zi* into the horizon of a wider scholarly community. Non-self (無我), a tenet commonly regarded as Buddhist, here is married to the Chinese *wuxing* theory. This surprising union is achieved through the mediation of refined spirit and essences (精 神魂魄). As all fire can flame into one fire, and all five elements constantly are transforming into each other, the self is likewise part of this relentless alchemy. At the same time, the Buddhist thesis also gains a new flavor and character when expressed in the Chinese language. This paper offers new points of reference on the early interaction between Daoism and Buddhism.

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萬世之下：宋代道學未來觀念淺析

日本學者栗田直躬指出，中國哲學傳統中常以「古」與「今」作為對立概念，而對「未來」的探討相對稀缺，此論切中肯綮。在中國哲學語境中，「萬世」、「萬年」等概念通常指涉時間的整體性，而非單指未來。《孟子·盡心下》中「百世之下，聞者莫不興起也」中的「百世之下」成為後世學者少數用以指涉未來的表述之一。然而，在唐代之前，這類表達多用於讚美古代聖賢和當代皇家功業。宋代儒者，尤其是程朱道學學者，不僅頻繁使用此類表達，甚至還以「萬世之下」為其議論張目。深入研究宋儒，特別是程朱學派對未來的想象，其內涵依然以整體主義的循環時間觀為基礎，在評判人物或自我期許時加入通向後世的時間軸。他們對「萬世之下」的強調，反映了宋儒在尊重《孟子》的背景下對其話語的重視；以及在儒佛交融的背景下，佛教未來觀對道學時間觀的影響。在佛教興盛的背景下，道學學者通過這類闡述參與了關於未來話語權的競爭。

After Myriad Generations: Future Concepts in Song Dynasty Daoxue

Japanese scholar Kurita Naomi pointed out that in the tradition of Chinese philosophy, the concepts of "past" and "present" are often seen as opposing, while discussions of the "future" are relatively scarce. This is a critique that hits the mark. In the context of Chinese philosophy, terms such as "ten thousand generations" and "ten thousand years" typically refer to the totality of time rather than the future alone. The phrase "after a hundred generations" from the Mencius is one of the few expressions that later scholars used to denote the future. However, before the Tang Dynasty, such expressions were mostly used to praise the achievements of ancient sages and contemporary emperors. Confucian scholars of the Song Dynasty, especially the Cheng-Zhu school of *Daoxue* (or Neo-Confucianism), not only frequently used such expressions, but also used "after myriad generations" to highlight their arguments. A deeper study of Song Confucianism, particularly the Cheng-Zhu school's imagination of the future, reveals that its

core concept is still based on a holistic, cyclical view of time. When evaluating other individuals or setting self-expectations, they incorporated a time axis extending into future generations. Their emphasis on "after myriad generations" reflects the exaltation of Mencius in the Song intellectual context, and the influence of Buddhist concepts of the future on their understanding of time, given the syncretic context of Confucianism and Buddhism. Against the backdrop of Buddhism's flourishing, Confucian scholars engaged in competition for the discourse on the future through such pronouncements.

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Problem of Evil in Wei-Jin Philosophy

This study examines the problem of evil within Wei-Jin philosophy, focusing on its philosophical and ethical implications. Building on classical debates, it contrasts the interpretations of Guo Xiang and Zhi Dun regarding the compatibility of evil with the Daoist ideal of *xiaoyao* (free and unrestrained existence). Guo Xiang's theory of "individual allotment" posits that individuals achieve harmony through their unique capabilities, yet acknowledges the paradox wherein such individual xiaoyao may inadvertently result in broader societal evils. In contrast, Zhi Dun critiques this approach, arguing that unregulated adherence to one's allotment can justify malevolence.

The inquiry expands to address the cosmological and axiological tensions within Daoist metaphysics, notably the notion of the "fall," as articulated in pre-Qin Daoism. It highlights a recurring dilemma: does evil originate from human nature as a divergence from the Dao, or is it an inherent aspect of the natural cycle? The discourse also integrates comparative perspectives, drawing on Augustine's concept of willful evil and Yujin Nagasawa's framework of axiological expectation mismatch, underscoring the universal relevance of the problem.

Two strategies are proposed to reconcile these tensions: redefining evil as a contextual deviation rather than a fundamental flaw, and interpreting perceived unnatural acts as inevitable elements of natural cycles. This exploration contributes to understanding how Wei-Jin philosophy navigates the interplay between ethical ideals, individual agency, and the persistence of evil in the human condition.

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A Daoist Theory of Creative Cognition

This paper interprets the Zhuangzi in order to formulate a general theory of creative cognition. The theory presented is one of creative cognition insofar as it attempts to explain what kind of mental processes are responsible for creative capacities, and it is general insofar as it aspires to be applicable to all instances of creativity. According to this theory, creative cognition consists

of processes through which agents can modify their construction of the circumstances in which they are. Since the properties constituting any given circumstance are partially determined relatively to agents' constructions of those, creative cognition turns out to be a form of metaphysical freedom by which agents can partially determine the properties of the circumstances they are in. The paper is organized into five sections. Section one argues that creative agency is a concern for the *Zhuangzi* and situates the text's within the literature in the philosophy of creativity. Section two explains why creative agency is important in the *Zhuangzi* by arguing that being creative is the only way to be an effective agent given the *Zhuangzi*'s metaphysical commitments. Section three reads the *Zhuangzi* in tandem with contemporary literature on embodied cognition and argues that our embodiment and ordinary cognition come with a particular way of constructing our environment. Section four argues that creative cognition consists of enacting processes that are capable of partially modifying such a construction. Finally, section five explains how the presented theory of creative cognition offers an understanding of metaphysical freedom that presents an alternative to standard ways of understanding metaphysical freedom in contemporary analytic philosophy.

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《"友伦"与明代儒者的修身工夫》

理学虽重自得自悟，师友讲授仍是学者造入此道最常借助的路径。如对理气、心性等诸多基本命题的探讨，尤需处于学术社群环境中方能切磋论析，这也是儒者与释、老二教之区别所在。传统中国的社会网络主要由五伦关系建构而成，其中"朋友"一伦本处于相对次要的位置。但友伦是唯一无关乎等级、财富等外在要素的社会关系，因此在儒家的理想社会秩序中，对于"友伦"的论述及朋友关系的建立有着丰富的阐述空间。明代儒者对于"朋友"一伦可谓格外强调，从明初开始出现的同志会讲之举，至嘉靖、万历年间则蔚然成风。迨至晚明泰州、东林二派，更在言教与行动上皆展现出以友为重的精神，甚至有个别学者推崇友伦于家庭亲亲之上。明代儒者对于友伦的推重，除了辅己成仁、鞭励学业、监督改过等个人修身需求之外，也是其"万物一体"哲学思想的实践和"务使吾道不孤"的学术传播需要。

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Thinking with Chinese Characteristics? An Analysis of Xi Jinping's Thought on Ecological Civilization

In this presentation, I will explore the relationship between propaganda and thought by tracing some of the philosophical references used in Xi Jinping's Thought on ecological civilization. While the Chinese term ecological civilization began as an academic translation of the Soviet term ecological culture in the 1980s, since Xi Jinping came to power, the concept of ecological

civilization has increasingly been cast as an ideological framework for the Chinese Communist Party's environmental and climate work. Works on Xi Jinping's Thought on ecological civilization often refer to two prominent philosophical traditions: Marxism and Chinese philosophy. References to Marxism are usually along the lines of Friedrich Engel's *Dialectic of Nature*, with a teleological view of history in which the next world stage is conceived of as an ecological civilization. References to Chinese philosophy are vaguer, with a scattering of quotations mainly from rival thinkers during the Spring and Autumn Period. I argue that this selective referencing to both philosophical traditions are used to create a distinctive identity for ecological civilization as part of a larger ePort to project and create Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. Thus, although ecological civilization as it appears in Xi Jinping's Thought is presented as a work of thought, its primary purpose is to function as propaganda for the advancement of a (greener) nation-state.

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Zhuangzian Virtues: Nonaction and So–itselfness

Although Zhuangzi rejects common moral standards such as benevolence and righteousness (*renyi* 仁義), the *daode* 道德 (the virtue of *dao*) he advocates is also a kind of normative guidance that can help people lead a Zhuangzian good life. Yong Huang argues that Zhuangzi implies a kind of virtue ethics based on the virtue of respect for difference, which is supported by a theory of human nature stating that different people have different natures, and that all agents have a tendency to respect and assist (if necessary) others in living the ways they want. Respect for difference alone does not constitute the content of the Zhuangzian good life, because the agent should act without constrained will and Zhuangzi also emphasizes how to tackle the interference from the outside world. Moreover, the predisposition that all humans tend to respect differences cannot be directly deduced from the text of Zhuangzi. I argue that the virtues of nonaction (*wuwei* 無為) and so–itselfness (*ziran* 自然) together constitute the content of Zhuangzian good life. Nonaction connotes unconstrained will and non–intervention with others, whereas so–itselfness connotes unconstrained will and freedom from external interference. The foundations of these two virtues stem from the human nature in a so–itself way.

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《公羊传》聩辄争国事件对"贤让国"义理的破坏与构建

《公羊传》在对聩辄争国事件评价中的助辄倾向，看似是对《公羊传》崇让原则的破坏，但也从反面构建出贤让国的底线与边界。《公羊传》助辄，并非支持辄与父争国、以子围父，而是借此明重本尊统之义理。宋明儒者对聩辄争国事件的再反思，不仅在聩、辄的父子关系中，对身为人子的辄提出了辞国避父的更高道义要求，更申明了为

仁由己的个人道德修养原则。宋至清学者对蒯聩的批判是期望处于君位继承序列中的候选人能够正视君位、政治权力对人的吸引力，以及在此诱惑下保持君子的理性。二者分歧的根源是诠释角度的不同，《公羊传》以礼法为依据，借事明义为后世立法；宋明儒者则重视在各种情境下对个人品德的修养历练，以实现身心的和谐。

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空虛與經世：王龍溪與紫柏真可的自我觀比較

在陽明學興起以後，儒者更為精微深入地吸收佛教思想，並鮮明地提出儒佛融合的思想。佛教學者亦有相似的認識，他們主張進入到日常倫理世界中學習如何自如地應對各種場面及可能。兩家傑出的代表人物分別是王龍溪與紫柏真可。在他們的思想中，自我需要掌握虛寂之法以掙脫陳舊的道德枷鎖，同時也需要承擔起經世的責任。然而，儘管儒佛之間的融合達到了一種新的高度，王龍溪的良知學依然會被佛教學者批判為"有相"；而紫柏真可亦會被詰問絕對"無"的境界究竟如何與倫理世界無礙地融合在一起。他們所面臨的來自對方立場的批評並非源於單純的排除異己的宗派歧視，而更多地在於雙方對自我的不同理解。王龍溪所理解的自我是身處於種種社會關係中的自我，這種關係性的自我是一切道德實踐的起點與最終目的。紫柏真可學說中的自我則是寂然不動的自我，雖然之後要積極入世、與萬事萬物接觸，但最終的指向卻依然是具有不被外物遷移的真如本性的自我。位於起點與終點的自我的不同始終區隔著他們的思想，忽視這一區分將會毀壞他們理論自身的精密度。

Emptiness and Involvement in the World: Wang Longxi and Zibo Zhenke on the Self

After the rise of the Yangming School, Confucians absorbed Buddhist thought in a more in-depth way, and clearly proposed the idea of Confucian-Buddhist integration. Buddhist scholars also shared a similar understanding. They advocated entering the ethical world to learn how to respond freely to various situations. Two outstanding representatives were Wang Longxi and Zibo Zhenke. According to their thinking, the self needs to master the method of emptiness to break free from the shackles of outdated morality, while at the same time taking responsibility for the world. However, despite the new height reached by the fusion of Confucianism and Buddhism, Wang's *liangzhi* would still be criticised by Buddhist scholars as 'having appearance'. Zhenke would also be questioned about how the realm of absolute 'emptiness' could be seamlessly integrated into the ethical world. The criticism they faced from the other side does not stem from sectarian discrimination, but rather from the different understandings of the self held by each side. Wang's understanding of the self is one that is situated in various social relationships. This relational self is the starting point and ultimate goal of all moral practice. The self in Zhenke's theory is something unmoving. Although it must actively enter the world later, the ultimate direction is still a self with a true and original nature that is not moved by external objects. The different starting and ending points of the self separate their thoughts, and ignoring this distinction would destroy the precision of their own theories.

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Identity and individuality in the question "what identity can there be for their activator?" (*Zhuāng zǐ*, ch. 2)

The question "咸其自取, 怒者其谁?" concludes the description of flute-playing in the opening paragraph of the 2nd chapter of the *Zhuāng zǐ*. It contains three references: the totality of all individual agents; the individual agents themselves and another individual agent whose identity is called into question. Since all individual subjects already fill the totality of possible agents, there is no room for the existence of another agent outside the totality. At first glance, the non-existence of this ominous agent seems to secure the identity of the individuals: Without an outside activator, they all have the capacity to act by themselves. This raises the question how is individuality constituted and how it relates to identity? In the case of the earthen flutes, individuality is based on the expression of a particular sound which in turn depends on the particular shape of the hole. The shape determines the sound when the wind blows through it, but the sound also determines the shape, because without sound the specific boundaries of the hole are hardly recognizable. Another problem arises with ability to act. Individuality seems to depend on self-activity. But since it is the "wind" that makes the holes sound, what kind of "activity" is the shape meant to have that makes each sound unique? And coming back to the initial question: If we cannot identify the agent in the outside, can we conclude that such an agent does not exist, as Guō Xiàng tells us?

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師道與自我：韓愈儒學重建中的主體意識與文化選擇

本文聚焦韓愈在中唐多元思想背景下的自我身份建構，探討其如何通過塑造「師」的主體形象來回應當時的文化危機。韓愈突破了同時代士人「外儒內佛」、「外儒內道」的調和傾向，自覺承擔道統傳承的文化使命，其師道觀的建立既是個人身份認同的確立，也是對多元價值觀的積極回應。通過「以文為教」的創新實踐，韓愈不僅重建了儒家價值體系的正統性，更有效地令士人的身份認同由文學回歸儒學，展現了強烈的文化自覺與主體意識。這種創新體現了中唐知識分子在價值多元化背景下對自我定位的深刻思考，同時也為後世儒學的發展開闢了新的途徑。

Shi-dao and Self-identity: Subjective Consciousness and Cultural Agency in Han Yu's Confucian Renaissance

This paper focuses on Han Yu's construction of self-identity against the backdrop of pluralistic thought in the Mid-Tang period, examining how he responded to the cultural crisis through fashioning himself as a teaching authority. Han Yu transcended the contemporary literati's tendency to reconcile Confucianism with Buddhism or Daoism externally while embracing

them internally, consciously undertaking the cultural mission of transmitting the Confucian Dao-Orthodoxy (*daotong*). The establishment of his teaching philosophy represents both a confirmation of personal identity and an active response to value pluralism. Through his innovative practice of "teaching through literature," Han Yu not only reconstructed the orthodoxy of Confucian values but also effectively redirected the literati's identity from literary pursuit back to Confucian scholarship, demonstrating strong cultural self-awareness and subjective consciousness. This innovation reflects the Mid-Tang intellectuals' profound contemplation of self-positioning amid value pluralization, while pioneering new approaches for the development of later Confucianism.

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"The Self" as a Modern Invention in the Chinese Context: A Growing Divergence Between Exteriority and Interiority

As Charles Taylor (1989) has demonstrated, the concept of the "self" is a modern invention, arising from profound social and intellectual transformations. Its ideals and taboos shape our thinking, perception of society, and linguistic world, without us being sufficiently aware of it. This paper employs a conceptual, linguistic and literary approach to argue that while the term "self" (自我) is now a common word in the Sinophone world, the Chinese notion of the "self" is also a continuous invention unique to modern and contemporary times.

Adopting interiority, a fundamental trait of modernity, as its framework, this paper examines a selection of texts from Chinese literary history: pre-Qin philosophical writings, Wei and Jin literary critiques, Tang and Song poetry emphasizing personal emotions, and Ming and Qing novels. It demonstrates a major difference between ancient and modern notions of the "self": in ancient times, while the "self" was primarily defined through actions and accomplishments, the modern "self" is characterized mainly by interior sensitivity.

A dilemma specific to the modern "self" thus emerges: the self is increasingly caught in a growing schizophrenia between the outward aspect of increasingly distant external actions and an increasingly exacerbated interior sensitivity. This paper will also make a preliminary attempt to address this issue, which is not specific to China but holds a more universal significance.

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Through the Looking Glass – Mirror as a Tool of Moral Reflection in the Party Discourse

In 2013, during the implementation of the mass-line campaign, Secretary-General Xi Jinping urged party cadres to "look into the mirror, groom themselves, take a bath and seek remedies" (*zhao jingzi, zheng yiguan, xixi zao, zhizhi bing*), echoing to a certain degree the Tang Emperor Taizong's eulogy to Wei Zheng, "One may use bronze as a mirror to straighten one's clothes and cap; antiquity as a mirror to understand the rise and fall of states; a man as a mirror to correct one's judgment." This was not the only time, Xi employed the metaphor of the mirror

in his speeches to the party cadre, over the years, identifying the CCP constitution, history, the older generation cadres and martyrs and, albeit indirectly, the people as potential mirrors.

The following paper analyzes the mirror metaphor used by party leaders as a tool for moral reflection in their speeches to the (mainly young) party cadres. What can a party cadre see in the mirror or what should he/she see, what does the mirror show to him/her, what kind of reality does the mirror reveal and what remains unmasked, which are the moral features a party cadre should hone by looking into a mirror and how does the appeal to the mirror fit into the larger discourse of clean governance (*lianzheng*)?

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Dehumanization: The *Huainanzi*'s Eradication of Identity and Selfhood as Necessary Means to Becoming a Sage

The *Huainanzi*, a massive and extraordinary text from the second century BCE, introduces a radical vision of selfhood. Rather than celebrating humanity's skills and morals that would elevate and save us from our beastly roots, the text argues that the sages need to shed all the qualities that define any phenomenal being. Opposing Confucian ideals of morality and self-cultivation, the *Huainanzi* promotes a body politic influenced by Zhuangzian discourses that transforms the sages into Dao-like non-beings (*wu*) void of action, motion, form, traces, and knowledge. What is the rationale behind promoting such practices of decultivation and dehumanization that result in the forfeiture of one's selfhood and identity? Liu An and his erudite courtiers argue that only by transforming oneself into a human manifestation of the Dao, the cosmic force behind the organization of the universe, one may function as an ultimate (*zhiren*) or true person (*zhenren*), a deified being who can ritualistically order the world via resonating correspondences (*ganying*) at the secluded center of the imperial court. In other words, the eradication of one's human traces and identity serves as a *sine-qua-non* for the *Huainanzi*'s vision of governance, leading to an outright rejection of selfhood and identity as a defining aspect of sages.

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Revisiting Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200): Rethinking His Theory of Emotions

Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), celebrated as a prominent synthesizer of Neo-Confucianism, is well known for developing a theory that attributed a positive role to emotions in moral psychology. In this paper, I offer a new reading of Zhu Xi's theory of emotions with three revisions to earlier scholarship. First, I highlight the central significance of the *qi* – the vital energy-matter – in Zhu's conceptualization of emotions. The importance of this concept has long been overlooked due to an exclusive focus on the binary between "nature" (*xing* 性) and "emotions" (*qing* 情). Second, building on the clarified role of the *qi*, I explain how "stagnation" (*zhi* 滯) represented the fundamental obstacle, the resolution of which enabled the development of morally pure

feelings in a perfectly spontaneous manner. Third, this new interpretation calls for integrating discussions of emotions in moral philosophy and medicine – a distinction artificially maintained by modern scholars but absent in Zhu Xi's thought.

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Nature, reason, and ritual – becoming human in the Xunzi

The stereotyped version of Chinese philosophy portrays Xunzi as the opposite of Mengzi (Kupperman, 2000). As much as other crucial for Xunzi's notions, such as mind (Stalnaker, 2003) and ritual (Wei, 1996), are studied, the significance of Xunzi's thought is often reduced to denial of Mengzi's doctrine of human nature. Studies that transcend this dichotomy and approach nature, mind, and ritual as parts of one complex are still relatively scarce (Kline III, 2000; Sato, 2003).

This study stems from my forthcoming paper (Zygadło, 2025) in which I argue that the notion of evil, or, more accurately, as I believe, 'detestable' human nature, even if it initially resulted from Xunzi's dissatisfaction with Mengzi's argument, is of very difference significance to Xunzi that his critics would like to see it. As the argumentation regarding human nature is presented in the 23 Chapter, it is apparent that Xunzi intends not to condemn human moral qualities but to acknowledge the significance of human agency in the Confucian quest for moral society.

The current study is designed as an analysis utilising notions of mind and ritual to contextualise the abovementioned conclusion further. As another inborn quality and a field of human activity resulting from the former and meant to curb desires, respectively, they are indispensable tools for attaining actual humanhood in the Confucian sense. Squared with Xunzi's vivisection of human nature, they present a complex analysis of moral psychology and provide a programme, within moral pragmatism's boundaries, for becoming a human.