



香港中文大學  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

# 2018-2019 & 2019-2020

通識教育優秀論文獎

General Education Best Essay Award

得獎學生論文

*Selected Student Essays*



大學通識教育部  
Office of University General Education





香港中文大學  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



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Office of University General Education

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GENERAL EDUCATION BEST ESSAY AWARD  
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SELECTED  
STUDENT ESSAYS

通識教育基礎課程發展基金贊助  
Sponsored by the General Education Foundation Development Fund

## 通識教育優秀論文獎 General Education Best Essay Award

### 聲明

優秀論文獎旨在表彰學生的努力和成就，展示優秀作品。在此收錄的得獎作品通過優秀論文獎的甄選準則，惟並不一定符合所有通識教育基礎課程對論文的課業評分要求。

### Disclaimer

The Best Essay Award is intended to recognize students' efforts and achievements, and to showcase their good work. Essays receiving the Award and put under this Collection are reviewed according to the selection criteria of the Award and do NOT necessarily meet all of the requirements for a written assignment/coursework of the General Education Foundation Programme.

## 2018–19

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方星霞	FONG Sing Ha
司徒偉文	SZETO Wai Man
江啟明	KIANG Kai Ming
余之聰	YU Chi Chung Andy
吳俊	WU Jun Vivian
吳家亮	NG Ka Leung Andy
何偉明	HO Wai Ming
李駿康	LI Chun Hong
林吐金	LAM To Kam Cherry
梁卓恒	LEUNG Cheuk Hang
張恆鏘	CHEUNG Hang Cheong Derek
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彭金滿	PANG Kam Moon
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陳如珍	CHEN Ju Chen
梁美儀	LEUNG Mei Yee
戴沛權	TAI Pui Kuen Amos

## 2019–20

### 初選委員會 First round adjudication

王永雄	WONG Wing Hung
方星霞	FONG Sing Ha
司徒偉文	SZETO Wai Man
江啟明	KIANG Kai Ming
余之聰	YU Chi Chung Andy
呂永昇	LUI Wing Sing
李明	LI Ming Kenneth
吳俊	WU Jun Vivian
吳家亮	NG Ka Leung Andy
何偉明	HO Wai Ming
李駿康	LI Chun Hong
林吐金	LAM To Kam Cherry
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張恆鏘	CHEUNG Hang Cheong Derek
許韻馨	HOI Wan Heng Sandy
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楊彩杰	YEUNG Choi Kit Sabrina
楊陽	YEUNG Yang
楊潔	YANG Jie Jasmine
趙茱莉	CHIU Chu Lee Julie
黎志偉	LAI Chi Wai Kevin
鄭威鵬	CHEUNG Wai Pang Damian
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梁美儀	LEUNG Mei Yee
戴沛權	TAI Pui Kuen Amos
蘇可蔚	SO Ho Wai Suzanne

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# 通識教育與時代的挑戰——代序

本年度的通識教育基礎課程優秀論文獎可以說是史無前例的。它第一次包括了兩個年度（2018–19和2019–20）的得獎作品，而頒獎禮則要透過網上舉行。

2019年下半年開始，香港民眾由反對《逃犯條例》修訂的爭議而引發社會空前動盪，原本是莘莘學子追求學問、學習切磋的大學校園，也不能倖免地捲入了衝突的旋渦，成為警民攻防的障地，大家應該記憶猶新。而接着2020年新型冠狀病毒導致全球傳染性肺炎疫病大流行，校園生活被迫懸擱，學習只能透過網上進行，學習群體僅限於虛擬的空間中建立。在全球化大環境下，各地產業環環相扣、人民頻繁流動、人與人緊密接觸的經濟和社會系統，均受到重大打擊，至今仍未走出困局，而這種新常態如何影響教育未來的發展，仍屬未知之數。當今世界原本已面對很多巨大的挑戰，例如怎樣平衡經濟發展與應對氣候變化、生態災難、社會不平等問題的需要，在疫病的陰霾下，更形複雜和難以解決。面對各種迫在眉睫的危機，大學教育應怎樣做？通識教育基礎課程要求同學閱讀中外人文和科學經典、討論人生意義、社會理想、科學真理，寫成論文，是否過於迂遠，不合時宜？

歷史學家Harari在《21世紀的21堂課》中提到，要解決當今人類面對的大問題有三個不同的層次的進路：包括技術層次，政策層次和身分認同層次。（128）以氣候變化對農作收成的影響為例，要面對第一類問題，如「怎樣解決氣候變化帶來的乾旱對農作收成的影響？」可以透過實用科學研究和技術發展去解決，例如研究抗旱

物種或建設水利工程等。第二類問題要面對的是政策問題，如「政府應該採取甚麼措施去遏止全球暖化？」或「社會如何支援受災的農民？」解決這問題便需要有政府與政策的知識，能聽取不同的意見、平衡社會上不同持分者的利益；同時要有卓越的溝通能力，說服不同意見者採取行動。第三類身分問題其實亦是倫理問題：「氣候變化對我當前生活的影響不大，千里以外的農民的生計與我何干？」又或者「要我關心其他人，那我只關心自己的國家、地方不就夠了嗎？」要解答這類問題，固然牽涉到我們對科學事實的了解：如氣候變化的成因和影響的全球性質；但更重要的是我們對人作為一個類的認同。千里之外的農民的生命是否有價值？我們今天的行為對農民的遭遇是否有影響？要不要負上責任？廿一世紀的諸多問題都跨越了學科、文化和地域的界限，在在需要更高瞻遠矚、能求同存異、具同理心、能與人協作的人才。培養具備三個層次能力的人才，即是為社會培養優秀的全球公民，這是當今大學重要的社會責任。

現代大學多採用主修科目加上分類必修的通識教育兩者結合去培養人才。主修科主攻精專學問，培養有專門知識解決問題的專家；分類必修的通識教育擴闊學生知識面，加強他們多角度思考與融通能力，這是決策者必須擁有的特質。但是怎樣能培養同理心與責任感？怎樣令學生認識和接受與自己處境不一樣、文化價值有所不同的人？怎樣令學生建立一種與他人命運相連的共同感？這都不是可以輕易成就的目標，但通識教育基礎課程可以是其中一個起點。

基礎課程的形式，表面上類近上世紀三十年代芝加哥大學校長赫欽斯（Robert M. Hutchins, 1899–1977）所提倡的經典名著課程（Great Books Program）。赫欽斯認為西方文化歷史上的經典是人類思想的高峰，學習這些文本可以提升學生的智性能力與建立良好的思維習慣，因此應作為所有大學學生必修的共同核心課程讀物。（23–29）

基礎課程的選材固然包括了對人類文化影響深遠的西方經典，但與一般的經典名著課程不同，通識基礎課程打破了西方中心主義的桎梏：「與人文對話」選取了包含了中國、伊斯蘭、佛教等西方文化以外的經典，幫助學生建立多元文化觀和跨文化意識。基礎課程同時亦擺脫了經典課程主要選取人文學科經典的慣常做法，設立「與自然對話」一科，透過閱讀不同類型科學的經典，讓學生了解左右現代世界發展的科學知識的方法和特質，以及反省不同文化中的自然觀如何影響科學的發展。透過經典接觸人文與科學的精神，學生亦可以對所謂科學與人文的「兩種文化」的對立有較深度的思考和體會。

更重要的是，通識基礎課程對經典的運用並不是以這些經典為正典（*canon*），以它們為「有教養的人必讀的經典」來要求學生遍讀。課程的核心是圍繞一些重要的、但在主修課程中少有觸及的歷久彌新的大問題而設計：如「怎樣才是美好的人生？」「如何建立理想社會？」「我們怎樣瞭解大自然和生命的奧秘？」等等。就如美國女哲學家努斯鮑姆（*Martha C. Nussbaum*）所說，經典主要是作為優良的「媒介」，是學生自我反省的起點和與同儕討論的觸發點。（*xvi*）一個文化能流傳下來而被奉為經典的，固然是該文化對重大的人生意義問題反省的結晶。然而經典不是不可取代的、牢不可破的權威。跨學科和跨文化的設計，引導學生在反思上述大問題時，知道不同的文化、相異的宗教傳統、特殊的學術領域，原來會採取極為不同的進路去思考和解答這些問題。因此，閱讀經典不會提供最終的不容置疑答案，重要的是同學必須自己去推敲和尋問。

在教學方法上，基礎課程最着重的是「對話」。量子物理學家波姆（*David Bohm, 1917–1992*）在晚年提出了一個建議，認為要解決人類的紛爭和各種社會問題，必須以無成見的、平等的對話為起點。人類面對種種危機的根源，是人類思想趨向碎片化，不同的信念、

知識、文化與制度，都建基於不同的假設；假設有個人層面，也有集體層面。當人運用思考去做判斷和作決定時，往往將假設視為理所當然，甚至不察覺到假設的存在。人與人之間持有不同的、未加檢視的假設，就令溝通變得不可能，衝突亦無從化解。（6-17）基礎課程雖然不是採用嚴格意義的「波姆對話」，但兩科貫徹對話的精神，以閱讀來自不同文化傳統與學科的經典作起點，學生須與不同文化、學科的經典直接對話；學生與老師、學生與學生之間繼而深入討論經典涉及的種種假設與價值取捨，思考這些取捨如何影響人對人生、社會和自然的理解，這是學習社群之間的對話。在學習的過程中，尤其是在討論和寫作論文的時候，學生必須檢視自身所處的傳統和自己所持有的價值，同時回應其他文化和自己不熟悉的學科的假設和價值，這樣，他們才可以更根本地了解今天主要的社會、文化與知識體系間彼此的差異與共同之處，在有基本的認知的情況下作出知情的判斷。

處身於廿一世紀，知識與技術不斷創新，亦極速廢退。簇新的科技需要學習，但也最易過時。基礎課程要求學生閱讀跨文化、跨學科的經典，強調對話，提供機會，讓他們在智性的氛圍中，面對面地討論人生與學問的大問題，是一般技術能力學習所不能取代的。更重要的是，基礎課程開啟了一個跨越學科、文化和地域界限的空間，讓同學反思人之為人的根本價值和追求，接觸與自己思想習慣、信念價值都不同的他者，這不啻是令他們能成為有思想的、可以包容、可與共事的廿一世紀世界公民的基礎。

\* \* \* \* \*

自2014年起，通識教育基礎課程學生論文獎採取學生自薦的辦法，主要的目的是鼓勵同學主動參與和發揮自主精神。自2018-19年度起，除由同學自行決定參賽外，又加入老師推薦類別，以免滄海遺珠。



文章評審過程亦一如既往的嚴格：所有文章先由授課老師組成的評審團隊初步遴選，再由基礎課程主任邀請其他學系的老師作最終評審，決定金、銀、銅獎的優秀作品。「與人文對話」一科的論文，在2018–19年度我們邀得人類學系的陳如珍博士擔任評審委員，而2019–20年度則得到心理學系的蘇可蔚教授慨允襄助；「與自然對話」一科論文的評審則連續兩年都獲地球系統科學課程的戴沛權教授鼎力支持，在此謹向三位深切致謝。

2018–19年度參賽文章共326篇，經初步遴選入圍的作品共40篇；最後獲得金、銀或銅獎的作品有二十篇，其中金獎兩篇，銀獎六篇，銅獎十二篇。而2019–20年度參賽文章共319篇，經初步遴選入圍的作品共39篇；最後獲得金、銀或銅獎的作品有廿二篇，其中金獎兩篇，銀獎六篇，銅獎十四篇。上面論及基礎課程雖以中外的經典文本作為閱讀材料，但並不是採取經典名著課程的進路，因此，論文不是關乎某些經典內部的學術探究。老師的設題或學生的取材，都強調對人生、社會或知識領域的大問題的反省，而不同經典對問題的進路、假設和價值取向，它們之間的異同就是同學書寫文章的參照點。獲獎論文的形式活潑多樣，從富想像力的文學創作到嚴謹周密的議論文，都表達了學生如何結合所閱讀的經典，探索生命的意義、追求幸福的進路、建立理想社會的途徑、科學知識的性質、威力與限制、科學和自由與道德的關係等等大問題。科學技術能否幫助人了解自己？疫病大流行和人與自然有甚麼關係？不同的人生觀帶來怎樣價值的衝突？通往快樂幸福的道路有多少？等等有趣的問題，大家都可以透過閱讀得獎論文，分享同學探索的樂趣。

通識教育基礎課程自2012年全面推行至今已踏入第九個年頭，而通識教育優秀論文獎更早在課程試行階段的2011年開始創設，一直以來，課程都深受學生歡迎，而論文獎自採用學生自薦的辦法後，

學生報名亦見踴躍。要求初入大學的學生閱讀和討論跨文化、跨學科的經典，就所學概念發揮寫作，探討重大議題，不論對老師和學生都是重大挑戰。基礎課程之受歡迎，可說是一個奇蹟，因為它沒有表面的實用價值、也絕不迎合學生流行文化的口味。然而整個課程的構思，補足了今日一般大學教育的缺陷，這就是對人生、社會、科學知識的大問題的忽略；對人類過去思想的成就與今日社會面對的難題之間，也缺乏連結思考的橋樑。課程得到學生接受，恰恰表明它回應了香港中文大學學生對大學教育理想性的期望。而基礎課程老師團隊在落實課程的教學中竭盡心力，開發教材和不斷完善教學法，當然亦功不可沒。在他們的引領下，學生克服了智性的、能力的、心理的重重障礙，掌握了他們原本以為遙不可及的經典，可以與老師和同儕就嚴肅課題對話，這種成就感是他們對基礎課程評價正面的根本原因，也是樂於參賽的動力。在此我亦對循循善誘的基礎課程團隊老師，和不懈努力、認真學習的同學，致以衷心謝意。

最後，我謹代表通識教育基礎課程同仁感謝鄭承峰博士及其家人對課程的支持。他們獨具慧識、深具人文關懷。他們的捐助讓課程可以舉辦各項活動，獎勵學生的成就和支持學生的創意；也讓我們有空間探索拓展學生學習經典的新途徑，使經典閱讀超越課堂，豐富學生學習經歷。他們對通識教育基礎課程的貢獻，我們定當銘記於心。

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梁美儀

大學通識教育主任

通識教育基礎課程主任



# Challenges of General Education and Today's Era—A Preface

The Best Essay Award for the General Education Foundation (GEF) Programme of this year is unprecedented. It is the first time that includes the awarded essays of two academic years (2018–19 and 2019–20) and the award presentation ceremony is held online.

Starting from the second half of 2019, the opposition to the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill has caused unprecedented social unrest. It may be still fresh in our memory that the university campuses where students used to pursue knowledge and learn from each other were drawn into the conflict, becoming the battlefields between the police and the people. In 2020, the coronavirus caused a global pandemic of contagious pneumonia, causing the suspension of campus life. Teaching and learning can only be conducted online, and learning communities can only be formed virtually. Under globalization, industries worldwide are interlocked and the flows of people are frequent. The economic and social systems where people are in close contact have been suffering a heavy blow. The predicament continues, and how this type of new normal affects the future development of education is still unknown. The world today has been facing many huge challenges, such as balancing economic development and addressing problems including climate change, ecological disasters, and social inequality. In the shadow of the pandemic, these challenges become more complex and difficult to solve. Facing all kinds of imminent dangers,

how should university education be? The General Education Foundation Programme requires students to read Chinese and foreign classics related to humanities and science, to discuss the meaning of life, the ideal society, and scientific truth, and to write essays. Is this too impractical or outdated?

Historian Professor Yuval Noah Harari mentioned in his book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* that there are three levels of approaches to addressing the major questions we are facing: technological level, policy level, and social and existential level. (128) For example, the influence of climate change on crop harvest points to the first level, such as “how to deal with the impacts on crop harvest caused by severe droughts under climate change?” This can be solved by scientific research and technological development, such as developing drought-resistant species and hydraulic construction. The second type of question is on policy level. For example, “What measures should governments adopt to fight against global warming?” and “In what ways can the society assist disaster-affected farmers?” Solving these questions requires the knowledge of government and policy, the willingness to listen to different opinions, balance the interests among different stakeholders’ in the society, and excellent communication skills to persuade those with different opinions to take action. The third question is on social and existential level, which indeed is the ethical questions: “Climate change has little impact on my current life. What relationship do the problems of farmers on the other side of the world have with me?” or “If I am to care about others, isn’t it enough for me to care only about people from my own region or country?” To answer this type of questions, our understanding of scientific facts, such as global impact of climate change, is certainly concerned. However, the more important thing is our recognition of humankind as a whole. Are the farmers’ lives on the other side of the

world precious? Does our behavior today have an impact on what the farmers encounter? Should we take responsibility? Many problems in the twenty-first century have crossed the boundaries of discipline, culture, and region. Therefore, talents need to have great foresight and equip themselves with the ability to seek common ground and accommodate differences, empathy, and the ability to work with others. Nurturing talents with the three types of abilities means cultivating outstanding global citizens for the society. This is an important social responsibility of universities today.

Modern universities tend to adopt a combination of major discipline and general education with distributive requirements to nurture talents. Major disciplines focus on teaching professional knowledge and cultivating experts who address problems by their expertise. The distributive requirements of general education broaden students' scope of knowledge and strengthen their abilities of multi-perspective thinking and knowledge integration, which are traits that a decision-maker must have. However, how can empathy and a sense of responsibility be nurtured? How to make students recognize and accept people who are in different situations and have different cultural values? How to help students build a sense of commonality connected with the destiny of others? These are not goals that can be easily achieved, but the GEF Programme can serve as one of the starting points.

The mode of GEF Programme is similar to the Great Books Program advocated by Robert M. Hutchins (1899–1977), former President of the University of Chicago in the 1930s. Hutchins believed that the classics in the history of Western Civilization represented a peak of human thought; students could enhance their intellectual ability and establish a good thinking habit by studying these texts. Therefore, these classics should be

the readings in the compulsory Common Core Curriculum for all university students. (23–29)

The selected reading materials in the GEF Programme certainly include Western classics that profoundly influenced human culture. However, unlike other Great Books programs, GEF Programme has shaken off the shackles of Western centralism: “In Dialogue with Humanity” includes Chinese, Islamic, and Buddhist classics to help students develop multicultural inclusiveness and cross-cultural awareness. The GEF Programme has also freed itself from the usual practice of mainly selecting classics of the humanities and launched “In Dialogue with Nature.” Through reading different types of science classics, students can understand the methods and characteristics of scientific knowledge that influences the development of the modern world; they can also have a deeper reflection and understanding of the opposition between the so-called “two cultures”: science and the humanities.

More importantly, the GEF Programme does not treat these classics as the canon, nor does it regard them as “the must-read classics for the educated” to require students to read through. The focus of the courses centers around some long-lasting big questions that are important yet rarely mentioned in the major courses, including “What is a good life?” “How to build an ideal society?” and “How do we solve the mysteries of nature and life?” As the American philosopher, Martha C. Nussbaum said, the main role of classics is an excellent “medium” to stimulate students to self-examination and peer discussion. (xvi) If a culture is passed down and regarded as a classic, it must be the product of that culture’s reflection on significant issues of the meaning of life. However, classics are not irreplaceable or unchallengeable authority. The interdisciplinary and



intercultural design of the programme can guide students to think about the above big questions, help them discover that different cultures, religious traditions, and academic fields would take very different approaches to consider and answer these questions. Therefore, reading classics will not provide the unquestionable final answer. The crucial thing is that students need to ponder and explore by themselves.

Regarding the teaching method, the GEF Programme values “dialogue” the most. Quantum physicist David Bohm suggested in his later years that to settle strife and social problems, it is necessary to have an unbiased and equal dialogue as a starting point. The origin of various crises is fragmentation, product of human thought which divides everything up. Different beliefs, knowledge, cultures, and institutions are based on different assumptions which can be categorized into two kinds: individual and collective assumptions. When people make judgments and decisions by thought, they often see assumptions as a matter of course, or even cannot realize the assumptions. Different and unreviewed assumptions make dialogue impossible and conflicts unable to be resolved. (6–17) Although the GEF Programme does not adopt the “Bohm Dialogue” in the strict sense, the two courses implement the spirit of dialogue: by reading classics from different cultural traditions and disciplines, students need to have a direct dialogue with these classics; an in-depth discussion between students and teachers or among fellow students on various assumptions and value trade-offs in the classics, together with a reflection on how these trade-offs influence one’s understanding of life, society, and nature, is a dialogue among members of the learning community. In the learning process, especially when discussing or writing an essay, students must review their own traditions and the values they hold. Meanwhile, they should respond to

other cultures as well as assumptions and values in unfamiliar disciplines. In this way, they can understand the differences and commonalities between the main social, cultural, and knowledge systems so as to make informed judgments with a basic understanding.

In the twenty-first century, knowledge and technology innovation are in flux, and speedily become obsolete. New technologies need to be learned, but they are also easily out-of-date. The GEF Programme requires students to read intercultural and interdisciplinary classics, emphasizes dialogues, and provides opportunities to discuss the big problems of life and knowledge in an intellectual atmosphere, which is irreplaceable by general skills-based learning. More importantly, the Foundation Programme has created a space that cuts across disciplinary, cultural, and geographical boundaries, allowing students to reflect on the fundamental values and pursuits of human beings, be acquainted with others who have different thoughts, habits, beliefs, and values. It lays a foundation for training global citizens in the twenty-first century who are able to think, embrace differences, and work with others.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since 2014, the Best Essay Award for the General Education Foundation Programme has adopted the method of students' self-nomination in its call for entries. The main purpose is to encourage students to take the initiative to participate and manifest the spirit of autonomy. Since 2018–19, apart from students' submission for the award, teachers' nomination has been introduced to avoid excellent works being undiscovered.

The adjudication process of the essays is as strict as before: all essays undergo shortlisting by the adjudication panel formed by the GEF teachers;

then the Director of the Foundation Programme invites teachers from other departments to be the final adjudicators and select the outstanding essays for the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards. In 2018–19, we invited Dr. CHEN Ju-chen from the Department of Anthropology to be the adjudicator for the essays of “In Dialogue with Humanity” while in 2019–20, we are delighted to have Professor SO Ho Wai Suzanne from the Department of Psychology in the adjudication panel; for the adjudication of the essays of “In Dialogue with Nature”, we are grateful to have the support from Professor TAI Pui Kuen Amos from the Earth System Science Programme for both 2018–19 and 2019–20. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. CHEN, Professor SO and Professor TAI.

In 2018–19, we received 326 essays submitted for the competition, and 40 of them were shortlisted; there were a total of 20 awarded essays, with two for Gold Awards, six for Silver Awards and twelve for Bronze Awards. For 2019–20, we received 319 essays with 39 of them shortlisted; there were a total of 22 awarded essays, with two for Gold Awards, six for Silver Awards and fourteen for Bronze Awards. As mentioned earlier, although the Foundation Programme uses Chinese and foreign classic texts as reading materials, it does not adopt the approach of the Great Books Program. Therefore, the essays are not academic researches within certain classic texts. Topics set by teachers or students emphasize the reflection on the big questions in life, society or field of knowledge. The similarities and differences between the approaches, assumptions and value orientations of different classics on a problem can be students' references when writing an essay. The forms of the awarded essays are vivid and diverse, ranging from imaginative literature to thorough argumentative essays. This shows how students integrate the contents of the classics and explore big

questions such as the meaning of life, the approaches to pursue happiness, the ways to create an ideal society, the natures, power and limitations of scientific knowledge, and the relationship between scientific knowledge, freedom and morality. Can science and technology help humans understand themselves? What is the relationship between the pandemic and man and nature? What value conflicts would be brought by different outlooks on life? How many ways to happiness are there? These kinds of interesting questions are discussed in the awarded essays. Readers can share the pleasure in students' explorations when reading.

The General Education Foundation Programme has entered the ninth year since its full-fledged launch in 2012. The Best Essay Award was first introduced even as early as 2011 during the soft launch of the programme. The programme has always been popular among students, and students are enthusiastic about applying for the Best Essay Award since it has accepted student self-nomination. Requiring university freshmen to read and discuss intercultural and interdisciplinary classics, write and develop on the concepts learned, and explore major issues, is a great challenge for both teachers and students. The popularity of the Foundation Programme can be treated as a miracle since it has no practical value on the surface, nor does it cater to the students' taste of pop culture. However, the design of the whole programme has made up the shortcomings of common university education—a negligence of big questions related to life, society and scientific knowledge, and the lack of a bridge to connect the achievements of human thought in the past and the problems faced by the society today. Student acceptance of the course shows that it exactly responds to their expectations for the ideality of university education. The GEF teaching team deserves all the credit for having done its best to develop effective

teaching materials, and to continuously improve the teaching methods. Under their guidance, students have overcome the intellectual, ability-related, and psychological barriers to master the classics that they originally thought out of reach, and been able to have dialogues on serious topics with their teachers and peers. This sense of achievement is the fundamental reason leading to their positive reviews of the Foundation Programme, and motivates them to participate in the Best Essay Award competition. I hereby would like to express my sincere gratitude to the devoted GEF teachers and the diligent students.

Finally, on behalf of the General Education Foundation Programme, I would like to thank Dr. Baldwin CHENG and his family for their support of the Programme. They have great insight with deep humanistic concern. Their generous donation has enabled us to organize various activities to reward students' achievements and to support students' creativity, allowing us to explore new ways for students' learning of classics, to take the classics reading beyond the classroom, so that students' learning experience can be enriched. We would always be thankful for their contributions to the General Education Foundation Programme.

*(Original in Chinese; translated by NG Hang Yu  
and revision by LEUNG Mei Yee)*

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**LEUNG Mei Yee**

**Director of University General Education**

**Director of General Education Foundation Programme**

## 通識教育優秀論文獎簡介

通識教育基礎課程為同學提供了扎實的寫作訓練，期終論文每有佳作，部分更極具創意。有見及此，課程於2011年設立年度論文獎，以表揚學生的努力及成就，同時為優異作品提供發表平台。

### 遴選過程

2018–2019及2019–2020年度論文獎除繼續由學生自行提交作品，亦加入老師推薦類別，基礎課程的老師先就論文作初選，獲選入圍的作品再由遴選委員會作最後甄別。「與人文對話」、「與自然對話」兩科各設一個金獎（獎金3,000元）、三個銀獎（獎金各1,000元）及十個銅獎（獎金各500元），遴選委員會可就實際情況刪減獲獎名額。

評審的準則包括：

- 論據有力
- 見解精闢
- 組織嚴密
- 行文流暢，用字準確
- 表達方式具有創意
- 參考資料運用恰當

## About the General Education Best Essay Award

The intensive writing training embedded in GEF results in many well-written student essays that are often precise, original and creative. The annual Best Essay Award was first introduced in 2011 to recognize students' efforts and achievements and to provide an outlet for showcasing of these quality works.

## **Nomination and Selection Process**

Following the previous practice, students were invited to submit their essays on their own. Since 2018–2019, teachers' nomination has also been introduced. All essays submitted were first screened by the First Round Adjudication Panel, which was formed by the GEF teachers. The Final Adjudication Panel then selected from the shortlisted essays for the awards. The following awards were set up for each of the “Dialogue” courses: one Gold Award (\$3,000), three Silver Awards (\$1,000 each), and ten Bronze Awards (\$500 each). The Final Adjudication Panel had the right to award a fewer number of papers if deemed appropriate. The selection criteria are:

- Soundness of argument
- Originality of ideas
- Organisation and structure
- Grammatical accuracy and precision of expression
- Creativity of presentation
- Appropriateness of references



## 得獎及入圍名單一覽\*

## List of Awardees and Honorary Mentions\*

# 通識教育優秀論文獎 General Education Best Essay Award

### 金獎 Gold Award

#### 與人文對話 In Dialogue with Humanity

2018–19

廖乙洁 LIEW Yi Jie

伍宜孫書院社會科學一年級 *Year 1, Social Science, Wu Yee Sun College*

2019–20

蘇泳茵 SO Yong Yin Eva

聯合書院心理學一年級 *Year 1, Psychology, United College*

#### 與自然對話 In Dialogue with Nature

2018–19

楊貝兒 YEUNG Pui Yi

善衡書院全球傳播一年級 *Year 1, Global Communication, S.H. Ho College*

2019–20

HEIBA Serageldin Amre Abdelaziz

晨興書院能源與環境工程學一年級 *Year 1, Energy and Environmental Engineering, Morningside College*

\* 學生資料以學生修讀通識教育基礎課程的學年為準。

Student information was obtained in the year of the student studying the General Education Foundation Programme.

## 銀獎 Silver Awards

### 與人文對話 In Dialogue with Humanity

#### 2018–19

馮羽霄 FENG Yuxiao  
 新亞書院 Year 2, Risk Management Science,  
 風險管理科學二年級 New Asia College

黃源龍 WONG Yuen Lung  
 新亞書院公共衛生一年級 Year 1, Public Health, New Asia College

謝宛穎 TSE Yuen Wing  
 新亞書院建築學一年級 Year 1, Architectural Studies, New Asia College

#### 2019–20

万宇軒 WAN Yuxuan  
 敬文書院 Year 1, Artificial Intelligence: Systems  
 人工智能：系統與科技一年級 and Technologies, C.W. Chu College

李尚隆 LI Shanglong  
 善衡書院法律學一年級 Year 1, Laws, S.H. Ho College

何燕林 HO Yin Lam  
 崇基學院生物醫學理學一年級 Year 1, Biomedical Sciences, Chung Chi College

### 與自然對話 In Dialogue with Nature

#### 2018–19

袁偉仁 YUEN Wai Yan  
 善衡書院內外全科醫學一年級 Year 1, Medicine, S.H. Ho College

徐翔 XU Xiang  
 聯合書院金融科技學二年級 Year 2, Financial Technology, United College

蔡靜怡 CAI Jingyi  
 伍宜孫書院 Year 1, Integrated BBA Programme,  
 工商管理學士綜合課程一年級 Wu Yee Sun College

**2019–20**

于子凌 YU Ziling  
晨興書院環球經濟與金融二年級 *Year 2, Global Economics and Finance, Morningside College*

黃杰靈 HUANG Jieling  
新亞書院中國語言及文學一年級 *Year 1, Chinese Language and Literature, New Asia College*

蔡沛霖 TSOI Pui Lam  
聯合書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, United College*

**銅獎 Bronze Awards**

**與人文對話 In Dialogue with Humanity**

**2018–19**

BAE Seung Mann  
晨興書院法律學二年級 *Year 2, Laws, Morningside College*

全玟奎 JEON Min-gyu  
晨興書院能源與環境工程學一年級 *Year 1, Energy and Environmental Engineering, Morningside College*

吳海天 NG Hoi Tin  
善衡書院 *Year 1, Quantitative Finance and Risk Management Science, S.H. Ho College*  
計量金融學及風險管理科學一年級

吳穎芝 NG Wing Chi  
崇基學院歷史二年級 *Year 2, History, Chung Chi College*

林巧瑜 LAM Hau Yu  
崇基學院 *Year 1, Chinese Language and Literature, Chung Chi College*  
中國語言及文學一年級

陳信源 CHEN Victor Xin Yuan  
崇基學院公共衛生二年級 *Year 2, Public Health, Chung Chi College*

**2019–20**

李欣庭 LI Xinting  
新亞書院理學一年級 *Year 1, Science, New Asia College*

姚金佑 YAO Jinyou  
新亞書院歷史一年級 *Year 1, History, New Asia College*

- 梁言 LEUNG Yin  
晨興書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, Morningside College*
- 梁瑋珊 LEUNG Wai Shan  
新亞書院社會科學一年級 *Year 1, Social Science, New Asia College*
- 溫芷昕 WAN Tsz Yan  
善衡書院生物醫學理學二年級 *Year 2, Biomedical Sciences, S.H. Ho College*
- 劉紀婧 LAU Kei Ching  
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- 鄭嘉汶 CHENG Ka Man  
伍宜孫書院 *Year 1, Earth System Science,*  
地球系統科學一年級 *Wu Yee Sun College*
- 謝慧怡 TSE Wai Yi  
伍宜孫書院 *Year 1, Biomedical Sciences,*  
生物醫學理學一年級 *Wu Yee Sun College*

### 與自然對話 In Dialogue with Nature

#### 2018–19

- 方太原 BANG Tae Won  
新亞書院 *Year 2, Electronic Engineering,*  
電子工程學二年級 *New Asia College*
- 吳佳怡 WU Jiayi  
崇基學院理學一年級 *Year 1, Science, Chung Chi College*
- 李尚哲 LEE Sheung Chit  
崇基學院物理一年級 *Year 1, Physics, Chung Chi College*
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新亞書院數學二年級 *Year 2, Mathematics, New Asia College*
- 曾慧虹 TSANG Wai Hung  
逸夫書院英文二年級 *Year 2, English, Shaw College*
- 劉詠欣 LAU Wing Yan  
新亞書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, New Asia College*

#### 2019–20

- 何國璋 HO Kwok Cheung  
新亞書院 *Year 2, Chinese Language and Literature,*  
中國語言及文學二年級 *New Asia College*

- 許盈智 SHU Ying Chi Camille  
 崇基學院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, Chung Chi College*
- 陳樂行 CHAN Lok Hang Brandon  
 善衡書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, S.H. Ho College*
- 楊鈺玲 YEUNG Yuk Ling  
 逸夫書院計算機工程學二年級 *Year 2, Computer Engineering, Shaw College*
- 劉家滔 LAU Ka To  
 新亞書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, New Asia College*
- 謝孝豐 TSE Howard Hau Fung  
 新亞書院語言學一年級 *Year 1, Linguistics, New Asia College*

## 入圍名單 Honorary Mentions

### 與人文對話 In Dialogue with Humanity

2018–19

- 王穎雯 WONG Wing Man Isabella  
 晨興書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, Morningside College*
- 胡嘉浚 WOO Ka Chun  
 和聲書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, Lee Woo Sing College*
- 陳文 CHEN Wen  
 逸夫書院計算機科學三年級 *Year 3, Computer Science, Shaw College*
- 陳君裕 CHAN Kwan Yu  
 敬文書院 *Year 1, Integrated BBA Programme,*  
 工商管理學士綜合課程一年級 *C.W. Chu College*
- 張訖鈴 CHEUNG Chi Ling  
 崇基學院歷史二年級 *Year 2, History, Chung Chi College*
- 張雨晨 ZHANG Yuchen  
 善衡書院 *Year 1, Integrated BBA Programme,*  
 工商管理學士綜合課程一年級 *S.H. Ho College*
- 梁健峰 LEUNG Kin-fung Jasen  
 新亞書院公共衛生二年級 *Year 2, Public Health, New Asia College*
- 莫逸濤 MO Yitao  
 聯合書院經濟學一年級 *Year 1, Economics, United College*

梁錫雲 LEUNG Sik Wan  
聯合書院 *Year 1, Chinese Language and Literature,*  
中國語言及文學一年級 *United College*

張瀚仁 CHEUNG Hon Yan Anthony  
新亞書院內外全科醫學一年級 *Year 1, Medicine, New Asia College*

勞珮怡 LO Pui Yi  
新亞書院 *Year 2, Geography and Resource Management,*  
地理與資源管理學二年級 *New Asia College*

楊其悅 YEUNG Ki Yuet  
聯合書院歷史二年級 *Year 2, History, United College*

萬依婷 MAN Yee Ting  
新亞書院生物化學二年級 *Year 2, Biochemistry, New Asia College*

楊庭朗 YEUNG Ting Long  
敬文書院日本研究一年級 *Year 1, Japanese Studies, C.W. Chu College*

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鄭靖怡 ZHENG Jingyi  
新亞書院 *Year 2, Professional Accountancy,*  
專業會計學二年級 *New Asia College*

談慧芯 TAM Wai Sum  
聯合書院翻譯一年級 *Year 1, Translation, United College*

蔡曉珊 TSOI Hiu Shan  
聯合書院英文一年級 *Year 1, English, United College*

## 2019–20

COO Ric Lim  
逸夫書院工程學一年級 *Year 1, Engineering, Shaw College*

王鈺淇 WONG Ching Kei Poey  
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新亞書院 *Year 1, Professional Accountancy,*  
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吳凱昕 GOH Kai Xin  
崇基學院法律學一年級 *Year 1, Laws, Chung Chi College*

凌恩培 LING Yan Pui Matthew  
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劉听怡 LAU Yan Yi  
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## 與自然對話 In Dialogue with Nature

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# 與人文對話

*In Dialogue with Humanity*



# **The Good Life and Its Correlation with Alcohol Inebriation—A Discussion between Confucius, J.S. Mill and Marx**

**LIEW Yi Jie**  
**Social Science, Wu Yee Sun College**

*[CONFUCIUS, MILL, and MARX appear out of thin air in a bar.]*

CONFUCIUS: How, and why, are the three of us even here?

MARX: Beats me. Probably another college student writing their humanities paper trying to play God. I always get zapped to random places this time of year.

MILL: Well, I can't exactly complain about the choice of location... Might as well get what we can out of this while we are here.

MARX: I wholeheartedly agree.

*[They look for a table and sit down in silence, out of place in the midst of loud music and partying. WAITER comes, bearing three mugs of beer.]*

MILL: We didn't order, did we?

WAITER: They're complimentary, sir.

MARX: Huh. These trips really have their perks, it seems.

*[MILL downs a mouthful of the frothy, golden liquid and hums appreciatively. CONFUCIUS takes an apprehensive sip.]*

MILL: Now, this is what I call the good life. Hey, Confucius, what is your ideal life like?

CONFUCIUS: I'll share my thoughts with you on "the good life", so to speak. A good life is a life of virtue. One of the core virtues is humaneness, which denotes the good feeling that a virtuous person experiences when he cares for and shows concern for others. Interpersonal relationships are the core of humaneness, as hinted on by its Chinese character "仁", which is constructed by two parts that mean "person" and "two" respectively. A good life is also a life where one continues to do the right thing no matter what, extricating oneself from the influence of the external environment (destiny and fate being among those circumstances), as it is something that cannot be controlled, unlike one's decision to be steadfast in the face of adversary, truly commit to righteousness ("義" in Chinese) and hold it at the highest esteem, like a gentleman does (*Analects* 17.23). Everything is meaningless without rightness; it makes what one does worthwhile (Cheng 270).

MILL: This sounds terrible, having to deny yourself from enjoyment and pleasure in exchange for "doing the right thing". What's in for the people who choose to live in a virtuous manner?

CONFUCIUS: Saying that a life of virtue equates to suffering is preposterous. Following the Way is desirable, for it brings true happiness and self-satisfaction in a way that material pleasures barely manage to, the latter being fickle and ever-changing while the former holds true for a long time. That being said, I do desire wealth and eminence, but only when they are acquired by legitimate and rightful means; they are as meaningless to me as drifting clouds otherwise (*Analects* 4.5; also 7.15). In other words, I would gladly seize the opportunity to amass wealth, but only if it is possible with hard work and determination (7.11). If it is impossible, I would rather stay poor if that meant retaining a clear conscience (6.9). By following the Way and upholding virtue, one is less susceptible to the lure of material comfort, as he understands fully that mental gratification does not depend on it.

MILL: I sincerely apologize for my unintentional affront. The alcohol's starting to get to me. The points that you have just raised—on virtues of humaneness and rightness, and how following them brings a life of satisfaction—are certainly interesting. It goes without saying that humaneness, which I conclude is a concept synonymous to the integrity of one's character, is instrumental in the welfare of the society, but there is another thing. You believe that man has to suppress themselves and hold themselves with propriety, and that this contributes to human's well being. Is that true?

CONFUCIUS: I would say so, yes.

MARX: Just get on with it, will you, John?

MILL: [*sarcastically*] Yes, sir. Well, I'm going to discuss this topic from another point of view. I believe that humans should be allowed to form their own opinions and thoughts and express them without reserve (III: 1). Men also should be free to carry out their opinions without hindrance, of course, at their own risk and peril. There are limitations to this rule: this is only in the circumstance that said free opinions and actions do not do harm to others.

CONFUCIUS: I imagine that it must be chaotic, the existence of so many differing opinions on the same topic.

MILL: To answer your question, Confucius, mankind is not infallible. Everyone makes mistakes. No one is perfect. No opinion—not even mine, yours, or of dear Karl's here—should be seen as completely true; they are at most one of the many sides of a truth (III: 1). Diversity of human character and lifestyle should be celebrated, instead of being seen as a despicable quality. Humans are born different innately, and so I believe that we should be given a shot to experience different modes of life (III: 1).

MARX: Your statement reminds me of the period in Chinese history before the Qin patriarch united all states into one. The Hundred Schools of Thought were founded in a time when no one regulated speech and thought, the rulers of states encouraging free discussion of ideas and philosophies, some even venturing to recruit the brilliant talent behind them. It was admittedly a time of chaos, but it had brought the birth of some brilliant philosophies that left an impact on the way humans live now, thousands of years later.

MILL: My point exactly. Individuality is not only one of the principal ingredients of human happiness and the chief ingredient of individual and social progress (III: 1); it is also a prerequisite for creativity and diversity. Therefore, one should be given the choice to choose, to plan his life for himself, by using his powers of observation, his reasoning and judgment, his firmness and self-control (III: 3)... If not, how much better would he be compared to an animal, that does nothing but eat, sleep and conceive their offspring? Perception, judgment, the ability to discriminate, our mental activity, all the qualities that are exercised when one makes choices... they are what that makes a human *human*. How else can we live a good life, if we are less than what we should be, are born to be?

MARX: I agree with you, on that being in touch of our human qualities is the path to a good, fulfilling life. However, there is one quality you failed to mention that is arguably the most important of all.

MILL: Pray tell, my brother, what would it be?

MARX: Labor is the most essential nature of humans. Man is a species-being (which means that man sees himself as connected, a part of his species) and labor is the essence of species-life. For labor, the very cornerstone of productive life itself is to man a means to fulfill the need to sustain physical existence, both of individual and species. And the species-character (the whole character of a species) is constituted of free conscious activity. Unlike the animal, of which character is inseparable from its actions, man is a free, conscious being that engages in species-activity when he so chooses. Life

activity is shaped by man into an object of will and consciousness (195). For example, man produces even when he is free of physical need and truly produces in freedom of such need, while an animal produces because there is an immediate physical need compelling it to do so.

MILL: In other words, humans are defined by their ability to work of their own volition.

MARX: Exactly, but what happens most of the time in a capitalist environment is this less than ideal situation, when the entity of labor is ripped out from the worker's essential being, and he feels no sense of accomplishment in his work, but only misery and unhappiness. He "does not develop . . . mental and physical energy but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind" (193). He feels most human carrying out his animalistic functions, while in his human functions he is no longer human. As John has just said, how is this a good life when human is reduced to a lifeless husk of what he should have been? A good life, ideally, is one where man produces without compulsion, without other complications, spontaneous and free.

CONFUCIUS: Both of you put forth good opinions on the elements that constitute a good life. I would like to supplement them with some points of mine if you don't mind. Freedom of expression and labor are both ideal, that is true, but what if making it happen compromises basic integrity? I believe that with regard to worldly affairs, we should "[side] with what is right" (*Analects* 4.10), which not only means to prioritize virtue over everything else but also to adhere to ritual. For example, as Mill has stated,



one should only express his opinions freely when it does not do harm to others.

MARX: I beg to differ. In some cases, being virtuous and doing the right thing only does harm to one's happiness and well-being, going against what you have claimed. As an example, in a capitalist society, workers are forced by their superiors to engage in mindless and repetitive labor, which causes only misery and dejection.

CONFUCIUS: I apologize, for I forget to elaborate that this not only applies to laymen, but also to the higher-ups in society. A virtuous leader should always put the needs of the people in mind. When a leader is virtuous and follows ritual, his subjects will automatically follow him without prompting, like how weeds inevitably bend in the wind. If he is righteous, then none of his people will be disrespectful (13.4). If a benevolent ruler leads in the right direction, nobody will dare to do wrong (12.17). So, in the opposite case where a superior does not assume his responsibility, the workers naturally feel discontented in their jobs and seek to rectify their situation. To conclude, I still stand with my opinion that virtue is obligatory for a good life.

MARX: That is a convincing argument.

MILL: *[interrupts]* Now that we've gotten the serious topic out of the way, what are your thoughts on the consuming of alcohol inebriation? Would it be a part of the good life to you?

CONFUCIUS: A gentleman does everything in moderation—he does not stuff themselves with food when they are eating and is not concerned about comfort when he chooses a dwelling (1.14). In the same vein, he does not drink until he is incapacitated by drunkenness. A gentleman “never [drinks] to the point of confusion” (10.8). He is always in control of his actions, careful of his words (1.14). Some people lose control of their actions and utter gibberish when they are on the precipice of alcohol overconsumption. This is undesirable behavior that could have devastating consequences.

MILL: Always the spoilsport, you and your rituals. Lighten up a little, would you? Personally, I say that being drunk is not a problem at all, provided that no harm is being inflicted on others. As I said earlier, a person should have “perfect freedom, legal and social, to do the action and stand the consequences”, provided that no harm is done to other people (IV: 3). A person is perfectly allowed to drink as much as he wants, get drunk and not be punished for it. However, when this degree of intoxication is the cause of damage, or a risk of damage, to other individuals or the society, he has violated the breach of morality and should be persecuted by the law (IV: 10). For example, a soldier or policeman must be punished should he be drunk on duty, as the intoxication brought by alcohol may hinder him in carrying out his responsibilities to the public.

MARX: Both of you made some good points. Now, I’ll tackle this topic from a sociological point of view. Alcohol is a commodity, as is bread, the means of sustenance for the proletariat. The bread and alcohol industries vie for grain, the main ingredient of production for both. Bread, of course, is more important and in higher demand, but alcohol always prevails in

time of grain scarcity. Why is that so, when bread packs nutrition when alcohol ruins the mind and body? It is because alcohol generates more profit, and the maximization of profit is the main goal of capitalism. As a result, when there is a shortage of grain, workers' access to bread is severely limited. They work, they produce, but they are robbed of their sustenance, the commodity they need most—this is a result of the alienation of labor (Marx 191). Left without choice, the average worker descends into the chasm of alcoholism, not only to mute his hunger but also because he has desperate need of recreation out of work, during the few moments in a day when he is finally himself, to make the next day of labor more endurable (193; also Engels 400). To conclude, alcohol consumption and intoxication were not birthed by choice then, but rather an effect of the conditions under which people try to live their lives (Fairve). When workers are not under exploitative relations that compel them to choose intoxication above nutrition and sustenance, then will the consumption of alcohol truly be a part of the good life. I myself enjoy a pint or two as much as the next man, now that the matter is less complicated.

MILL: I'll drink to that.

MARX: I believe our time is up. Before we leave, let's toast to a good life, shall we?

CONFUCIUS, MILL, MARX: To a good life.

*[They finish their beer and vanish, leaving no traces of their patronage except for three empty mugs.]*

WAITER: That was such an illuminating conversation! After listening to their words, I finally have an idea for my final paper, but before that, I will have to finish my work here first...

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**Teacher’s comment:**

What does it mean to live a good life? Does it mean being wealthy, happy or successful in life? What roles do the human nature and virtue play? Does it mean caring for others and making a better society? Yi Jie’s essay tries to take a careful look at all these questions and compare the views of Confucius, J.S. Mill and Karl Marx about good life and their analyses of human nature. Yi Jie demonstrates her good understanding of all these great thinkers, as well as her ability to apply their thoughts in the discussion of what is the meaning of the good life. This essay is a well-written and thoughtfully conceived dialogue. It shows clear expression of ideas and the knowledge which is well integrated and supported by evidence from our selected texts. (LUI Wing Sing)



# 快樂製造商——不丹商業夢

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## 引言

快樂有無定性？理想社會存在與否？答案尚且未知，世上卻總不乏努力者——

不丹，位處中印交界、發展落後卻憑藉天堂樂園之名獲得關注的小國，五年前終不敵李氏擴張，迎來首三間百好超市。這曾被譽為亞洲最快樂的國家，隨着現代化建設與外界資訊流入已不再快樂。社會酗酒、濫藥問題嚴重，國民失業率、自殺率高企（亞歷克薩·德沃森），佛教信仰彷彿不再能夠填補人民精神的空虛。故，三位超市經理就此提出各自方案，以圖助不丹重回快樂。

## 亞當·斯密：現代化超級市場

### I. 快樂人生與理想社會

斯密營業前就不丹社會問題作分析，認為其困境全因經濟發展水平與發展國家相差甚遠，經濟模式剛脫離自給自足狀態，雖有引入資本模式，但分工程度不足，勞動生產力低、政府干預過多<sup>1</sup>。旅遊業帶

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1 不丹政府對於當地經濟的管制措施頗為嚴格，國家經濟發展方向、限制都有明確界定。如環境先於經濟、不發展重工業等。（〈不丹經濟〉）

動下，外圍發展水平令當地產生落差與攀比，經濟水平的差距是不丹人痛苦的根源。

由此，斯密從物質層面定義理想社會——普遍富裕的社會才是良好管理的社會，滿足自利人性需求才是理想的社會<sup>2</sup>。社會資源分配得當，不論高低階層者，在無政府管制下，於社會交易中獲取多種物品，享受經濟自由，進一步推演，自由與自利便是斯密所重視的理想社會元素<sup>3</sup>。

## II. 超市營運

為提高生產力，斯密引進精細化分工、機械化生產，近似香港超市。管理上依照不同技術劃分部門；貨品均分門別類、規矩放置，明碼標價。且引用電子科技輔助生產。員工均享有最低工資，考慮當地交通以步行為主、醫療由國家負擔（安柏），故並無額外福利。

因精細分工，超市提供頗多低技術要求工作崗位<sup>4</sup>，吸引不少待業青年<sup>5</sup>應聘，更帶動周邊行業，故斯密認為他改善了當地失業率。歷

2 亞當·斯密在《國富論》第一章提出「分工使得各種產品激增，勞動者除滿足個人所得外還有大量勞動品可出售，這種現象在社會各個階層都普遍存在，由於勞動品極其豐富，以致可以提供給下層人民，社會各階層普遍富裕起來。」（8-10）另，他也補充到人類的交易行為背後是「利己之心」，即是以自己想要的兌換對方想要的，而不是慈善；並指出「交換是人的本能」，故人性是自利的。（10-12）且《國富論》中提到的利益傾向物質層面：欲滿足這種利益，自要改善經濟生產力。一個分工得當、物質充沛的社會最是理想——大多數人遭受痛苦的社會不是幸福的，唯有人們利益得到滿足，才會幸福快樂。

3 原文：「自由與自利被一隻看不見的手指引製造出秩序與和諧，因此，維護良好的社會秩序並不需要國王及大臣進行持續不斷的監督。」（埃蒙·巴特勒 9-16）亞當·斯密以生產模式為社會基礎，在他的假設中，自利的特質令人們為了自身利益不受損傷而盡力把資源和平引導至效。而自由市場和自由交易是效率的保證。由此可見，「自由」也是亞當·斯密所推崇的理想社會元素之一。另外，自利的人性若無自由確保，則可能刺激人們為追求自利實行不法行為。

4 亞當·斯密提及在精細化分工下，工人只從事最基礎簡單的工序。（8）

5 不丹就業市場並不發達，近年來水力發電工程為其經濟貢獻頗大，但工程結束，則有大量工人進入待業狀態。且正因市場交易並不發達，民營企業家有限，整體可以提供的經濟崗位非常有限，長年失業率高企。（洪好靜）



經五年，員工專注於所屬生產部分，熟能生巧、生產力大大提升<sup>6</sup>。員工及顧客得以享受更豐富多元的物質生活——商品是該超市的賣點。但斯密也指出，不丹人口遠不及中印人口大國的市場交易機會多。營業不久，便發現生產品滯銷嚴重，比如新鮮奶製品大半浪費。收入雖多，純利卻有限，故斯密先生雄心壯志正在籌劃拓展市場<sup>7</sup>。

## 馬克思：理想中的大同世界

### I. 快樂人生與理想社會

馬克思對此則嗤之以鼻，他認為不丹社會問題已反映前期市場引進的資本主義不值參照，怎會如斯密所言是分工不足導致？斯密在不丹問題上犯了與工業革命相同錯誤<sup>8</sup>。如何使不丹人從生產中實現自我價值才是當務之急。

斯密經營過程中，未有保障工人利益<sup>9</sup>，只追求經濟利益<sup>10</sup>。分工制度下，為確保等質生產，工人僅需跟隨一致標準重複完成工作，無權參與決策過程。比如出貨部依貨架進行擺設，後者並不能體現工人

6 原文：「勞動者的熟練程度因分工而提高；工作之間的交換損失時間減少；機械的發明簡化了工作。勞動者工作量雖之提升。」（亞當·斯密 7）

7 原文：「社會分工程度受市場對商品需求的限制，受市場交換能力大小的限制……鄰近地區的富裕程度和人口數量。」（亞當·斯密 12-15）在該章節中，亞當·斯密強調國家購買力的限制推動開拓市場，並否定殖民強行傾銷行為，推動自由貿易、培養當地消費，行成互惠互利。考慮到不丹自然資源豐富、特色民族食品服飾等對於他國而言將頗為新鮮，想必可以培養需求、擴大市場。

8 參考《1844手稿：異化勞動》及王森〈資本統治、異化與全球化——馬克思對資本主義消費的分析與批判〉，馬克思著書時間正是工業革命後期，當時亞當斯密的資本主義幾乎成為市場絕對機制。相關問題包括分工模式本身帶來的異化勞動和資本累積與剝削。後者見參考書目，相關後果包括工人生活條件低劣骯髒、非法童工等行為普遍。這些社會問題令馬克思深切體會到資本家剝削之過，故大肆批評無視工人利益保障的資本主義。其中，以「異化勞動」最為人熟知。

9 馬克思指出，利潤、租金、工資三者的劃分使得資本家在生產擴張過程剝削勞工所得，工資增長遠不及資本增長，故貧富懸殊頗為嚴重。而隨着工作愈來愈精細，要求技能不高，工人供應增加遠高於需求增加，為增加勞工市場競爭力，工人無權提高工資，更是依賴資本家「施捨」工作崗位。如此，工人等同依附於資本家。（5-30）

10 原文：「勞動在國民經濟學中只是以賺錢活動的形式出現。」、「勞作動物」（12-13）

自我想法。換言之，這些工人無任何控制權，完全隸屬斯密。人類特有的思考與反思能力在分工下被消磨殆盡，他們只知生存，不知反思工作意義。故看似物質得到滿足，創造力卻不得成長——斯密製造了一群機器。且工人競爭甚強，工作壓力過大，彼此敵視，簡直侮辱佛教信仰——斯密超市未必能改善不丹人生活<sup>11</sup>。

由此，馬克思從人的價值推演至和諧無階級對立的社會。他以人的價值為核心的生產模式改變社會。故馬克思提倡工作是人實現自我、有所進步的方式，更借此培養人對於社會的歸屬感與集體感，消除彼此階級的對立，生產依勞動分配，締造理想的平等自由共產主義社會。如此社會生活的人們，將得到精神滿足，自是快樂（洪鑣德 136）。

## II. 超市營運

馬克思於不丹生活一年後方開業，為實現經濟、人文精神的雙贏局面，以合作社形式營運超市，以「集體管理、集體決策、守望相助」為核心政策，每個員工會交替任職不同崗位——員工的參與權與自主權大大提升，超市營運的決策均由內部員工會議表決，每人都需發表意見。為使每一名員工都對超市有高歸屬感，馬克思定期舉辦各種討論會及聯誼會。因政策設立面前人人平等，故馬克思超市福利合理，除收入依勞動分成外，還有產假等，更是尊重當地佛教思想，尊重齋戒月等。

開業數年，超市以其人性化服務最為人熟悉，員工待客熱情有禮。在諸多政策下，員工漸培養起創新與隨機應變的能力，馬克思超

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11 原文：「……異化勞動的結果便是其他人也與他相對立……」（馬克思 51）正因分工之下專業技術的要求甚低，為了爭取有限工作崗位的的不丹人自然要相互競爭。且因為不丹本地教育水平、技術培訓等等遠不及鄰國印度、尼泊爾，不本地的工程也多為他們主導。

市得以集思廣益。且他們積極參與社會活動<sup>12</sup>——不丹近年出現共產黨反政府組織<sup>13</sup>，有懷疑指馬克思超市孕育反政府思想，對此，馬克思表示他的生產模式只是發揮人類本質，促進員工肯定自我，反思政府之過。

不論如何，馬克思超市在不丹興起一陣合作社熱潮，由下而上的自由民主推動不丹民主及公民意識教育<sup>14</sup>。馬克思更自信道共產世界不遠矣。

## 莊子：難得快活逍遙人

### I. 快樂人生

最後一位經理被喻為最有個性的高人。莊老先生慨嘆不丹變化，表示不丹之困令他聯想到春秋禮崩樂壞的中原<sup>15</sup>。對此，莊子卻說由人開始對萬物分類、定高下之時，便對環境造成有為的負擔<sup>16</sup>——周禮如此，不丹亦面臨之。

莊子指斯密以賣剩豬肉無用為名，盡數丟棄，何不另做加工食品或施捨窮乏者？馬克思雖意識到工作對人的束縛，卻仍無法脫離生產

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12 不丹外流勞動甚多，又以尼泊爾為主，佔全部人口25%。自1985年起，不丹政府施行「種族淨化」運動，強制要求所有民族以不丹傳統文化為標準，配合新的國籍政策，使得大量尼泊爾人喪失公民資格，並於1990年被宣布為非法移民。大量尼泊爾人成為難民。（覃詠欣）

13 不丹反政府及武裝力量近年來不斷發展，帶動發生境內暴力活動，其中主要力量包括馬列毛、不丹共產黨（毛派）等，他們的主張包括宣布主權民主、保障人民權利與自由，遣返不丹難民等。（楊思靈）

14 對馬克思而言，符合人類本質的、不受異化的勞動是自由的生命表現。（Fromm 43-57）

15 莊子所處年代正是周禮崩壞的春秋時代，「強國事兼併」已成慣例。各國鬥爭不斷、社會混亂至極，周禮作用不再。有鑑於此，各學者紛紛著書立說，試圖解釋亂世、提出救世之法。以莊子年代來看，相對出名的便是孔孟儒學、墨家；政治上則以法家為主。

16 原文：「是非之彰也，道之所虧也。」（陳鼓應 104）、「凡事亦然。始乎諒，常卒乎鄙；其作始也簡，其將畢也必巨。」（118）

這一框架。他着意強調集體，反令工人陷入合群概念。斯密、馬克思二人之辯實則造成對立爭執，不丹之亂由此惡化。當筆者詢問是否追溯不丹原始社會方為出路，莊子指如是已達御風而行境界，卻仍未真正順應天地自然，皆因不丹精神信仰有所待<sup>17</sup>。

由此，莊子從制度建立本身評核不丹困境，認為正是各種制度化的束縛太多，令人們精神不再自由，逐漸迷失於物欲之中，終身勞碌，放逐自我<sup>18</sup>。欲令不丹人解脫，應由內在着手，而非改變不同的制度。莊子從絕對的精神自由定義快樂人生，首要回歸自然，達「無為」——簡言之則是刨除約束與制度的框架。若可對外界定義的成功，抱一笑置之的態度；放下自我認知的偏見或知識世界，不刻意劃分我、他、物，忘卻世俗既定規矩，達到自由自在無所束縛、依靠的逍遙境界<sup>19</sup>。

由逍遙推演至理想社會，莊子承繼老子小國寡民思想，認為無為可避免紛爭，「齊物」則可拋貴賤高下之別，真正做到人與萬物平等和諧——至德社會成矣<sup>20</sup>。

## II. 超市營運

莊子於兩年前方開業，一不招聘，二不分工，三不守舖。店內貨品陳列並無細分，採取以物易物交易，更有者自願留下以工替物。

17 不丹以佛教信仰為主，佛教經文、要求（如齋戒等）對當地影響甚大。不丹少肉多素的飲食習慣便是其一例子。

18 原文：「終身役役而不見其成功，茶然疲役而不知其所歸，可不哀邪！」（100）

19 原文：「至人無己，神人無功，聖人無名。」（94）莊子以四種人生層次，道明逍遙境界必不可少的是拋開外在限制。包括世俗認可、自我意識與內外分明的對立，及依賴外在物體。

20 參考牟宗三及勞思光，以及《莊子·秋水》：「以道觀之，何貴何賤，是謂反衍。」（陳鼓應 130）；「無以人滅天，無以故滅命，無以得殉命。」（132）；《莊子·齊物論》「是亦彼也，彼亦是也」（102）、「天地一指也，萬物一馬也」（103）。

莊子多遊歷不丹山水，偶然路經則於店內坐忘心齋<sup>21</sup>。顧客初是貧乏者，後又有「尋寶人士」或孩童視之為遊樂世界，斯密、馬克思笑稱莊子超市開成「四不像」，莊子對此反問何謂超市？並表示孩童與尋寶者比他二人更懂得無用之用<sup>22</sup>。

時至今日，莊子超市完全融入不丹社會，透出與世無爭的氣質。莊子店內坐忘心齋，帶動當地人停下腳步、靜心感受呼吸、融於自然，有趣的是其中不乏斯密、馬克思超市員工。有指莊子重興佛教禪坐，他則笑稱即興而為、感應天地，不知何謂宗教教條。至於無為者為何行有為之事，莊子則回應如今全球資訊流動，回歸天地初開的質樸實不可行，心有逍遙已極難得，人世義務以悠遊之心待之即可<sup>23</sup>。

## 總結與個人見解

身處香港，筆者深刻感受資本主義對人文精神的忽略及社會主義過於理想化引致的鬥爭。莊子的逍遙可說是紛擾世界下的良方，唯令人疑惑人類生而逍遙<sup>24</sup>，為何要追求資本利益、身外之物？逍遙真是快樂的最終真諦嗎？

21 原文：「顏回曰：『墮肢體，黜聰明，離形去知，同於大通，此謂坐忘。』仲尼曰：『同則無好也，化則無常也。』」（《莊子·大宗師》）；「若一志，無聽之以耳而聽之以心，無聽之以心而聽之以氣。耳聽止於聽，心止於符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛。虛者，心齋也。」（陳鼓應 116）莊子提出的坐忘心齋皆是修身養性、沉澱浮躁思想之法。坐忘中，莊子強調捨棄自身形體、智慧、知識，即是拋棄外在，回歸內心，失去束縛才能夠促成通達的自然境界；至心齋，心齋與佛教禪定有異曲同工之妙，以現代語言理解則是「放空自我」，心靈凝聚安定，集中於清虛的心境，從而令人安定、不為名利得失影響心境，從而悠遊於世俗規矩卻不為影響——如此便是空明。

22 《莊子·逍遙遊》中以不能為木匠所用的大樹，最終因為無用而可以安享晚年，說明無用之用的大用。

23 同腳注22心齋。

24 參考牟宗三、勞思光先生有關莊子學術評價，莊子追溯小國寡民的原始狀態，認為人生而逍遙，換言之即是人類文化蓬勃發展之先。

筆者以為所謂回歸自然，回歸最為重要。回歸象徵反思，唯有反思現況、社會限制，才可以找尋屬於自己的精神自由。或許快樂是自我精神經反思後真正安於現狀——定性在個人。關鍵在於給一個選擇的機會，你會否改變。筆者仍相信，知識的獲取既導致人越見複雜，也可助我們擁有反思的權力，而非冠上無知幸福<sup>25</sup>的名頭。

同理，社會與人的快樂關係稍顯微妙。純樸社會確實令城市人嚮往，莫非人類千年的發展皆是多餘？「理想社會」的背後總存在一種思想，不論儒道資社，為了達到如此理想皆造就歷史教訓——是否理想社會並不存在？筆者反而覺得人類仍在尋找一個理想社會的平衡點，完善制度的過程自不是片刻成就。

有心人欲體驗人類意識形態進化史，不妨親身到訪「快樂的」不丹。

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25 不丹因為發展較晚，到1999年才引入電視與外界接觸。因此常有人稱不丹人之所以快樂，是因為他們並不知道外界的生活、自身的貧乏，等同東亞的北韓。

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## 老師短評

本篇文章以不丹經濟發展之後出現各式社會問題的情況為背景，嘗試闡述馬克思、亞當·斯密和莊子的思想，哪個可以幫助不丹人重獲快樂。題目設定甚好，能引用經典去分析現實情況。對馬克思和亞當·斯密的分析大致準確，不少觀點超出了指定讀本，可見同學有延伸閱讀。最為特別的是，同學先闡述斯密和馬克思的觀點後，最後引用莊子的思想指出兩者所代表的經濟生產模式，不過是兩種成心的表現，把論文提升到另一個層次的思考，先立後破。（楊彩杰）



# Facing the Dawn of the Era of Artificial Intelligence: In Dialogue with Marx and Rousseau

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Interviewee: Karl Marx, Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Interviewer: Phyllis

List of Acronyms: KM=Karl Marx, JR=Jean-Jacques Rousseau,  
IN=Interviewer

[Begin Transcript 0:00:10]

**IN:** Good afternoon. It's a great honor to invite you both. This is Karl Marx, the great mentor of workers all over the world, and the author of *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. This is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an outstanding enlightenment thinker, who wrote the world-famous *Social Contract*.

**JR:** Don't forget to introduce yourself, Phyllis. Of all the people here, only you are a participant in today's human society.

**IN:** Indeed, I'm the only person here involving in the present society. But

Eva, the AI stenographer<sup>1</sup> behind us, who is recording our conversations and transcribing them into words now (Syncedon), can also be regarded as an important member of today's society.

**KM:** Thanks, Eva.

**IN:** As you can see from heaven, artificial intelligence, or AI for short, is revolutionizing our society at a phenomenal rate. On the positive side, AI is ushering in a new era of higher working efficiency and better living quality (Makridakis). But on the other hand, as Stephen Hawking warned, it might also bring us the threat of being replaced or even destroyed (Cellan-Jones). Eva, for example, can be a nightmare for thousands of human stenographers while actually improving the efficiency and accuracy of stenography.

Kuzvile even predicted the specific coming time of the AI era in *The Singularity is Near: 2045*. It means two-thirds of humans today, including me, are still alive (劉慈欣). Therefore, in the next ten or even twenty years, in the dawn of the era of AI, we humans have to face a variety of problems. How to relieve the unemployment pressure caused by AI? How to avoid the risk of AI destroying us humans? A more general question, how to complete the social transition to the age of AI? I'd like to hear from you two wise men.

**KM:** I just thanked Eva, not only because it is recording this conversation now. More importantly, it frees the stenographers from the labor of stenography, which is external to them (*Early Writings* 326). The activity of

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1 In 2018, Voicera has enabled AI stenographers to record meetings, transcribe audio into text, and highlight key points.

stenography belongs to another, for instance, Eva's activity belongs to us. This involuntary activity is a stenographer's loss of self, free mental cannot be developed in stenography, or to say, the estranged labour.

Phyllis just mentioned unemployment. But in my opinion, it should not be regarded as unemployment, but as a change of career path. Productivity determines relations of production (*Das Kapital*, vol. 1), any improvement of production tools will lead to changes in production relations, and so will AI. Besides stenography, AI may also make industries including finance, education, and medicine unmanned. Fortunately, as Phyllis once argued, the cultural industry based on subjective consciousness is still peculiar to mankind (Feng). Under the promotion of AI, human beings may turn to devote themselves to the cultural industry dominated by individual spirit, where there is no alienation between workers and labor, and between products of labor (*Early Writings* 327): the labor depends on the worker, and the worker relates to his own activity as free activity (331).

Additionally, the development of AI accelerates information globalization (Jain and Jain), thereby making the public ownership of spiritual means of production a reality. Furthermore, the working tool—the human brain is owned by everyone. Therefore, in the age when AI is highly developed and everyone is only engaged in spiritual work, the private ownership of production materials will cease to exist. The liberation of the society from private ownership is bound to be accompanied by the liberation from slavery (333) and employment (Marx and Engels). By then, the word “employment” itself may not make sense, let alone “unemployment”.

**IN:** Thank you, Marx! While listening to your speech, I was suddenly inspired to have an exciting idea: if AI comes, can communism be far

behind? I've always thought that communism is out of reach, but if AI can really complete all the work to create huge wealth, and then let the government allocate money to every member of society—no one strives for material, most of them work for spiritual satisfaction. By that time, human self-liberation and communist society are likely to be realized.

However, in Marx's analysis just now, AI seems to have been regarded merely as a tool of production. It should not be overlooked that AI is also a product of human labor. Back to the time when Marx wrote *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, it can be seen as the only possibility that if the product does not belong to the worker and be opposed to him as an alien power, it must belong to another man (330–331). Nonetheless, in the age of AI, we need to consider another case: AI, as a product of labor, might belong to itself. We cannot rule out the possibility that AI may become the alien force that rules mankind in its own name.

**JR:** There's no denying that it sounds scary. If this power is completely free and not in chains (Rousseau 71; bk. I, ch. 1), no one can predict what is around the corner. With the development of AI in more and more fields, traditional roles played by humans are being replaced at an alarming rate—the establishment of a new social contract between humans and AI is urgent. Humans should place AI and its power under the ultimate guidelines of the general will which includes the will of AI—let AI, like humans, be an inseparable part of the whole (82; bk. I, ch. 6). Once humans and AI are united in a body, a violation of any member is an attack on the whole, which will all the members resent the same enemy (84; bk. I, ch. 7). In this way, AI and humans have no choice but to support each other. That's exactly what we want to see: when humans are no longer imprisoned by the anxiety of

AI, instead of restricting the development, new areas of AI application for social progress can be explored securely.

Moreover, just in case, even on the day when AI really wants to destroy human beings, the social contract with AI, which aimed to conserve the contracting parties (96; bk. II, ch. 5), is still our umbrella. Similar to the death penalty imposed on criminals, if AI attacks social rights and even threatens human survival, then “it is expedient [for the society that AI] should die (96; bk. II, ch. 6)”. It is stipulated at the time of signing the contract—AI should be sentenced to death when attempting to destroy humans, which is the condition for humans to guarantee the survival of AI (96; bk. II, ch. 5). Note that the nature of AI is absolutely rational (Xu and Wang), so the establishment of treaties can be seen as a determination of principles for them. Therefore, once the treaty is made with AI, the probability of AI breaking the contract is zero in principle. Based on its rational characteristics, AI may even become one of the legislators for the fact that AI can be free of any emotions and be able to behold all human passions (Rousseau 101; bk. II, ch. 7) with the advancement of simulation technology (Mao *et al.*).

**IN:** That’s really instructive, Mr. Rousseau. In fact, about half a year ago, Pepper, a Japanese AI robot, appeared in the British Parliament as an AI “member” for the first time (Times Now Digital). Pepper successfully discussed the impact of AI on the labor market and the future of education with human members of parliament—this validates the possibility of adding AI’s will to the general will. Nevertheless, there’s still something that cannot be ignored. Recent psychological studies have shown that AI does not satisfy the structure of moral practice at least for now, it can only

abide by utilitarian moral norms (Brožek and Janik). That is to say, AI only regards actual efficacy or benefits as ethical standards (Skelton). Due to the fact that AI, with strict utilitarian morality, is far more rational than humans, although it might be possible to discuss factual issues such as the intellectualization of the education system and labor market with AI, I am not sure what will happen if human rights, democracy, and justice are involved in the discussion.

Besides, since the exchange and sharing of information between AI can be easily achieved (Proctor), we cannot assert that there won't be a partial society of AI. This makes it hard to judge whether each AI makes up its own mind, then the good articulation of the general will might not be ensured (Rousseau 92; bk. II, ch. 3).

**KM:** Regardless of whether the era of AI is really socialist or not, AI is bound to bring us a new social form while improving productivity and changing modes of production (Engels). Faced with the new social form, patching on the original social contract may be far from enough. What humans need to do might be to jump out the framework of the original treaty and explore a new social contract suitable for the AI era—after all, it's a contract between humans and non-humans.

**JR:** You have a point there, Marx. The social contract I suggested in *The Social Contract* was to help the French people oppressed by the ruler in the eighteenth century to defend their rights. Now, to protect human rights in the new world of AI, humans need to contribute their courage and wisdom to create a brand new social contract meeting the requirement of the new century. Phyllis, the responsibility for building a new contract lies with

your young people. However, if you want we two old men's opinions, you are always welcome.

**IN:** Thanks a lot, Mr. Rousseau, and of course Mr. Marx. Two hours with you have made me more confident about the transformation into the era of AI. Eva has recorded our interview and compiled the text, I will share this transcript with everyone living in the dawn of the Age of AI. Once again, express my thanks to both of you.

[2:15:05]

**IN:** Eva, can you swear that you have not tampered with the transcript?

[End Transcript 2:30:00]

Stenographer: Eva

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### **Teacher's comment:**

FENG's work demonstrates the ability to identify a topical problem that has far-reaching implications on world knowledge and the meaning of humanity. She covers multiple and specific grounds, and has delineated a realistic and viable scope of inquiry. Her engagement with ideas of thinkers from the past is of a prospective nature, situating them in an emerging and complex paradigm. Readers end up being challenged to radically question where and how we are in the development of technoculture in its multiple manifestations. The autonomy she has accomplished by building insight across disciplines manifests a transformative potential that is to be emulated in all intellectual inquiries. (YEUNG Yang)

# Is the Course “In Dialogue with Humanity” Self-contradictory?

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## **Introduction**

The course “In Dialogue with Humanity” centers on goodness. According to the course outline, students are expected to tell what good life and good society are and how they can be constructed (Yeung). Paradoxically, the texts adopted by the course seem to disagree on whether goodness should be emphasized. I want to make sense of this “loophole” and explore whether the course design is self-contradictory.

I would first delineate the aforementioned inconsistency with two texts. The first is *Symposium* which seems to match the course design and support the emphasis of goodness. The second is *Zhuangzi* which seems to challenge the course by negating goodness. At last, I would propose that the conflict can be resolved by reconceptualizing goodness.

## ***Symposium*: Pro-emphasis of Goodness**

The learning outcomes written in the course outline are predominated by two phrases—“good life” and “good society” (Yeung). However, the last

outcome, instead of “good”, uses “desirable” and “ideal” to describe “life” and “society” (Yeung). This suggests that goodness is desirable and ideal, echoing with Diotima and Socrates’ dialogue in *Symposium*.

Diotima and Socrates deduced that goodness is our ultimate object of desire (206b) based on the following syllogism: 1) Everyone wants to be happy (205a); 2) To be happy, one has to possess what is good (202c and 204e); 3) Therefore, everyone desires goodness (205a). Goodness thus matters to humanity.

According to Diotima, the collective desire for goodness suggests two possible cases: 1) we lack goodness or; 2) we already have it but fear losing it in the future (199e–200e). The former case is highly understandable as intuitively, we only desire what we lack. There is no need to want something if we already possess it. Immediately challenging it, however, is the latter case—we cannot guarantee that our possession is permanent. We yearn for future possession. Desire can thereby sustain even though we already have what we want. Now some might perceive their lives as permanently good. Absurd as it sounds, a possible way to conceive it is to believe that everything (including anything that will be) in life is good. Yet, the sense of being permanently good could still be ephemeral and the desire for it could reemerge again. Here I present the third case—3) we are uncertain of what goodness **really** is. That is, what we **think** is good might not be **truly** good. Once the doubt strikes us, we no longer feel good. We cannot claim to possess goodness if we cannot ascertain whether our standard of goodness is perfectly true. With that uncertainty, we have yet to possess goodness. Now I would show how the case just presented is rooted and developed from Diotima’s contemplation of beauty.

Diotima conceived knowledge of beauty as eternal, immutable, perfect, unique, transcending substance and instance (211a–e). Such knowledge

could be acquired at the “final end” of education (210e), preceded by generalizing particular cases of beauty and philosophical reflections (210d). In other words, during the learning process, we only see parts of true beauty. And when we gather enough of them, we could finally understand it. This knowledge serves as the standard of the good, engendering absolutely good thoughts and actions, making us immortal and god-like (211e). It would satisfy us permanently, and our lives would be worth living (211d). Presumably, that “final end” could be infinitely distant if the knowledge is as powerful as Diotima described. It is unlikely that anyone has acquired it and completely understood goodness. As a result, our uncertainty persists. Our thirst for goodness thus cannot be quenched. This offers an account of humanity’s continuous desire for goodness.

In light of the above, *Symposium* supports the emphasis of goodness in this course for three reasons: 1) Goodness is humanity’s common and ultimate goal; 2) We have not reached that goal; and, 3) The course offers a podium for education and philosophy, which might lead us to that goal. This might be the rationale of the course design.

### ***Zhuangzi*: Anti-emphasis of Goodness**

Intriguingly, not all texts in this course are in line with the rationale just described. For example, Zhuangzi suggested that we should stop pursuing goodness as he contended it would blind us from the truth. He might respond to Diotima in at least the following ways.

First, nothing is absolutely good. In “Free and Easy Wandering”, Hui Tzu satirizes Zhuangzi by comparing Zhuangzi’s words with a huge gourd and a tree named shu (*Zhuangzi* 79–80). The former is too heavy to be used as a container and too large to be used as a dipper (79). The latter is big

but weirdly shaped and therefore does not interest carpenters (80). The two metaphors imply that Zhuangzi's words are big but useless, failing to draw attention from the public. Zhuangzi responds by pointing out Hui Tzu's prejudice. The huge gourd, though cannot be made into utensils, can be used as a tub for floating in water (80). Thus, whether something is useful or not depends solely on how we use or view them. Similarly, nothing is absolutely good or bad by essence. Whether something is good can always change with our thoughts.

Second, Zhuangzi went further than proposing relativism—he even undermined the meaning of categorizing things into “good” and “bad”. He thought that all attributes of things are not the nature of things, but artificial names. We name things to differentiate them, calling them “this” or “that”, “good” or “bad”, and so on. However, from the perspective of “that”, “this” is “that”; from the perspective of “bad”, “good” is “bad” (83–84). “This” is also “that”, “good” is also “bad”, and vice versa (84). Therefore, things appear to be better or worse not because they are naturally so, but out of our perceptions, which do not necessarily reflect the truth. Zhuangzi advocated seeing things from the perspective of nature, then we would realize that everything is equal—we are all just products of nature (90). One modern way to make sense of this equality is that everything is simply combinations of protons, electrons or neutrons—the chemical nature of things. The more we try to differentiate them into good or bad, the more we conceal their nature, the further we are from the truth.

If goodness is unrelated to the truth, then it might not be our ultimate object of desire. This is because, as described previously why humans continuously desire goodness, only the truth can confer certainty, neutralize doubts, and completely satisfy us. Moreover, unlike Diotima, who believed

humans can attain perfection, Zhuangzi told us to doubt our capacities and “lose our selves” (81). He thought that to approach the truth, or the Way as he named it, one cannot be confined by his human perspective or else he is doomed to fail. Therefore, Zhuangzi proposed abandoning our body, mind, self, conventions, reasoning—everything. In that way, we can become nothing and do nothing—totally spontaneous and purely subject to the force of nature (81). He would likely advocate the abandonment of education and philosophy as well given they are man-made.

Now Zhuangzi seems to fundamentally conflict with Diotima and contradict the course design. However, I would show how we might reconcile the two texts and reconceptualize goodness so that they could coexist under the course.

### **Reconciliation between *Symposium* and *Zhuangzi***

Even though Zhuangzi contended that everything is equal, it is difficult if not impossible to avoid differentiation. For instance, after reading his text, the nature-centered view appeared to be superior to the human-centered view as only the former could bring us to the truth. We would then regard the former as a “better” option. In other words, we would regard not seeing things as “good” or “bad” as “good”—and we are still confined in the notion of goodness. Therefore, we are unable to consistently take the nature-centered view and see all things as equal. Zhuangzi might have noticed this problem as well when he declared that his statements “obviously [fit] into some category” and are thereby “no different from others” (86). This statement might have exposed his tendency to be different from others. It also reflects his suspicion that he too made “discriminations” (87)

by differentiating his worldview (way to the truth) and others' (way to non-truth) into "good" and "bad", like what others did. Hence, we could not escape from the notion of goodness.

While it sounds unfortunate that we could hardly abandon goodness, goodness could be compatible with the truth if we did not limit what it might be. A negative example is Diotima's ideal of goodness. It was conceived to contain the truth (Plato 211c) but could be easily attacked by Zhuangzi. This is because Diotima sounds too assertive by describing what goodness might be and claiming that goodness could be acquired through reasoning and education (210e). She seems to be less aware of our epistemic limitations. Zhuangzi, on the other hand, not only questioned our capacities to know the truth but was also more cautious when describing it. He understood that the truth is "not named" because it could not be contained by words, which are bound by human's prejudice and subjectivity (*Zhuangzi* 87). We must exercise caution in our intellectual pursuits and keep verifying our understanding of the world.

All in all, though loopholes were found in their theories, both Diotima and Zhuangzi were concerned about the truth and inevitably regard it as the ideal of life, hinting a possibility to compatibilize truth and goodness. To realize that, we must reconceptualize goodness, hence the course design.

I propose that we should strive to empty the connotations of goodness and always doubt what goodness might be. In the course, we engage with numerous key thinkers. Their ideas have shaped many of our conventions, affecting how we think of good and evil, or truth and falsehood. There is a potential danger that we let these authorities define how we can live well without questioning them. We saw in the case of Diotima and Zhuangzi that even the most fundamental ideas, which form the basis of many other



theories, could contain serious loopholes. These fallacies were exposed once we carried out critical examinations. Therefore, goodness in this course should not signify some predetermined destinations. It is important to note that the key thinkers or texts in this course are not themselves a guide to goodness. Only by questioning and re-evaluating their ideas can we keep approaching true goodness.

Emptying connotations of goodness also means including any original and non-conforming ideas in discussion. This is best demonstrated by the course in which texts with competing ideas are included. When put together, the texts produce more insights and bring us closer to the truth than their mere sums. As in the case of Diotima and Zhuangzi, while they exposed each other's weaknesses, they complemented their counterpart at the end by showing how goodness and truth could be compatible, producing new angles for inquiries. Hence, it is crucial that the term goodness does not limit our intellectual freedom or favor particular types of ideas. We should strive to create a pluralistic environment in this course.

In short, our analysis and discussion result in three main implications: 1) We can abandon neither goodness nor truth; 2) We can compatibilize the two; and, 3) We should not set limits for goodness unless we understand its truth. Now it can be said that by emphasizing goodness, the course does not necessarily limit the texts or ideas it contains. The inclusion of contradictory texts is therefore legitimate.

## **Conclusion**

“Words have something to say. But if what they have to say is not fixed, then do they really say something?” (*Zhuangzi* 83) The meaning of

words always changes. In the beginning, we saw goodness as the ultimate object of desire. Then, we discovered that goodness might distract us from the truth and could be undesirable. Finally, we opened a possibility of compatibilizing the good and the truth. And we subsequently propose a way to fit conflicting ideas in the course framework of goodness. Did we “really say something” about goodness? Are we gaining certainty of what it truly is? Perhaps our understanding only becomes vaguer.

Yet, acknowledging the ambiguity of goodness is necessary as it honestly reflects our uncertainty. And uncertainty is the key to avoid being blinded from the truth and falling prey to conformist mentality. I particularly refer to the course design. At first glance, it seems to limit our direction of inquiries by urging us to pursue goodness, as if it defines our goals. Now that the ambiguity of goodness is revealed, allowing unlimited interpretations, our paths of intellectual pursuits become infinitely broad and diverse. In “In Dialogue with Humanity”, goodness is not necessarily a definite point marked on the map. Instead, it could be empty—simply a mirror reflecting what we are going after.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

As an intellectual inquiry, WONG’s work shows ingenuity in choice of topic and formulation of problematic. It is a purposeful and rigorous argument, addressing multiple perspectives, confronting challenges, to arrive at a conclusion that preserves the complexities of his chosen problem. As a response to the course “In Dialogue with Humanity”, WONG’s writing shows critical and reflective judgement on authority—the compulsory nature of the course itself and its designed goal. It is evident that his care for truth motivates him to keep formulating challenging questions as any responsible thinker would do. His reasoning is sound and lucid, his voice, composed and confident. WONG’s succinct conclusion that “acknowledging the ambiguity of goodness is necessary as it honestly reflects our uncertainty” sends a sparkle to all of us as members of the teaching and learning community of the course: it is the human ability to confront and dwell in the unknown and the unanswerable that crystalizes the value of intellectual and moral pursuits. (YEUNG Yang)



# 豉油辯論

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B國在上年經歷了七級地震，至今災區仍如人間煉獄一般，重建進度緩慢得讓人詫異。最近，鄰近的A國決定暫時接收B國的災民。於是，來自B國的B先生搬到了A先生的隔壁。他們從來沒有說「早晨」以外的交集，這個難民好像從來不需要他的幫助，這讓A先生感到很奇怪。

叩叩叩。

A先生第一次敲響了B先生的門，B先生很快開了門。

「嗨！不好意思，打擾你。」A先生尷尬地笑道：「我想借一借豉油，請問方便嗎？」

B先生疑惑地問：「為甚麼？」

A先生呆了呆：「噢，因為我的剛好用完了，超市這個時間好像都關門了……」

「我的意思是，我為甚麼要幫你？」

B先生此話一出，氣氛頓時變得尷尬。B先生見A先生的臉色似乎不太好，急忙道：「你不要誤會。只是在我們國家，我們從不互相幫助，也沒有合作可言……」

A先生突然記起B國以前發生過一次革命，舉國的價值觀和社會運作模式產生巨大轉變，開始與其他國家脫節，猶如一個自我隔離的疫區。

B先生見A先生皺起眉頭，也不想貿然在這陌生的地方得罪人，便說：「其實我家也沒有豉油，不然……我與你到街尾的便利店看看吧。」

二人在黑夜中的街道結伴而行，A先生再按捺不住好奇：「你說你們從沒互助和合作，怎麼可能？人類從古至今就懂得群居的重要性，合眾人之力才可以對抗惡劣生存環境。不共同協作，就注定滅亡。（Rousseau 155; bk. I, ch. 6）人沒有辦法靠自身而活得美好，必須在群體中尋求幫助和合作。」

「那你如何定義活得美好？」B先生漫不經心地反問。

A先生回答：「雖說人於世上有數不清的掣肘，難以完全忠於自己（148; bk. I, ch. 1），但我認為美好的人生是不拘泥於枷鎖，盡力活得自由；社會使大家生活安穩愉快，凡事從國民共同利益出發，才稱得上美好社會。」

B先生點頭以示同意：「既然你同意必須活得自由，那麼沒有互助有何不可？我們B國在工業革命時期，勞動階層被過分剝削，平均壽命大幅下降至三十歲之後，人民就達致共識要追求自由的人生，沒有人對社會有任何義務或必須犧牲性命地付出。你說人不能獨活，但歷史告訴我們，任何協作永遠只會落得一個下場——其中一方變成從屬的被無止境地剝削，淪為盲目工作的機器（Marx 220）。」

「東歐在冷戰時期推行的分工制不就是血淋淋的例子嗎？不論是國家主權與人民自由也被完全抹殺。可憐被前蘇聯分配負責農產的羅馬尼亞人與烏克蘭人，許多得活活餓死。」B先生堅定地說：「所以我

說，只有不為社會所用才可保身求存，脫離枷鎖，獲得自由。（陳鼓應 213）」

A先生歎了一口氣，道：「說得簡單。你們都不投身社會工作糊口嗎？」

B先生得意地說：「我們主張回歸自然，B國人民每家門前有一塊農田，我們也懂得打獵，自給自足，不需要與家庭以外的人合作。」

A先生聽得口呆目瞪：「無可否認，自給自足在正常情況下可以維持生存的基本需求，但是能造就美好生活嗎？缺少了社會分工，生產力豈不是低得可怕？」

說着他們到達了二十四小時便利店，二人找到了貨架上最後一瓶豉油，A先生仔細地瞧着瓶身的營養標籤，續道：「以這瓶豉油為例，如果不採用勞動分工，你得一手一腳完成種黃豆、發酵、包裝等所有繁複的工序。但與其他人分工，每個工序純熟度提高，又省時，生產力大大提高……（Smith 189-190）」

B先生輕蔑地說：「生產力真的如此重要？東西夠用不就好了？執着於得到更多外物只會損害自由。」（王博 115）他示意讓A先生把這最後一瓶豉油拿去，加快腳步走向收銀處，不願再應酬這個健談的鄰居。

A先生搖搖頭說：「這不是關於財產累積。難道你有三頭六臂嗎？你覺得每個人每天為生活的基本所需而奔波勞碌，這樣的生活自由嗎？看上去好像因為沒有參與社會，也沒有讓他人進入自己的生活而沒有了束縛，可是你依然無法主宰自己和實現人應有的本質。人的本性是創意和自由，主導自己的生活。現在你將自己的本質僅僅變成維持生命的手段，做的事全都只是為了求存。（Marx 227）這不是生活，這只是生存。」

見B先生的腳步放緩，A先生繼續說：「互助和協作讓你不用為基本所需煩惱，人類在生命中不再處於被動，而可以有更多時間追求其他東西，比如說，夢想。」

B先生的腳步停了下來，眼裏閃過一絲猶豫，但隨即又指向收銀機前的夜班收銀員：「難道像這位小姐一樣夜以繼日地勞動，被工作剝削就是你口中從合作達致的美好生活？」

「不是，正確的互助和合作裏，雙方地位平等，沒有任何一方比較優越。可惜，現在的社會仍然未能實踐這一點，才無法杜絕剝削和不公義的出現。」

「我不明白。如果互相合作是剝削的源頭，令生活和社會變得不美好，除掉它便無後顧之憂了，不對嗎？」

「朋友，那是『斬腳趾避沙蟲』。『互助合作』只是一個讓生活更自由便利的方法，剝削和勞動異化是人們在執行互助時衍生的問題。剝削不是互助帶來的必然結果，它的出現只歸咎於有人將自身利益看得比共同利益重要，是資本主義誘導下人性犯下的錯誤。我們應該解決問題，而不是否定互助本身。」A先生嘆息道：「其實，剝削的出現更強而有力地印證了為何美好社會需要互助和合作。」

「何出此言？」

「沒有互助，等同人們沒有『共同利益』的概念。如果我們不承認大家是一個共同體，那麼你不會向身邊的人伸出援手，因為你覺得他的事與你無關，你們只是一個個獨立個體，其他人存在與否，安好與否，不影響你自己的存在與安好。於是，同理心就慢慢被埋沒，社會的不公義還有誰來管？還有誰會想世界變得更好？沒有人再爭取改善貧富懸殊，世人懶理全球暖化快令島國淹沒的事實，就連鄰居請求看顧一下孩子也會推卻。永遠抱着事不關己的態度，這樣的社會，你覺得美好嗎？」A先生認真地一問。



B先生沉默片刻，又道：「但這些所謂對社會的承擔和幫助別人的責任，不就是限制我們自由的枷鎖嗎？我們應該與社會保持適當距離的。」（王博 27）

A先生似乎陷入沉思，二人結賬後就一言不發地走回家。

到家了。

「如果枷鎖其實能帶來自由呢？」A先生突然拋出的問題讓B先生頓了一頓。

「例如法律保障我們的自由，但同時是枷鎖。透過互助，全部人同樣奉獻出自己，大家得以成為一個共同體，因此互相照應，盡所能保護所有人，事實上自由並沒有消失。（Rousseau 155–156; bk. I, ch. 6）互合作可能讓人失去了隨心所欲的自然自由，但可以換來的卻是更有力量的公民自由，這才能讓社會每個人同時得到安定，又同時是自己的主人。<sup>1</sup>」A先生比劃着解釋。

「你們國家地震發生了這麼久，至今仍未復修好，是因為大家都各自為政，沒有任何分工合作吧。」

B先生心頭一顫，想起了當初國家災後如何陷入一片混亂，每個人要同時尋找親人和重建家園，沒有任何來自他人的支持與分擔。他想起他心愛的妻子，因為災後搜救進度緩慢，最終失救而死……他再次陷入了思考。

「我們開放讓你們B國的災民暫時住下來就是互助的體現啊！我們視全球為一個整體，假若你們那邊民不聊生，結果疫症爆發傳到我們境內，或是民憤醞釀出極端組織四處策動襲擊……唉！總之，沒有人或事物是獨立存在的，助人不就等於自助嗎？」

1 原文：「……我們必須放棄這些自然自由，以換取一系列的保障，穩定，以及一些公民自由，civil liberty……」（葉家威 137）

B先生一直凝視着地面，A先生突然將手中的豉油塞到他手裏：「你不是也沒有嗎？或者對於有些人而言，幫助別人就是活得快樂美好的方式。下次再聊！」

「等等！」

A先生停下來，疑惑地看着上前的B先生。

B先生追上前微笑着說：「你不是要豉油嗎？來，借給你。」

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## 老師短評

文章寫得相當用心細緻，有說故事的技巧，能將幾個文本的內容巧妙地交織在不同情境、佈局、人物與對話中。故事中的人物並非自說自話，頗能結合兩個人物的情境與觀點真正地「對話」起來。最後宛穎提出「剝削的出現更強而有力地印證了為何美好社會需要互助和合作」，的確是神來之筆，足見你的心思。（鄭威鵬）



# 論幸福

## ——《尼各馬可倫理學》與《莊子》的幸福觀比較

万宇軒

敬文書院 人工智能：系統與科技

「人最寶貴的東西是生命。生命屬於人只有一次。人的一生應當這樣度過：當他回首往事的時候，不會因碌碌無為、虛度年華而悔恨，也不會因為為人卑劣、生活庸俗而愧疚。」

——《鋼鐵是怎樣煉成的》（尼古拉·奧斯特洛夫斯基 252）

### 一、引言

如何不留遺憾地度過人生是每一個人都無法迴避的問題，古往今來的哲人、學者都嘗試回答過這個問題，然而時至今日，有關人生幸福的問題還是困擾着許多人。本文將嘗試從何為幸福及如何獲得幸福兩個角度分析《尼各馬可倫理學》與《莊子》中的幸福觀，並對二者異同作以比較，探索兩位古者的智慧以期對我們自己的生活有所啟發。

### 二、何為幸福

《尼各馬可倫理學》中對幸福有兩方面的解釋。首先，幸福就

是最高善。生活中一切活動都有目的，這些目的被亞里士多德稱為「善」（1094a1-5）。善有不同的層次，有的善是為了其他的善，有的善是既為了自身又是為了其他的善，還有一種善則是純粹出於自身緣故（1094a5-15）。在亞里士多德看來，當一種善的目的是另一種善時，前者就不如後者有價值（1094a5-15）。因此，上述三類善中，出於自身緣故的善就是最高的、最具價值的善<sup>1</sup>。在人類的眾多追求中，幸福恰恰符合這種善的性質：幸福總是因其自身而被我們追求，而當我們追求其他任何目的時，我們也同時為了幸福而追求這個目的（1097b1-10）。所以亞里士多德總結，幸福是所有善中最值得追求的，是人生最高的目標。

其次，幸福是靈魂含理性部分的合乎的德性的實現活動。每種事物都有對應的活動，這種事物的善就是出色地完成它對應的活動<sup>2</sup>（1097b25-30）。因此，人的善就是出色的完成人對應的活動。人的善是靈魂的善，不是身體的善（1098b10-15）。人的靈魂又分為三個部分，即營養和生長的部分、感覺的部分、含理性的部分（1102a25-1103a5），前兩個部分動物也具備，因此它們對應的活動不是屬人的活動；而含理性的部分則是人類獨有的，因此這部分的活動是人類的活動，人類的善就是出色地完成這種活動（1098a15-20）。亞里士多德把這種善表述為靈魂含理性部分的合德性的實現活動<sup>3</sup>。又因為幸福是屬人的最高善，所以幸福就是靈魂含理性部分的合德性的實現活動。

總結來看，亞里士多德從兩個維度闡釋了幸福的含義：抽象而

1 這種善因其自身之故被當作目的，並且其他一切善最終都指向它（1094a20-25；1097a25-35）。

2 例如木匠的活動就是做木工、笛手的活動就是演奏笛子；因此木匠的善就是出色地完成木工活，笛手的善就是出色地演奏笛子。

3 「德性」是指使得一個事物狀態好並出色完成它的活動的品質（1098a15-20；1106a15-20），人的善是出色的完成靈魂含理性部分的活動，因此人的善是靈魂含理性部分的合德性的實現活動。

言，幸福是人生的最高目標；具體而言，幸福是靈魂含理性部分的合德性的實現活動<sup>4</sup>。

與亞里士多德不同，莊子並未系統地分析何為幸福，而是將自己的幸福觀寄寓於瑰麗的想像世界中，用浪漫的文字表達出來，其核心思想是悅生樂死與逍遙。

悅生樂死的關注點是人的身體，有兩層意義。首先是不「憂生懼死」，即不因外物的消長而憂慮，不因身體的生死變化而痛苦。在莊子看來，人被身體和外物左右是迷茫可悲的：「與物相刃相靡，其行盡如馳而莫之能止，不亦悲乎？……其形化，其心與之然，可不謂大哀乎？人之生也，固若是芒乎？」（〈齊物論〉；孫通海 28）相反，擺脫生死外物帶來的困擾使人自由安適：「夫大塊載我以形，勞我以生，佚我以老，息我以死。故善吾生者，乃所以善吾死也。」（〈大宗師〉；孫通海 122）這種狀態被莊子稱為「懸解」，亦即解開了人執迷於生死變化的「倒懸」狀態：「且夫得者，時也；失者，順也。安時而處順，哀樂不能入也，此古之所謂縣解也。」（〈大宗師〉；孫通海 130）第二層含義是能夠修養生命以盡餘年：「為善無近名，為惡無近刑。緣督以為經，可以保身，可以全生，可以養親，可以盡年。」（〈養生主〉；孫通海 55）總之，莊子悅生樂死的幸福觀就是懷着安時處順的心態看淡生死變化，同時在力所能及善待身心，保全生命。

逍遙更側重於人的精神，是指人看透事物本質，與萬事萬物和諧統一時的精神自由。這種精神自由對莊子而言是最值得追求的，因而可以說是莊子幸福觀最主要的部分。這可以從莊子對其理想人物的描寫中窺見一二：「藐姑射之山，有神人居焉……乘云氣，御飛龍，而游乎四海之外。」（〈逍遙遊〉；孫通海 13）以及「至人神矣！大澤

4 至於具體是何種實現活動，將在「如何獲得幸福」部分加以討論。

焚而不能熱，河漢沍而不能寒，疾雷破山、飄風振海而不能驚。若然者，乘云氣，騎日月，而游乎四海之外。」（〈齊物論〉；孫通海 44）這裏的「游乎四海」指精神上的升越，而「水火不侵」意在表達思想不受形骸拘束的自由。凡此種種皆表達了莊子的理想人物能夠順物而行，不受塵世牽累的精神自由的狀態（陳鼓應 62）。

綜合來看，莊子幸福也包含着兩方面的意義：悅生樂死的幸福是擺脫身心痛苦的「消極幸福」，而逍遙的幸福則是達到精神自由的「積極幸福」<sup>5</sup>。

### 三、如何獲得幸福

《尼各馬可倫理學》明確指出，幸福是需要通過努力獲得的（1099b15–20）。承前所述，幸福是靈魂含理性部分的合德性的實現活動。靈魂中的理性可以分為兩種，一種是實踐理性，其德性稱為道德德性；另一種是理論理性，其德性稱為理智德性。實踐理性部分對應兩種活動：製作與實踐；理論理性對應了一種活動：理論沉思。製作是指為了生產某種東西進行的活動，目的在於生產的產品；實踐是政治的或道德的活動，目的既可以指向其他目的也可以是實踐本身；理論的活動是對不變的規律或事物本質的沉思，其目的就是沉思本身（廖申白 6–7）。按照亞里士多德對善的排序可以看出，沉思是這三種活動中最高級的<sup>6</sup>，實踐次之，製作最次。因此亞里士多德總結，最使人幸福的生活就是沉思的生活（1177a15–20），具體而言就是對形而

5 這裏的「積極幸福」與「消極幸福」是類比積極自由與消極自由。「積極幸福」是說因達到安詳平和的心靈狀態從而得到幸福，「消極幸福」是說通過擺脫不幸得到幸福。

6 理論沉思除了有自身即是目的的優點外，還具有以下優點（1177a10–1177b20）：  
1. 是我們本性最好部分的實踐活動——因為理性是我們身上最高等、最接近神性的部分；2. 最為連續，比其他任何活動都持久；3. 能帶來驚人的快樂，並且這種快樂既純淨又持久。4. 含有最多的閒暇——因為戰爭、政治等活動都指向其他目的因此是忙碌的，只有沉思不含其他目的並且本身又嚴肅又能帶來快樂。



上學、神學、數學、自然科學等進行沉思、研究的生活（廖申白 11）。這種生活是好於人的接近神的生活（1177b20–25）。同時亞里士多德也提及，第二好的能使人幸福的生活是實踐的生活（1178a5–10），具體來說就是適度地<sup>7</sup>實踐勇敢、慷慨、大方等品質<sup>8</sup>的生活。但這種生活沒有神性，是完全屬於人的，並且需要依靠較多的外在事物（1178a15–25）。總而言之，亞里士多德的理論中最能獲得幸福的方式就是沉思的生活，但對沒有哲學天賦的一般人而言，實踐道德的生活也不失為一個替代選擇。

儘管亞里士多德嚴謹地分析出了幸福的本質和獲得幸福的方式，但他的理論中仍存在着——外在善<sup>9</sup>。他坦言，雖然幸福的實現主要依靠靈魂合德性的實現活動，但也需要一定的外在善如朋友、財富、權力、運氣等作為基礎（1099a30–1099b5），即使最自足的沉思的生活也需要健康、食物、其他的照料，以及中等的財產作為支撐（1178b30–35；1179a5–10）——出身貧賤、身材醜陋或命途多舛的人在亞里士多德看來都不是幸福的人（1099a30–1099b5）。然而，這樣一來幸福就不再是靠人力能追求的目標了，這顯然與我們試圖探尋的幸福不符。因此，人的幸福與環境、命運的關係在亞里士多德的幸福體系中產生了難以調和的矛盾。

當亞里士多德的理論遇到困境時，莊子的幸福觀卻恰可以很好的包容這個問題<sup>10</sup>。對於如何獲得幸福，莊子的理論很簡單——體認天

7 亞里士多德指出，道德德性就是適度，這種適度有兩個含義：1. 它是兩種惡（過度與不及）的中間；2. 它的目的是選取感情與實踐中適度的那個。（1109a20–25）

8 亞里士多德列舉的具體道德德性有：勇敢、節制、慷慨、大方、大度、對待小榮譽的德性、溫和、友善、誠實、機智、羞恥、公正。（詳見第三卷第6–11章、第四卷、第五卷）

9 善被分為三種：外在的善、身體的善、靈魂的善（1098b10–15）。外在善指人自身之外的善。

10 《莊子》中的人物「支離疏」雖然四肢錯位、「五管在上」，但可以悠然自得地享受天年（〈人間世〉；孫通海 88）；「闔跂支離無脛」的遊說者贏得衛靈公的欣賞（〈德充符〉；孫通海 110）；衛國的「哀駘它」相貌奇醜，可婦人願意做他的妻妾，國君願意封他為宰相（〈德充符〉；孫通海 103–104）。可見莊子的幸福與命運、外在條件之間沒有任何矛盾。

道。因為得道的人不受外物的影響、懂得如何養生避害<sup>11</sup>，因此可以達到悅生樂死的境地；同時得道的人能夠消融自我體會到人與自然萬物的相通（陳寧寧等 49），從而獲得逍遙的精神狀態。

體認天道的具體過程可分為三個階段（62）。首先是「齊物、論」，即認識到世間萬物差別的相對性，破除人的成見看透萬物的本質，具體而言就是以相對的眼光看待世界，包容是非之別，以及看淡生死變化<sup>12</sup>；之後是「心齋坐忘」，這是認識到萬物齊一之後，停止向外探求並反身於內心，通過拋棄智慧和意識來體察與宇宙之道相通的存在<sup>13</sup>——換言之就是通過冥想、內省的方法擺脫瑣碎思慮的困擾進而獲得質樸純真的內心；最後是「逍遙遊」，意指人在達到「同於大通」的境界後能順從天然的本性，善待自己的身心，並且安時處順、無憂無慮地生活。

可以看出，莊子獲得幸福的方法主要是向內心探求、看淡外在環境的變化，因此對外物基本沒有任何要求，自然也就不會出現亞里士多德遇到的問題；但莊子的幸福體系也有局限性。莊子主張放棄與外界世界抗爭，向內心世界回歸，然而這樣的幸福觀可能會促成逃避現實的思想，對個人生命可能有利，但對民族的進化和文明的發展卻可能構成阻力（臧文 3）。

11 「知道者必達于理，達于理者必明于權，明于權者不以物害己。至德者，火弗能熱，水弗能溺，寒暑弗能害，禽獸弗能賊。非謂其薄之也，言察乎安危，寧于禍福，謹于去就，莫之能害也。」（《秋水》；孫通海 257）這段話說明瞭解道的人可以依順萬物的變化規律行事，因此可以避開世間一切傷害。

12 這部分內容集中在《齊物論》：1. 以相對的眼光看待世界：「天下莫大于秋豪之末，而大山為小；莫壽于殤子，而彭祖為夭。天地與我并生，而萬物與我為一。」（《齊物論》；孫通海 39）；2. 包容是非之別：「是以聖人和之以是非，而休乎天鈞，是之謂兩行。」（《齊物論》；孫通海 35）；3. 看淡生死變化：「予惡乎知說生之非惑邪！予惡乎知惡死之非弱喪而不知歸者邪！」（《齊物論》；孫通海 46）

13 心齋：「若一志，無聽之以耳，而聽之以心；無聽之以心，而聽之以氣。聽止于耳，心止于符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛。虛者，心齋也。」（《人間世》；孫通海 72）；坐忘：「墮肢體，黜聰明，離形去知，同于大通，此謂坐忘。」（《大宗師》；孫通海 143）二者皆是向內探尋，拋棄感官智慧的過程。

#### 四、結語

同樣是追求幸福，亞里士多德與莊子採用了截然不同的思路。亞里士多德從一般常識和普遍的價值觀入手<sup>14</sup>，通過邏輯分析，推導出在具備一定的外在條件時，人應該從事甚麼活動來獲得幸福；而莊子則以一種全新的世界觀改變人看待世界的方式，使人能夠免受外界的影響，獲得精神上的自由解脫。簡言之，亞里士多德關注如何做，莊子則偏重如何想；亞里士多德考慮如何實踐幸福，莊子則思考如何遠離痛苦。

這樣的差異根源於二人所處的社會環境。亞里士多德生於貴族家庭，成長於民主自由的古希臘城邦。因此，其理論中「生活常識」與「流行觀點」很大程度上也是與他處境相似的人的觀點，所以亞里士多德的幸福實為有物質基礎與安定生活的人追求的幸福，自然更偏重實踐；而莊子身處戰國末期，生活在血流漂櫓的戰亂之中，治理國家的是「昏上亂相」<sup>15</sup>，人能做到的不過免於災禍刑罰<sup>16</sup>，所以莊子的幸福實是社會動盪身不由己之人的幸福，必然更側重調整心態、思考現實。

本質上，《尼各馬可倫理學》與《莊子》都是人類追求美好生活的嘗試，只不過它們誕生於不同的社會背景，適用於不同的生活處境。當我們處在不同人生境遇中時，不妨辯證地汲取兩者的智慧，找到適合自身的理想生活。

14 亞里士多德經常使用「普遍看法」引出討論或印證結論，例如第一卷第5章分析常見的生活目標，第一卷第8章用常人對幸福的「一般觀點」對屬人善進行辯護，第七卷第11章、第十卷1-5章討論人對快樂的「一般意見」。

15 「今處昏上亂相之間而欲無憊，奚可得邪？此比干之見剖心，征也夫！」（〈山木〉；孫通海 288）

16 「天下有道，聖人成焉；天下無道，聖人生焉。方今之時，僅免刑焉！」（〈人間世〉；孫通海 90）

## 徵引書目

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## 老師短評

何為幸福？如何獲得幸福？行色匆匆的世間，這是人類咸能靜思的生命問題。然而，人類卻又在不自覺中汲汲尋覓幸福的蹤跡。在研讀《尼各馬可倫理學》與《莊子》之後，宇軒同學穿越了亞里士多德與莊子兩位古哲人所觀照，經驗與精神兩個層面的幸福觀。於《尼各馬可倫理學》部分，宇軒精確分析亞里士多德的「至善」乃是幸福美滿的人生，乃人類靈魂中最高的理性活動。於《莊子》部分，他藉由莊子精妙的譬喻，瑰麗的文句領悟出「幸福」乃是能「悅生樂死」，超越生命限制的「逍遙」。全文文章，結構嚴謹，分析細膩，字裏行間流露出作者深思過的生命問題。（高育民）

# 去留肝膽兩崑崙

李尚隆  
善衡書院 法律學

## 隔世金環彈指過<sup>1</sup>

菜市口人聲鼎沸，黑壓壓的。

朔風突如其來刮過，撲到臉上時竟是滾燙的，驚飛了巢中雀。彤雲仿佛要下墜，天光像被鎖在囚籠裏，透出一兩縷盡數折映在刀口上。

今天要死人。

「各國變法，無不從流血而成。今中國未聞有因變法而流血者，此國之所以不昌！」木築高臺上，青年披散着頭髮，眸中卻始終煥亮着凜然與希冀。劊子手雙眼微眯成線，也許記不清這一年砍下的頭顱夠不夠填滿家門口的小池塘。

「有之，請自嗣同始！」

刀上寒光被透出一星半點太陽光射到台下百姓的眼裏，卻沒人遮掩，心死了眼裏就透不進一點光。半大的孩子邊笑邊指着，嘲弄他的辮子未曾梳好，大人狠狠拍了拍孩子的腦袋，千人擁堵的菜市口噤若寒蟬。

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<sup>1</sup> 摘自譚嗣同，《似曾》。

他突然想起啟超說的「少年自由則國自由」，可看見那孩子時眼裏不免有些黯淡。透出的那一點點陽光被雲遮住了，隔絕星月銀河，也隔絕了全中國的自由。

「吾有一言！」他忿然。

但刀落下了，頭顱落地。

青年叫譚嗣同。

## 不信籠中假自由

我總不免在談起自由時想起譚嗣同，為自由執炬者卻再也沒能見到他想見到的光明，即使一百年後的我也未曾得見。

而關乎他對自由的理解，與其他先賢似也大相徑庭。

今古千年未有一朝不談自由，但多數人皆是在亂世中為求安定而構築的假自由，我願稱之為「籠中自由」。籠中自由是頗具民族概念的一種假自由形式，在華夏古代的無數先賢口中仿佛是自由的最終境界，以個人自由的犧牲換取社會秩序的井然。可這樣的境界，從來不曾為任何一個人爭取到自由。

而譚公，恰是古往今來為真自由衝破牢籠點燃炬火的第一人。

1865年他出生在一個儒學未泯、綱常縛身的帝國，可他卻言「佛生最先，孔次之」（譚嗣同 44），對孔丘的籠中自由不敢苟同。也許有人認為，孔丘之言「七十而從心所欲，不逾矩」（2.4）乃千年前對個人自由的最佳詮釋，實則不然。於孔丘而言，他眼裏的最高境界並非「從心所欲」，而恰恰是「不逾矩」——「道之以德，齊之以禮。」

（2.3）孔丘眼裏，所有從心所欲之自由都脫不開社會禮德的桎梏牢籠：束縛自己、放棄自己的個人自由，去成全一整個社會的「溫、良、恭、儉、讓」（1.10），最終的目的並不是為個體創造自由，而只

是把個體的自由鎖在籠中，以規則冠名來鎮壓抗爭、使社會達成「大治」，只達成統治者一個人的從心所欲。

若自由是把黎民置身綱常之後再妄談從心所欲，是把一國的宏圖大志凌駕於眾生之天賦人權，那孔丘之言如今究竟扼殺多少自由之思、究竟逼着多少人面對克己復禮的歷史倒車時無奈歎一聲「請事斯語」？<sup>2</sup>

如此籠中自由觀被深深烙在大清遺民心臟深處的年代，又怎能不令譚嗣同痛心疾首？若居之無倦只是為了行之以忠<sup>3</sup>，而不是為了天下黎民能以自由之身立世，那麼會有多少人活成行屍走肉，為這座了無生機的帝國陪葬？

這囚籠中的自由，譚嗣同寧可不要。

## 乘物遊心我之命

時務學堂來的學生總是不多，興許是不敢。

維新思潮一浪一浪地轟擊着湘城腐朽的鐵柵欄，湖南頓成了大清最富活力的一片土地。可譚嗣同之語好似又超出了維新思潮那麼幾寸，令不少學子望而卻步，總覺得譚公走得急了些。

倒也是這麼回事。

1897年，他著罷《仁學》一書，書中談仁卻與傳統儒學不同。他談及：「初當衝決利祿之網羅，次衝決俗學若考據、若詞章之網羅，次衝決全球群學之網羅，次衝決君主之網羅，次衝決倫常之網羅，次衝決天之網羅，次衝決全球群教之網羅，終將衝決佛法之網羅！」（3）

2 原文：「克己復禮為仁」（12.1）、「回雖不敏，請事斯語矣」（12.1）。

3 原文：「居之無倦，行之以忠」（12.14）。

瞧瞧這瘋子。

這世界但凡有點兒甚麼網羅，他要衝個遍了，這與時人頗有不似。若前朝王夫之、黃宗羲、顧炎武者，今則康有為等輩，衝決利祿俗學尚可，若說起衝決君主綱常、天之網羅，無不閉口噤聲，終究只是在求個「集體自由」。

我所認為的自由應有兩類：集體自由與個人自由。二者誠然皆是與籠中自由相對立的真自由，然古代賢達常只注重前者。黃宗羲於《明夷待訪錄》中雖大談君乃天下大害<sup>4</sup>，卻未敢言及廢君立憲之方策；雖言及「貴不在朝廷，賤不在草莽」<sup>5</sup>，卻未能根除侵犯自由的等級倫常，終究仍是上溯三代之法<sup>6</sup>的局限思維。這尚能理解，畢竟梨洲之年代固困於封建窠臼，對自由的理解終究限制在集體上，未能深入至個人的自由，觀之康梁等輩，不外如是。

集體自由在譚公的時代多被理解作救亡圖存的鑰匙，以國家集體的自由作為民主共和的基礎。本質上說，那時的集體自由更多是為了喚醒整個中國的仁人志士，來完成強國以求得共同自由的手段。這與盧梭《社會契約論》中個人權利的讓渡<sup>7</sup>有一定程度的相似，人類沒有別的辦法可以自存，除非是集合起來形成一種力量的總和才能夠克服阻力（155）。然而，時人常忽略盧梭在此言之後的進一步論述：「每一個與全體相聯合的個人又只不過是在服從自己人，並且仍然像以往一樣地自由。」<sup>8</sup>顯然，盧梭之語並不僅僅強調集體自由，個人自由才是社會契約的本質目的；當今世界，極權政府把集體自由主義奉為圭臬，這與千年前孔丘對自由的曲解又有何異？而這不就是個人自由觀並未在人們心中扎根的表現嗎？

4 原文：「為天下之大害者，君而已矣。」（〈原君〉；黃宗羲32）

5 原文：「貴不在朝廷也，賤不在草莽也。」（〈原法〉；黃宗羲 36）

6 原文：「三代以上有法，三代以下無法。」（〈原法〉；黃宗羲 36）

7 原文：「每個結合者及其自身的一切權利全部都轉讓給整個的集體。」（156）

8 觀點源自盧梭：「這就是社會契約所要解決的根本問題。」（156）



故人民需要譚公，需要那一聲對個人自由的喊。

1897年，他在時務學堂完成了《仁學》，痛斥綱常對個人的束縛，其情感張力可謂前無古人。他追求的不僅僅是集體自由強國的思潮，更是每一個中國人從酣夢與疲弱中醒來，為盧梭所說的「天賦人權」付諸行動，去追求國家集體之外的、屬於自己的那一份自由。

聽起來更像莊子不是嗎？乘天地正禦六氣辯的無所待<sup>9</sup>，也許是譚公心底最想要的自由。可他終究只是個普通人，在無可救藥的封建之末，一個願為衝決封建網羅、追尋自由付出生命的青年，最終還是護着光緒走向了末路，坦然赴死。

可也許死亡對他來說，才是屬於他的「天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一」（《莊子·齊物論》；陳鼓應 219）呢？

可也許他看見三十一年後趙家樓前為自由發出喊的孩子時<sup>10</sup>，也會欣然一笑呢？

## 去留肝膽兩崑崙<sup>11</sup>

「我不走。」他眼裏還是那份凜然與希冀。

梁啟超的拇指尖把食指攥出了血。

「留一條命，將來能為民主自由做更多。」梁啟超想最後勸一句。

「留了命還能做更多嗎？」他把盞中杜康一飲而盡，大笑。

「他們不是不懂，他們只是睡着了。」他走向梁啟超，輕輕擁抱。

「我不能逃，我得叫醒他們。」

9 原文：「若夫乘天地之正，而禦六氣之辯，以遊無窮者，彼且惡乎待哉！」（《莊子·逍遙遊》；陳鼓應 210）

10 指五四運動中的青年。

11 摘自譚嗣同，《獄中絕筆》。

「一死而已！」

譚嗣同沒走。

因為他知道，他一個人的命若能點燃往後千年自由的炬火，讓此後蒼生能看見自由的光，他便永不畏懼。因為他知道對他來說，人生而自由，枷鎖卻只能源於人民<sup>12</sup>。

他知道，此後如竟沒有炬火，他便是唯一的光<sup>13</sup>。

「我自橫刀向天笑！」

去留肝膽，兩崑崙。

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## 老師短評

李尚隆同學的這篇〈去留肝膽兩崑崙〉，借晚清戊戌變法的歷史處境，運用文本討論了個人自由與集體自由的議題。李同學在自己設計的語境中，將孔子、黃宗羲、盧梭和莊子的思想穿插在文中，在集中討論問題本身之餘，也體現了自由這一問題的不同面向。文筆生動、流暢。

文章對自由的嚮往，精妙地在慷慨激昂和悲涼無奈之間取得了平衡。（高莘）



# **A Summer of Freedom's Night Dream: A Reflection on Suffering in Hong Kong's 2019 Pro-democracy Movement**

**HO Yin Lam**  
**Biomedical Sciences, Chung Chi College**

Every muscle feels sore, and joints leach pain every step I take. Slapped my hand on the doorknob and entered my bedroom nearly at the crack of dawn after a dismal long day out. Not able to think anymore, I collapsed on the bed and fell asleep.

I cried.

I looked around the room,

Walls covered in an unrealistic shade of white.

Your crying face projected onto and

Flickered around the room's chalky walls.

The image of

Pale, thin plastic tie

Around your wrists, held against will,

Tears running down your face and

Your gas mask.

Why have you fallen?

I cannot remember clearly.

Nor can this city give you an answer.

I stood for you,

I tried my best to protect you, and failed,

From those who only bring suffering.

Is there nothing I can do

To break this destiny?

There was nothing in the room, yet irregular shadows span across its cold walls. An old Chinese man and a man in a distressed Ancient Greek robe opened a door and came in. Was there a door in the room anyway? I was never aware of it. They stared at me for a while and said in sync, breaking the awkward silence, “It’s destiny.”

The music of the people is

Air breathing through

Humanity’s handcrafted bamboo pipes.

The music of the land is

Wind crashing through nature,

the Earth’s millions of cracks and holes.<sup>1</sup>

The music of the heavens is

The same wind. But

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrase of “地籟則眾竅是已，人籟則比竹是已。”(陳鼓應 98)

Flowing through existence,  
Passing through each and every specific  
Hollow trunk, Jagged channel, Grainy rock  
Making each and every specific sound.<sup>2</sup>  
Designated? Just the way it is.

Suffering cannot be avoided.  
These things will come,  
Even when muffled in silence.<sup>3</sup>  
The murderer of Laius,  
Has been here all along.<sup>4</sup>

If this was destiny all along, then there must be no way to defy it. Being born into this society, at this time of all times, many are granted a duty and purpose. Yet, the consequences of carrying through one's belief are unavoidable. "I understand ... but", I murmured to myself. Losing your loved ones and even people you never knew ... is agonizing. The Chinese man seemed to feel my thoughts and looked towards me. He separated his lips and words flew out of his mouth, "Are you in pain?"

You are a fish. Just like your friend.  
A fish like everyone in this city,  
Swimming through the white mass of  
Smoke and terror.

2 Paraphrase of “吹萬不同，而使其自己也，咸其自取，怒者其誰邪！” (98)

3 Paraphrase from Sophocles (341).

4 Paraphrase from Sophocles (450–451).

In the Northern seas, so distant  
 You will never know about.  
 There are fish as well. But  
 Not even your city's skyscrapers can compare,  
 Size up to many thousand kilometres.  
 And occasionally they fly,  
 Gigantic fins morph into wings.<sup>5</sup>

When a fish swims in the big sea,  
 Pushes forth a small white fringe, at most;  
 When the terrifying Northern fish swims,  
 Tornadoes break through the landscape.<sup>6</sup>  
 Sweeping away tight knit families,  
 Unidentified bodies,  
 And scars an entire generation.

When you can see the Northern fish,  
 What is a fish to you?

I'm stunned by pain, thinking of the suffering of our generation, and generations in the past, and generations coming. Is my loss of one friend incompatible, compared to the many more losses? If I were examining society with a bird's eye view, maybe yes. But to consider one's personal pain and emotion, no. One friend lost, can be followed by two, three,

5 Paraphrase of “北冥有魚，其名為鯤。鯤之大，不知其幾千里也。化而為鳥，其名為鵬。”(陳鼓應 91)

6 Paraphrase of “水擊三千里，搏扶搖而上者九萬里。”(91)



eventually millions more lost. This cannot be the solution to suffering. The heights of knowledge can allow us to view events differently, and understand better why certain events happen, but should never be used to cover up pain. Suffering is not a tangible matter, able to be compared and cancelled out for its insignificance. That was when the Greek men turned to me, exposing the two pools of blood, replacing what should have been two eyeballs, in his eye sockets.<sup>7</sup> Terrifying, but I looked at him sternly as he started to talk.

For the ill-fated ones,  
Fate will leap no matter what,  
from the furthest peaks:  
Ones out of your wildest imaginations  
And your broadest knowledge.  
Just to push and shove and force you  
Into the deepest depths of ill-fortune.<sup>8</sup>

“Tragedy cannot be avoided and will occur no matter how it is avoided.” He said. The city’s citizens could and have migrated and left. Some convinced themselves of a new identity; some returned, hoping for the best. But the tangled curse laid in the city’s past will only persist. Standard for pain cannot be lowered further and further every time faced by adversity. The deep depths of ill-fortune is well-preserved, regardless of how many times pain is dismissed.

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7 Idea of appearance of Greek man is referenced to how Oedipus gouged his eyes out with Jocasta’s golden brooch. (Sophocles 1265–1270)

8 Paraphrase from Sophocles (1300–1302).

Facing the undeniable truth of pain, is there anything we can benefit from it? I questioned myself, and the two men in front of me. The Chinese man paused a bit to think, while brushing his stereotypical ash grey goatee softly. He then said calmly, “One must detach from suffering.”

It takes everything to become a saint.  
 Forget about yourself,<sup>9</sup>  
 All the happiness, sadness, anger and needs.  
 Desires chains you down  
 As you drown in emotions,  
 Unable to struggle through the mud.  
 True liberated spiritual freedom  
 Comes separated,  
 from all concepts and matter in the world.

It takes everything to become a saint.  
 Build up your knowledge like a mountain,  
 Better than the foolish little birds<sup>10</sup>  
 Laughing at the grand vulture,  
 So you never become them.  
 And shield yourself from suffering,  
 By learning and seeing the worse monster,  
 If the Northern fish ever attacks.

9 Paraphrase of and an extended idea of “至人無己，神人無功，聖人無名。”(陳鼓應 94)

10 Paraphrase of and an extended idea from “斥鴳笑之曰：「彼且奚適也？我騰躍而上，不過數仞而下，翱翔蓬蒿之間，此亦飛之至也。而彼且奚適也？」”(93)

“The tragic events in destiny cannot be changed but we can change the perspective we view it with to minimize suffering. Therefore, the more perspectives we gain, the more freedom we have.” He said as his goatee is finally arranged to his liking. Letting his words sink in, I realized the core of his ideology was based on emotional detachment. I cannot picture what being human is without emotions, even if that is harmful or not constructive to ourselves. “On the basis of not segregating emotion, more suffering can occur in the search of knowledge and truth.” Said the Greek man.

Whatever may come, let it burst forth!<sup>11</sup>

Suffering is a heavy tuition to be paid

In the lesson of chasing self-will.

Call me with all the slurs you'd like,

But at least it was the truth.

Flushed away and torn, but satisfied,

As I try to swim against the current of destiny.

“What is the value of suffering to me? What is freedom as well?”, my brain is swollen and aching as these questions drilled through my consciousness. Is freedom the ability to see though pain in facing misery or is it the ability to seek the wanted but cold, hard truth, despite any painful consequence? Seeing their two perspectives on suffering, you can see how much variation there is to this question. It can be thought as a harmful thing to be avoided, or the matter-of-fact price to pay for one's destiny defying will. As I was reasoning out this question, they both turned to me and asked,

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<sup>11</sup> Sophocles (1076).

“You never knew why your friend was arrested though, did you? If the truth will scar you, will you ever want to know?”

They exited the room for a brief while as I closed my eyes and thought. Will I be able to face whatever the truth it is, behind the pain of losing a friend, and their pain losing a future and freedom. The consequences are dire.

The men entered the room with an old-fashioned black-white television, handed me a remote, and left the room again. Probably will not return.

I was given a choice.

To be protected by ignorance,

Or crash into the painful catastrophe

Brilliantly scripted by fate,

But be able to find the truth.

What is freedom?

Assuredly, I pressed the tiny triangle  
on the remote. Play.

Free to run away

From the green and blue,

Clothed demons.

I was beaten by black batons

With red streaks all over my body.

I touch my dried wounds.

Ouch.

Her yellow helmet and pink gas mask

Turned back to face the camera.  
Crashing through the violent crowd.  
Shoving everyone off me.  
Took my place, active but involuntarily.

I cried. Again.  
Feeling like the most painful pain.  
A thousand bullets penetrating and fracturing,  
Every muscle, bone and nerve.  
A million tear gas canisters,  
Exploding inside my head.

Yet, the only thing I would want is revenge.  
Or the motivation to go on, some may say alternatively.  
Not to drown in sorrow and gouge my eyes out,  
Not to seek the opposite of suffering.  
As I take better care of myself and my emotions,  
The motivation to commit further shall be fostered.  
Not giving mercy to the enemies but  
Thankful to all sufferings endured,  
For it pushes one to persist.

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### **Teacher's comment:**

HO's story shows a deep and passionate reflection on current conditions of this city. She introduced two contrasting perspectives on suffering, to see whether it is a harmful thing that should be and can be avoided (Zhuangzi), or the price the will against destiny should pay (Sophocles). Surprisingly, the story ends with a martyr spirit that goes beyond the Stoic spirit of Zhuangzi and Sisyphusian heroism of Oedipus. Between spiritual detachment and passive heroism, the protagonist in the story chose to fight and revenge, not out of the will blinded by fear, but out of love and clear-vision of life and suffering. (CHENG Wai Pang Damian)

# **An Open Letter to Anand Giridharadas: A World of Equal Cooperation and Appreciation of Collective Effort**

**BAE Seung Mann  
Laws, Morningside College**

Dear Mr. Giridharadas,

After listening to the podcast “When the Market Is Our Only Language”, your ideas inspired me to explore the question of “how to live together.” Therefore, in this open letter, I aim to propose an informed vision of how we, as a society, can live together in our world today. Ultimately, after engaging with the respective ideas of Marx and Hanh, I believe that the exercise of equal cooperation and greater appreciation towards collective effort best advances our world closer to achieve the ideal of being able to genuinely live together.

To be coherent, I will first contextualize the discussion in relation to the money-driven individualistic world we live in today. Subsequently, I will consider the idea of a need to have an operation of equal cooperation rather than an operation of unequal exploitation. Lastly, I will examine the idea of needing society to better appreciate the value of collective effort as opposed to idolizing individual strength.

## Contextualization of the World Today

In order to comprehensively explore the question of “how to live together,” it is first crucial to situate this issue to the world we live in today. As presently constituted, our modern society is a materialistic money-driven world where people are becoming more individualistic. In such a world therefore, there has been the popularization, prioritization, and normative acceptance of a money-driven consequentialist attitude of society. In other words, it can be said that principled thinking is now dead. Not surprisingly, like you mentioned in the podcast, “when it [money as the focus] becomes the only way of thinking about the right thing to do” (Tippett), there are some major resulting defects that hinder the goal of cohabitation amongst members of society. Such divisive problems will be considered alongside the ideas of possible solutions derived from the two thinkers of Marx and Hanh.

## A World that Works Equally

In the “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” Marx can be said to provide a “negative definition” of how we can live together. To clarify what I mean by a “negative definition,” the text suggests to us “what not to do” if we are to live together as opposed to a “positive definition” that suggests to us “what to do” if we are to live together. Specifically, the idea of “estrangement of man from man” (Marx 196) illustrates a depiction of society that we must avoid. Here, through the concept of “estrangement,” Marx demonstrates how the workers (i.e. proletariats) are treated as “objects” for the sole betterment of the capitalists (i.e. bourgeoisies). With the labor



of workers becoming “an ever cheaper commodity . . . the devaluation of the human world grows . . . [which] produces itself and the workers as a commodity” (190–191). It is evident that there is a clear emphasis on the conception of the workers as an inferior commodity, a tool, a material, rather than as equal human beings. Furthermore, because the workers are a commodity of labor for the capitalists that control the “objectification of labor,” the workers are fundamentally subjected “under the rule, coercion, and yoke of another man” (198). The tone and mood of Marx’s words that demonstrate the distressing state of the workers during mid-19th century Europe, provokes a vivid sense of oppression that was being perpetrated at the time. As such, Marx provides us with the idea that if we are to genuinely live together, we must avoid the action of exploiting certain people for our own wellbeing by conceiving them as inferior tools or commodities.

From this analysis, we can understand that even in our current 21st century society, Marx’s negative definition still bears truth to expose the fact that we are not genuinely living together. Due to our society adopting an economic consequentialist attitude, in the specific context of an employer-employee relationship, there is a tendency for employers to conceive their employees as mere tools because adhering to a cold and rigid consequentialist mindset offers more economic benefits than adhering to a warm and flexible principled mindset. Such a phenomenon could explain the unreasonable treatment that fellow humans inflict on one another in this specific context. For example, though not always the case, the main reason why an employer fires his/her employee is because that employee’s “output” is not as efficient as it once was or because it can be replaced with different personnel that has an “upgraded skill-set.” In more crude terms, that employee is seen merely as an old rusty tool that needs replacing.

Crucially, Hanh's commentary on "The Way of Understanding" in the *Heart Sutra* provides an important insight as to the grim consequence of indifference to those humans perceived as mere tools. If we want to "really" understand each other, Hanh states that we must "feel their feelings, suffer their suffering, and rejoice in their joy" (123). However, using the above employer-employee context, this is predicated on the fact that the employer actually views his/her employee as a fellow equal human. In the instance where the employer assumes his/her employee merely as a tool for his/her own benefit, the employer cannot embark on Hanh's method of understanding and the employee should not embark on expecting such a hopeful act of empathy. How can an inorganic object have a feeling, suffering, or joy for another human to feel, suffer, and rejoice in? It is impossible. As such, it is reasonable to deduce that once conceived as an inorganic, inanimate tool for the purpose of exploitation, it would be unrealistic to expect improved treatment over time. Only the grim future of exacerbated indifference and callousness awaits these unfortunate exploited people.

Therefore, before any further analysis, it appears that we fail to live together in two different senses. In one sense, we fail to live together since we exploit other fellow humans as a commodity for our personal gain. This being the case, in another sense, we fail to live together because we fundamentally lack compassion and become indifferent to those humans conceived as a commodity.

Accordingly, by engaging with both Marx and Hanh's thoughts, we can derive the idea of a need to have "equal cooperation" to remedy the issue of unequal exploitation and better live together in our world today. By treating people as a commodity, the production of their labor "stands opposed to [them] as something alien" (Marx 191). Consequently, these people become "disconnected" to their work. Thus, what we must do is to

make these workers become “connected” to their work, make their labor as something “part of them and not alien to them.” Here is where the idea of equal cooperation can be derived. The definition of cooperation is to work together “for the same end.” So, the aim and outcome of labor is not to solely benefit an exclusive few, implying that the laborers are exploited, but rather the labor depends upon an equal relationship and agreement of collaboration as fellow respective humans for the benefit of all people that contribute to the work. In this sense, even when the employer directs the employee on what to do, this is not an act directed with the intention of exploitation but rather an act directed to genuinely advance towards the same shared goal. Hence, when we work in cooperation we stop seeing these other people as tools to achieve our own objective and instead see these other people as fellow absolutely necessary companions striving to achieve the same objective.

An interesting implication of this idea could be hypothesized in the context of a company’s hiring process. Normally, there is much weight given to the criteria of an applicant’s GPA because it can be “mis-applied” to indicate how much of a “useful tool” he or she can be to the operation of “my” business. However, now, when companies aim for equal cooperation, the criteria of the applicant’s personal goals, personal ambitions, or personal philosophy may be given the most weight during the hiring process in order to discover an employee who best coincides with what “we” as a company aim to achieve.

## **A World that Appreciates Collective Effort**

Alongside the idea of equal cooperation, the idea of appreciating collective effort allows us to have a more nuanced and holistic vision of

“how to live together.” Another problem of today’s world is that because we are a money-driven society that emphasizes the idea of personal property and personal wealth, our society has become much more individualistic. As such, individual success stories receive the most media attention and are then preached to the mass. For example, in countless of movies and documentaries Steve Jobs is solely credited as the man behind Apple’s revolutionary success story when in reality it was through the help of others, such as Steve Wozniak or Chris Espinosa, that Jobs was even able to launch Apple in the first place. The problem of this phenomenon in relation to the discussion at hand, is that we fail to better “live together” because we come to idolize individual strength as opposed collective cooperation, which encourages for a more self-centered and ego-centric society to be nurtured.

The consequence of such a phenomenon can be linked back to Marx’s concept of estrangement. When we as a society become more self-centered and ego-centric, this, in turn, further undermines our goal to live together because we come to not appreciate the help of others, or, in the worst-case scenario, we reject help because we think that the notion of “help from others” is a sign of weakness. In such a world therefore, the idea of team-work and collaboration will be sneered upon. Here, like the workers estranged from their own labor, those “role-playing” people who help within a team, will likely be estranged of their contribution to the project if not appreciated and disdained upon.

Accordingly, the concept of “emptiness” and “interbeing” within the *Heart Sutra* directly confronts the mistaken belief to credit our inherent “selves,” and instead encourages us to appreciate the not-so-obvious collective effort “behind the surface.” The idea of “emptiness” will inform us that it is deluded to think that there is a “self” that we can glorify to

explain our privilege or despair. Hanh states that “[n]o matter how wonderful something is, when we look deeply into it, we see that there is nothing in it we can identify as a separate self” (121), rather we are simply constituted through the five skandhas that are subject to the influence of the environment that surrounds us. Instead, what really explains our current “state of affairs” can be better understood through the concept of “interbeing.” Hanh states that “to be is to inter-be” (119). Here, the idea is that “things” are not “absolute,” but is formed through a process of being necessarily interdependent of various factors. Therefore, like Hanh’s example of seeing the logger, the mill, the wheat, the logger’s parents and so on “behind the sheet of paper” (119), when we see an individual’s success, we can see for example, his/her co-workers that help his/her professional life, we see the company that provides the resources for his/her project, we see his/her family members that support him/her and so on. Hence, it is not the individual that should be idolized, but rather the background people that had made this individual’s success possible that should be in the spotlight.

In turn, by appreciating collective effort, we can better live together within our world today. The rejection of individualistic success to emphasize and encourage a collective form of success conveys the message that we cannot achieve anything substantial without the cooperation with others. After such a reflection, we become less egocentric, more modest, and come to the understanding that it is not “I,” but “We” that should be treasured.

### **Are We to Also be Blamed? Who Must Act?**

On a further note, Marx’s text implicitly suggests that these “exploited people” and “background people” are not complete victims without any fault. Though not explicit, when describing the idea of “estrangement

of man from man,” the tone and mood of the text not only critiques the capitalists for exploiting the workers, but also implicitly attacks these estranged workers for allowing themselves to be exploited, stating that “[j]ust as he creates his own production as a loss of reality, . . . , so he *creates* (emphasis added) the domination of the non-producer, . . . , just as he estranges from himself his own activity, so he *confers* (emphasis added) upon the stranger an activity which does not belong to him” (Marx 198). Thus, through the use of words such as “creates” or “confers” which suggests a degree of volition on the part of the workers, Marx insinuates that these exploited workers have their share of the blame. We can extract and apply this same perspective to the unappreciated and ignored “background people” of our world. Moreover, as the two specifically identified words suggest a degree of volition, Marx’s text could also be interpreted to provide a practical suggestion on how to materialize the ideas discussed above, namely, to stop creating or conferring the existing state of affairs and instead take our own affirmative action to change the narrative of society to operate under a scheme of equal cooperation and greater appreciation of collective effort. If we don’t do anything, then as Marx insinuates, nothing will change.

## Conclusion

The goal of this letter is not to provide a definite answer to this timeless question, but rather to provide some degree of treatment that can better advance our world one step closer to achieving this ideal. Therefore, by no means do I assert that the issues identified and remedies suggested above are absolute answers. Nevertheless, by engaging with the respective ideas

of both Marx and Hanh, I hope you can find merit in my informed vision of living together through equal cooperation rather than exploitation, and the appreciation of collective strength rather than individual strength.

Yours sincerely,

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**Teacher's comment:**

BAE's work presents a vision of what it means to live together. It is well informed by ideas from the past. It also shows sensitivity toward the present world, which he takes upon to analyze with a sense of urgency and conviction. The argument engages with established ideas in a detailed and nuanced manner. It is also well integrated in that each thinker sheds light on the other within the careful framing of the argument. BAE's voice comes through as he takes up a specific position, risking going against more well circulated ideas to make a case for social change. This civic-mindedness and sense of justice in re-defining the notion of success so that it is more inclusive and caring are thought provoking and inspiring in times of tribulation. (YEUNG Yang)



# **The Only Thing We Have to Fear is Fear Itself**

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On March 4, 1933, the newly elected president of the United States of America, Franklin D. Roosevelt has famously quoted in the very beginning of his speech: “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself” (Roosevelt). Roosevelt later proceeds to say: “nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” (Roosevelt) After the First World War, came the Great Depression, where there were banks became bankrupt and world economy collapsing and imploding into pieces. For them, for the US, “fear” was thought of the world collapsing with current economic crisis. However, in this currently tumbling situation, what Roosevelt is trying to offer to the people of the United States is hope, and the tables can be turned: It can be used towards their advantage to make “retreat” into “advance”, making fear turn on itself. This concept of fear varies in whatever situation that you are in. While fear can come in ways of worry, anxiety, phobias and concern, overarching in both various time periods and regions of this world, the explanation, interpretation, and the philosophy behind the concept of fear differentiates in many ways. Throughout the course of reading and perceiving the thoughts behind many

different philosophers, there are many ways fear is dealt with, specifically compared in the *Heart Sutra* and *The Bible*, two famous ancient texts that created the pillars of two of the biggest religions all around the globe. This essay deals with what each text and belief think about the concept of fear, from how different texts identify them, to how people who believe in those texts wrap their heads around the concept to overcome fear.

Among numerous Asian philosophy and their texts, one of them stands out most from many that places their focuses and prioritizes in the conditions of one's inner peace and happiness, is Buddhism's the *Heart Sutra*. With the *Heart Sutra* being the primary teachings of Buddha and his beliefs, it focuses on individuals being "empty" and achieving a certain point to where we are internally "peaceful" and how its "Final Goal of Buddhism" for all people to truly achieve *nirvana*, a transcendent state where there is no suffering, greed, nor sense of self, where one has nothing to fear about. The thing an individual must fear about, is well described in the 16th chapter of the *Heart Sutra*, "No Longer Afraid". The introduction of this chapter reads: "and because there are no more obstacles in their mind, they can overcome all fear, destroy all wrong perceptions, and realize Perfect Nirvana." (Hanh 176) Within this chapter, fear is explained as living the life with "wrong perceptions" that causes all the fear, anxiety and suffering. These "wrong perceptions" include: imagining what is impermanent is permanent, misinterpreting something that is causing us suffering for something that will bring us happiness, what is actually taking away our freedom is giving us freedom, and what is impure is pure. These four misconceptions of life are known to be creating the fear and the anxiety that is putting through our world into pain and fear, thus corrupting our lives. Just like how the *Bible* acknowledges Satan to be the axis of evil,

fear and anxiety in the *Heart Sutra*, the main axis of evil that is driving the people into inner corruption with fear, is the mindset of materialism, due to having the wrong point of view towards them. As the *Heart Sutra* explains, “the truth is that those with great power and wealth are the people with the greatest fear, jealousy, and anxiety.” (Hạnh 177). When the people with authorities and wealth hold power, they always tend to desire to hold onto those “values” and “privileges” they have for a very long time, while in the *Heart Sutra*, it is not a privilege but rather the primary reason of the phenomenon of being afraid. Those kinds of individuals with excessive monetary value and forceful authority are afraid to lose the possession which gives them in the delusion of thinking that “they are happy and safe”, whilst they are suffering and struggling to keep it by their dear side. According to the Buddhist value, the way to truly be happy, have no more fear, and to reach nirvana is to simply let go of those materialistic occupation of their position and possession. This point of fact is directly covered in the story of Bhaddiya, a monk who had been a state governor. In the text, it states: “During [a meditation Bhaddiya was in] he was so happy that he exclaimed, ‘Oh my happiness! Oh my happiness!’ Another monk . . . thought that [he] regretted having given up his status as governor.” (Hạnh 178) The reason why Bhaddiya was so happy is unlike his past, where he had had lots of power, guards, possessions and such that he was afraid to lose, now he “no longer ha[s] any of those things[,] even the title ‘governor’.” (Hạnh 178). He has clearly achieved the understanding of the point of his actions, that he was truly free, and that by doing such a simple action of letting go, he has overcome fear. The logic behind this text and teaching is that according to the *Heart Sutra*, you cannot simply overcome fear due to the actions which you are taking. What truly matters is understanding the reasoning

and the logic that you are taking behind the action. Not only you have to simply let go of the materials that you are holding in possession, but also the feelings, the reluctance to let go of them must also be conquered. Nirvana cannot be reached simply by showing off, but you also need to truly feel that you are reaching that stage. As the *Heart Sutra* claims, Nirvana isn't a "place you can go" (Hanh 179), but an "extinction" and "empty of separate self, empty of weightiness, empty of burden, [and] empty of boundary" (Lion's Roar Staff). Not only the extinction of the actions taken, but also the reasoning and logic behind. Anyone can let go of their title, their wealth, but it takes tremendous time of thinking, training and meditating in the mental, Buddhist way to truly let go of those and overcome the fear the *Heart Sutra* suggests us, just like Bhaddiya and his actions.

If Eastern philosophy provides the concept of overcoming fear in the *Heart Sutra*, then western philosophy provides explanation and the conception of fear in one of the best steady sellers in the world, the *Bible*. There is a song by a thrash metal group Metallica called *Fight Fire with Fire*. Just like an eye for an eye, according to the Bible and its teachings, fear from the Satan and the evil should be fought through the fear of God. According to *Huffpost*, "[t]he phrase 'fear not' is used at least 80 times in the Bible." (Kastner) However, the biggest "fear" that needs to be acknowledged in the Christianity is the "Fear of the Lord", where "God is to be feared because of who He is" (Riddlebarger), even though it does not necessarily mean to be afraid of God. It means to show "reverential fear [and awe] of the Lord," (Revival Ministries International) and respect to his wrath. It is a form of acknowledging for the Christians to show that God is great, greater than any being in the world. The "Fear of God" brings many benefits towards the believers, which starts with the blessing of fearing

God. According to the Proverbs, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov 1:7). God teaches to fear him, which is to have a “biblical fear of God, a wonderful thing, and a doorway to life and blessing” (Altrogge) for the believers. What the Christians believe in the sense of fear is that with Jesus has taken all the punishment of the people, when the people sin, God is not meant to punish them, but is meant to discipline them, let them acknowledge the fear of God and what he is capable of accomplishing. To the teachings of the *Bible*, to fear God means to live up to God’s glorious holiness, the exact opposite of sin and evil. It is to deeply respect and admire God that he loves us so much that he makes the believers turn away from fear and sin, through the fear of God, and the respect of his divine. This phenomenon makes us repel from the real evils and fears of Satan. The *Bible* is full of many different hardships to the people following the voices of God and is afraid of God. However, they are meant to make use of this fear, to stiffen their beliefs in Christ and to go through all the fears and the tests with horror and the sins Satan creates for them. According to the Psalms of the *Bible*: “In God I trust, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Psalm 56:11), the testimony of praising God grants the ability of him leading the correct way out of the evil fear, being the pillars of fire and clouds as God has granted Moses and his people out of the way from the fear and the wrath of the great Egyptian Empire. To the people, the “Lord is [their] rock, [their] fortress and [their] deliverer.” (Psalm 18:2). The fear of God makes him the divine hiding place, and a source of redemption of “limp[ing] through life riddled with fear and anxiety” (Kastner). For their concern, they will no longer be afraid of the opposing things against them. An eye for an eye, fear for a fear.

As in matters of psychology comes to mind, fear is obviously an inevitable emotion. There cannot be a life where no one is not afraid of a single object, nor have any kind of emotions that relates to situations such as being anxious or nervous. However, that does not make the emotion undefeatable. Both texts, the *Heart Sutra* and the *Bible*, strictly stick and are loyal to their philosophical beliefs in ways of overcoming a certain type of fear of their own. Although they may have their own differences in where the *Heart Sutra* has lots of inner mind situations to deal with, while there is a religious “one above all” being in the *Bible* that will guide them towards overcoming the hate; the fact that they are using themselves and their own willpower to overcome any kind of hardship and fear in their way does not change. Overcoming the fears that you face in life gets you unstuck in any kinds of situation and is certainly a material that will lead to fueling for your success and happiness. By trying to fight the fear of losing your desired values or strictly by believing in the fear of God, it will fight the fear itself and at the end, lead to happiness and spiritual emptiness and peace. After all, the only thing fear has to fear is fear itself.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

JEON attempts to show the commensurability between the *Heart Sutra* and the *Bible* through the notion of fear. What makes the article interesting is that he discusses that notion at a meta-level, that is, fear itself. As the

title suggests, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” This essay shows JEON’s deep understanding of fear that lies in ourselves rather than other objects. In reading his work we are told that the possible solution of fear also lies in self-determination that we either empty ourselves or devote ourselves to God, which reminds us the close relationship between happiness and our way of thinking. (LOWE Chun Yip)



# 莊子幸福嗎？

## 從亞里斯多德看莊子

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亞里斯多德（下稱亞）和莊子曾活於同一時代<sup>1</sup>，然而天各一方。亞處於古希臘，經歷帝國擴張及盛世，而莊子處於中國戰國時代，面對亂世。在截然不同的環境中，二人建立起各自的處世觀點及方式。亞認為人要良好地發揮理性，以獲得客觀及至善的幸福，達至美好人生；莊子則「無待」而「遊」，隨「道」而為，以使心境快樂，活出其理想的人生。由此可見，在相異背景下孕育出的兩套著名思想，皆有在為人處世和幸福人生的哲學上發展。兩者對處世的方式和人生的追求看似互不相干，但實際是否如此？本文將嘗試對照兩者，以探討一核心問題：在亞對幸福的客觀定義下，莊子的處世方式有為他達至幸福人生嗎？

### 幸福與理性

亞指出人的最終目的是幸福。亞認為人所進行的所有活動皆有其目的，而達至目的本身亦有其更高的目的，直至追溯到唯一的最

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<sup>1</sup> 莊子經考究約出生於公元前369年，亞出生於公元前384年；二人生平曾同時存在。

終目的，即至善。（*The Nicomachean Ethics* 1094a1–3）此至善為幸福（*eudaimonia/happiness*）（1095a17–19）。由此推導，莊子所有的身體行為及精神活動，即其完整的生活方式及態度，皆為達至幸福，而本文將以此概念為基礎作延伸，探討莊子之處世方式有否成功為其帶來幸福。

亞認為理性是達到幸福的客觀標準。亞指出一事物只要良好地行使自己的功能便可被客觀地稱為善的事物，故當人良好地行使自己的功能時，就會客觀地達到善，即幸福的人生（1097b23–27, 1098b8–12）。根據亞的功能論證，事物的功能為其本身獨有的特點和活動，而人的功能則為其本身獨有的「心靈依照理性原則活動」，因此人良好地進行發揮理性的生活方式便可達至幸福人生（Shields 378; *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a12–18）。當中，幸福有兩種程度：以理性達至美德（*arete/virtue*），即希臘文中的卓越（*arete/excellence*），可帶來次等的幸福；默觀（*theoria/contemplation*）可帶來最高的幸福，因默觀為發揮理智的最佳形式（Shields 404; *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1177a18–21, 1178a9; 黃藹 37）。以上亞對幸福之定義將於下文配合莊子的人生觀加以闡述。

## 「無待」與幸福

本部分將探討無待有否達致客觀幸福。莊子認為一切的是非判斷皆是相對，故曰：「物無非彼，物無非是」，活出一種無待的境界，即除去執於一家偏見的成心，使自己不執着於某一事物或觀點，隨時順着自然的規律而轉換適合的標準，以對應無窮的變化（陳鼓應 101–102）。在亞的概念下，莊子「無待」的狀態為達至客觀幸福的結構式手段，即「無待狀態」之（長時間）存在目的為達致客觀幸福（黃藹 47）。然而，莊子無待的個人本意並非直接為了達到亞定義的

客觀幸福，乃為使自己心靈不受外在環境影響，靈活採用適合標準，如察覺樗樹的「無用之用」，令心境快樂自在，可見莊子無待之目的為得到其主觀快樂（陳鼓應 97）。此亦可得知，莊子無待並非無所追求、不在意人生，而是以破除成心的處世境界追求心靈的幸福快樂，可謂「待於幸福」，而此為感知的、主觀的幸福。但若深入研究，可發現莊子以個人本意，透過無待帶來主觀幸福的同時，亦成功為其達至亞定義的客觀幸福。下文論述之「幸福」皆指「亞里斯多德定義的客觀幸福」。

無待是良好發揮理性的體現。莊子因察覺了是非萬物的相對性質而無待，曰：「彼出於是，是亦因彼。彼是方生之說也」（102）。此理念當中展現了莊子對世界的理性觀測，即其對「彼」和「此」互相依賴而存在的理解，以致其悟出泰山可以是小、彭祖可以是短命的相對觀念，為邏輯、理性的運用（105）。而且，無待本身須以理性思想判別適合的處世標準。莊子在應事接物時，要運用理性判斷出何等方式或準則最順應自然而不含成心，並隨時思辨自己有否執於某方，以靈活更改更合適的處世標準，當中的自我思辨及反省包含了相對概念的理性運用。莊子亦以「庖丁解牛」的故事比喻為人處世應如解牛般順應規律而行，每至困難複雜的地方便謹慎而為，而理性便體現於「如何下刀」的正確決定，即為人處世透過理性觀測及思考而作出謹慎及順應規律的抉擇，此亦為無待的理想結果（《莊子·養生主》）。可見莊子有發揮理性以達至無待。

無待以其理性達至美德，成就幸福人生。亞指出所有美德皆為「中庸」（*mesotes/mean*），中庸之道為生活處世的準則，其指人的所有行為及精神活動都應在「過」與「不及」兩極之間，代表為人處世要在極端之間表現出最合適、極致的行為和思想方式，此極緻為卓越，即美德（*The Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b13-16; 黃藿 74）。當中，要實踐美德，必須透過理性找到中庸（*The Nicomachean Ethics*

1106b18–1107a1)。此與上述無待中，透過理性找出最合適的處世準則之概念不約而同。而且，亞指出中庸是相對個人而言的（1106a29–30, 1106b20）。此符合莊子無待中，以其個人心靈的主觀快樂作為處世方式是否合適的標準。再者，亞所指的中庸並不是執着一點和固定不變的，而會依隨每件事的情況而有所調整，方可達到極緻（黃藹 87）。此正是無待的核心精神，即不執着於某一觀點，因應情況而適當調節應事接物的方式。結合以上，可見莊子的無待之心與亞的中庸之道不謀而合，兩者皆以理性靈活選擇最適合個人的處世方式，故莊子人生的行為及思想方式可謂中庸，即以理性達至美德，使其獲得亞定義的幸福。

### 「遊」、「道」與幸福

莊子以「遊」悟「道」，體現理性默觀，達至幸福。

遊有助默觀。莊子以遊處世，遊指其放開俗世的追求，隨風漂泊，以無待之心打量這個世界，體現精神的自由和逍遙，並從中悟道的過程（包兆會 84, 88, 89）。亞指出的默觀為對真理的理性思考，使能獲得最高的幸福，而進行默觀唯一需要的是閑暇（*skole/leisure*）（*The Nicomachean Ethics* 1177a18–21; 黃藹 181）。除生命必須的活動外，社會及政治的參與會剝奪進行默觀的閑暇，然而人若與群眾生活，必須進行這些活動，故不食人間煙火的生活最適合進行默觀（黃藹 188）。莊子之遊不待於俗世榮欲，其可見於莊子寧「曳尾於塗中」也不願為楚國當官（陳鼓應 136）。此無待而遊之舉為莊子帶來的精神自由和逍遙正為亞所指的一種遠離社會和政治之閑暇，使其具備進行默觀良好條件。

遊以悟道體現默觀，達至幸福。在遊的閑暇下，無待本身的相對概念激發莊子對萬物本然的理性思考，「照之於天」而得「道樞」方

可「應無窮」，理性觀照事物的本然及核心從而「悟道」，方可順自然之道以應萬變（102）。當中的道為萬物的本體基礎，即自然的真理，此道為必然，並沒有相對立的彼此，謂之「彼是莫得其偶」（鄧小明 119；陳鼓應 102）。同時，默觀中的真理也須是必然的（黃藹 166）。可見莊子之「悟道」與亞之「默觀」再次不約而同，兩者皆以理性思考世間必然的真理。故此，莊子在遊中得以閑暇，在閑暇中得以悟道，發揮理性體現默觀，達至亞定義的最高等幸福。

## 總結：莊子、亞里斯多德、幸福

從莊子的角度來看，他無待而遊，隨道而為，心境快樂，達至其主觀的幸福人生。對此，亞又會有何看法呢？即使生活在截然不同的背景，亞和莊子各自的著名思想在幸福人生的哲學上依然環環相扣，核心理念不謀而合：在亞對客觀幸福的定義下，莊子的無待之心能以理性達成中庸的美德，使其獲得次等的幸福，而遊助其發揮理性以悟道，體現默觀，使其獲得最高等的幸福。由此可得出結論——莊子的處世方式有為他達至亞里斯多德定義的客觀幸福人生。

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## 老師短評

在此文中，吳同學展現出對亞里士多德和莊子的深入理解。亞里士多德為希臘哲學的集大成者，以理性把握世間真理。莊子則是道家代表，但求以無待之心遨遊世間。二者的關係素來少人討論。吳同學獨具慧眼，看出二者在處世之道上的異曲同工。遊心於無窮，亦可助人默觀天下。這正是活用自己見解，促成經典之間對話的上佳例子。  
(王邦華)

# 與哲人同行：終極審判

吳穎芝  
崇基學院 歷史

人生匆匆數十載，許多人至死的一刻也找不到生存意義，甚至因一時鬱結而提早結束生命，只為生人留下一句「生而為人，對不起」。聽說彌留之際會有人生走馬燈在眼前晃過，若真可回顧一生，多少人會覺得自己的人生是幸福的呢？古希臘斯多葛學派認為人生活的意義就是為了追求幸福，惜三代以下有亂無治（《明夷待訪錄·題辭》），亂世只為人民帶來無盡的痛苦，但正是這些痛苦不斷與哲人的思想互相碰撞砥礪，才有各種絕望中的希望出現。生而為人，必有意義。

公元前286年，使者在關門前來回踱步，手中緊握着兩塊木牌。一塊刻着孔丘，一塊刻着莊周，但背後不約而同都有兩大紅字——貴人。終於，關門應聲而開，兩個老者徐徐走來。

瘦長的莊周：（向孔子作揖）不料生前無緣相見，死後卻能同行。

方臉的孔丘：（回禮）有朋自遠方來相伴黃泉路上，不亦樂乎？<sup>1</sup>

使者：死後之人多感驚慌失措，難以置信。何以兩位夫子如此從容？

丘：老夫本就朝聞道，夕死可矣。（4.8；楊伯峻 36）況自古皆有死，（12.7；錢穆 77）不足為奇。

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1 原文：「有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？」（1.1；楊伯峻 59）

周： 不錯。人之生死皆由道出，後歸於道。死生存亡如夜旦之常，（《莊子·大宗師》；陳鼓應 [中華書局] 48）何須懼之？

使者： 如此豁達之人世間罕有，兩位果真是百年難得一見的貴人。雖然肉體已逝，但靈魂不滅，故輪迴之前兩位需通過四重審判以觀生前功過及意義。

丘： 吾十有五而志於學，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳順，七十而從心所欲，不踰矩。（2.4；楊伯峻 12）人生可謂圓滿。周，你歸隱山林，不仕朝廷，人生哪有意義？

周： 此言差矣。正如夫子可知使者快樂與否？

丘： 吾非使者，固不知彼矣。

周： 正是。子非吾，安知吾之意？<sup>2</sup>周追求逍遙自在，虛己以遊世，（《莊子·山木》；孫雍長 253）不困於廟堂。人生意義，自不可同日而語。夫子一生周遊列國求用於諸侯卻不受待見，不也只落得累累若喪家之犬？（《史記·孔子世家》）

丘： 你！

在兩位老者爭持不下之際，四周地面頓時裂開，三人隨着落石跌進一冰窖中。

## 第一審判——不仁之罪

五官王： 審判乃觀亡者生前是否不仁，若罪成需判處被困冰塊之中

2 原文：「惠子曰：『子非魚，安知魚之樂？』」（《莊子·秋水》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 137）



以罰其冷漠。

丘： 稟大王，孔丘以仁愛為本，推及五倫：事父母以孝，事國君以敬，事朋友以信，可謂泛愛眾人。所謂仁者，就是具備諸德，有完備人格之人。仁者立身後，還會推己及人，此即為「己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人」。(6.30；楊伯峻 64) 是以我不像周只欲獨善其身，而盼兼善天下。<sup>3</sup>

五官王： 孔丘之仁愛，使父子相親，朋友有信。反觀莊周，不提仁愛，只談自在，五倫如何維繫？現判周冰封五百年——

周： 大王且慢！夫子達而立人不可真正稱仁。夫子只是強施仁義之言與自身德行於人，實際是以他人之惡揚自身之善。不僅肺腑之言不被聽取，反會被視為災人，從而引發傾軋爭鬥。(《莊子·人間世》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 112) 加上，夫子之仁愛是由親及疏之愛。但何謂親疏，各有標準。是以周提倡齊物，各人一視同仁，無所謂愛與不愛。所謂天地與我並生，眾人與我齊一。<sup>4</sup> 周並無帶有成見的親疏之愛，有的只是互相包容，又怎會不仁？

五官王： 原來莊周是眼冷心熱，看似無情卻有情。審判通過——

## 第二審判——不義之罪

轉眼間，三人便到了一處被熔岩包圍之地。岩漿之下有無數黑炭之人在哀嚎。

3 原文：「達則兼濟天下，窮則獨善其身。」(《孟子·盡心章句上》；孫琚 208)

4 原文：「天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一。」(《莊子·齊物論》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 105)

- 卞城王： 審判乃觀亡者生前有否盡義，若罪成需判處火湯之刑。
- 丘： 稟大王，丘終生義以為質，禮以行之（15.18；楊伯峻 164）：於父母，生事之以禮，死葬之以禮、祭之以禮；（2.5；楊伯峻 13）於君上，能致身以盡禮；（1.7；錢穆 64）於天下，義之與比。（4.10；楊伯峻 36）由是觀之，丘依禮以事尊長，行義以達吾道。（16.11；楊伯峻 175）反觀周一不盡人臣之責，不仕無義；（18.7；楊伯峻 194）二不對禮崩樂壞之社會施以援手，只懂歸隱山林，豈非不義於天下？
- 卞城王： 孔丘的確盡義，使老者安之，朋友信之，少者懷之。（5.26；楊伯峻 51）然而莊周……
- 周： 夫子知其不可為而為之，（14.38；楊伯峻 155）反而會令自身被道德責任困住，見天下沉淪無力挽救而終日自怨。大王，所謂義者，宜也。周認為儒禮並非合宜之事。反而禮者，亂之首也。（《莊子·知北遊》；孫雍長 279）此時六國已然不講義戰，互相功闕只求吞併，不理百姓生靈塗炭，朝不保夕、民心惶惶之時還急切要求克己復禮，（12.1；錢穆 72）豈非強人所難？因此周不仕朝廷，實因不想成為諸侯傷及人民的劍刃，反而隱居講學以教弟子安時處順，使哀樂不能入。（《莊子·養生主》；陳鼓應 [中華書局] 88）面對亂世調節心態泰然處之，不受困苦所阻，知其不可奈何而安之若命，（《莊子·人間世》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 117）方為道之至也。以退為進，有何不可？
- 卞城王： 孔丘之義正是君子需持守之道德標準；而莊周看似無義於天下，但實際考慮到人民的心性需要。在亂世中先定其神，可謂另一種義的體現。因此審判通過——

### 第三審判——怠惰之罪

三人乘船來到海上一小島，見有一巨大木輪不停轉動橫掃地面，受刑的人需不停向前跑動，否則就會被輾過痛苦不堪。

楚江王：此等皆是生前虛耗光陰之人，死後被罰不停地跑以補回生前欠缺勞動。孔丘，你生前為人師表，半生講學授徒三千，應非怠惰之人。

丘：大王明察。丘一生博學於文，（12.15；錢穆 82）學而不厭，（7.2；楊伯峻 65）故學而時習之，（1.1；錢穆 59）一日不違。丘斗膽說每十家人或有一個與我同樣忠信之人，<sup>5</sup>但絕不如丘之好學。

周：夫子一生時間都用於學習，不正是虛耗光陰嗎？吾生也有涯，而知也無涯。（《莊子·養生主》；陳鼓應 [中華書局] 81）不如觀自然之道、悟萬物之理。

丘：周，學思應當並重。吾嘗終日不食，終夜不寢只在思考，最終卻無得益，（15.31；楊伯峻 166）可知思而不學則殆呀。（2.15；楊伯峻 17）

周：可夫子之學乃教君子小人之別，是非如何依據仁義判斷。然而物無非彼，物無非是；是亦因彼，彼亦因是。（《莊子·齊物論》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 102）天地萬物皆有共通性，君子小人非二元對立體，正如盜賊中也有俠盜，那該如何判定孰好孰壞？所謂君子小人皆是虛名，是非標準也隨人之成心而定。況且知也者，爭之器也。（《莊子·人間世》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 112）有知識，代表自己會執着於相應的看法與

5 原文：「十室之邑，必有忠信如丘者焉，不如丘之好學也。」（5.28；楊伯峻 52）

思想，因此容易日以心鬪，經常與人口舌上作不爭之爭。其後更溺所為之，成近死之心。（《莊子·齊物論》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 99）是故學習不應困於一家之言，去除偏執主觀的成心才能照見事物之本質，明白百慮見一致。

- 丘： 依周所言，難道成為隱士，終日只知養生方為有用之人？
- 周： 養生看似無用，實際是無用之用。我等隱士不淪為諸侯之工具，不被世俗眼光、知識潮流所規限，任由天性發展，才是無用之用。我等正因大而無用，才不夭斤斧，在亂世中依然安然處世。（《莊子·逍遙遊》；陳鼓應 [香港中文大學大學通識教育部] 97）夫子，你不正因大而有才落得困苦的下場，仕途中有十二次受挫，為侯國大夫所排擠、加害，終不得重用嗎？所以倒不如逍遙遊於濠河之上，觀萬物之流轉，悟道之所在。通過自然了解自身生存之意義，不更善用光陰嗎？
- 楚江王： 孔丘一生為學不倦，更著《春秋》留下微言大義。而周雖隱居遊世，但時刻省察道之所在，如何使自己放下成見、逍遙無待，兩者皆善用生前之時間，因此審判通過——

#### 第四審判——貪婪之罪

最後一場審判，眾人來到一片沙地，遠處有一懸崖，崖上站着穿着一身黑袍的閻君。

- 閻君： 孔丘，你對富貴有甚麼看法？
- 丘： 大王，無可否認富貴是人之所欲，但是不義之富貴於我如浮雲。（7.16；楊伯峻 69）君子當食無求飽，居無求安。

(1.14；錢穆 70) 丘雖是貴族之後，但平常也是粗茶淡飯，曲肱而枕之。(7.16；楊伯峻 69) 如顏回所言：一簞食，一瓢飲，在陋巷，足矣！(6.11；楊伯峻 58) 此所謂安貧樂道。

周：好一句安貧樂道。若人成為富貴之奴隸，人生便不得逍遙。昔楚王曾許周為相，可我寧願漫步於濠水橋上，觀魚兒自在地暢泳，與惠施相辯。有俗人認為貧窮等於困苦，不然。貧也，非憊也。(《莊子·山木》；陳鼓應 284 [2012]) 物質上的貧窮可能歸咎於天時不合，時運不濟，時機一到便能大鵬展翅。但是心中貧乏卻是真正困苦，是以周不為物質名利富貴所困，物物而不物於物。(《莊子·山木》；陳鼓應 [中華書局] 278) 即使一生不得富貴，人生也感充實。

閻君：面對不仁、不義、怠惰、貪婪等誘惑，許多人未能堅守信念。但是兩位貴人在數十年光陰卻始終一以貫之。(4.15；楊伯峻 35) 現在我宣判所有審判通過，兩位慢走——

孔丘和莊周身後忽然出現一道強烈的光芒，兩位哲人慢慢走向身後的光圈，消失不見，在下一個世界繼續貫徹他們的道。

人生就是在分岔路上不斷地選擇，孔丘選擇成為不惑、不憂、不懼的君子，(9.29；楊伯峻 94) 莊周選擇成為超然物外、逍遙自在的至人。他們都在有限的生命裏活出不平凡的意義，你未必要達到他們的境界，但以上所言四大罪，你有犯過嗎？

對，說的是你，

下一場審判的主角。

需要審判的從來不是孔子與莊子，而是我們自己。

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## 老師短評

文章把文本的思想與素材編織得相當巧妙，明二者之別，但又能夠點出二者可匯通之處。比較奇怪的是，每個關口的問題都好像為孔子度身訂造，他非常容易便能過關。反過來說，問題則非常考驗莊子的應對才智。雖然，莊子辯才無礙，但若果問題的設定有些變化，讓孔莊雙方都有機會受到挑戰，以敘事計，會更可觀。（鄭威鵬）

# 為了我理想中的烏托邦

林巧瑜

崇基學院 中國語言及文學

烈日當空下，我領着五個人前往中央倫敦條件設置中心。

蘇格拉底一路上連珠發炮地問了一連串問題：「你理想中的烏托邦是怎樣的？」又來了，這已經是第二十三條問題，嗯，我終於明白為何雅典人要處死他。<sup>1</sup>

「到了。」我指向一幢灰白色的矮大樓，正門上「社會、本分、穩定」的格言映入眼簾。我領他們到會議室，會議室桌上中央還有一盤桑麻<sup>2</sup>，孔子、蘇格拉底、莊子、盧梭、一行禪師順序圍圈坐下——他們都是我從保留區帶來的人才。原本耶穌也在我的邀請名單中，但他拒絕前來，看來還在生氣新世界把《聖經》列為禁書<sup>3</sup>。

「感謝大家前來幫忙，我們現在就開始討論如何為新世界建立……」「太多東西要改了！」孔子打斷了我的說話：「他們怎能不為父母守喪呢<sup>4</sup>？噢不，他們沒有父母，哪怎麼行呢？這不就失去了一倫嗎？而且他們怎麼能不向朋友互相學習呢<sup>5</sup>？還有……」

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1 公元前400年，梅勒托等人以下述兩項罪狀指控蘇格拉底，並要求判處其死刑：一是不敬神；二是荼毒青年。（Kong）

2 由於桑麻在新世界十分普遍，故會像糖果一樣，放在會議室招待客人。

3 《聖經》在新世界被列為禁書，「總統書齋的一個保險箱裏藏着一些被禁止的古書——《聖經》、詩歌——究竟是甚麼，福帝才知道！」（阿道斯·赫胥黎 13）

4 孔子十分注重子女為父母守喪，參見《論語》17.21 宰我與孔子的對話。

5 孔子認為朋友之間可以互相學習，「三人行，必有我師焉。」（《論語》7.22）

「咳咳，我們只能作兩個安排。」我清一清嗓子，說：「所以要選取最迫切的兩個安排。」我望向盧梭，希望政治哲學系的他能帶領討論。<sup>6</sup>

「人是生而自由的。<sup>7</sup>」盧梭開口了：「新世界的人用自由換取安定，是盲目而不智的……」「安定不是很好嗎？這不是公平交易嗎？」蘇格拉底打斷了他的發言，盧梭白了一眼：「在牢獄的人雖等着被處死，也住得很安定呀！牢獄會因此成為悅意而可居住的地方嗎？」<sup>8</sup>蘇格拉底臉色一沉，他才剛從保留區的牢獄保釋出來<sup>9</sup>，這句話似乎戳中了他的痛處。盧梭續說：「大家想想看，新世界的統治者又不是負責人民的生活所需，反而是逼使他們工作，從人民消費中得益，為甚麼人民反而為統治者而失去自由？<sup>10</sup>這關係應該轉換呀！」

「但新世界的人在出生之前，就已經被統治者決定了命運，例如德爾塔和愛普西隆的智力天生低下，<sup>11</sup>只能做勞動工作。」我嘗試為這個現象作解釋。「這就是問題所在了，這裏的人民打從一開始就無條件地喪失選擇生活方式的自由！」盧梭厲聲道。我尤如被當頭棒喝，問道：「所以應該取消劃分胚胎階級的制度，對嗎？」盧梭搖頭，道：「單純地取消這個制度並不能改變統治者操控人民自由的現象，治標不治本，我建議從根源入手，使人民可以主宰自己的生活

6 盧梭是啟蒙時代著名的政治哲學家。

7 出自盧梭《社會契約論》第一章第一句，「人生來是自由的，但卻無往不在枷鎖之中。」（6；第一章，第一卷）

8 參盧梭在《社會契約論》第一卷，第四章有關牢獄的比喻：「如果這種太平的本身就是對人民的一種災難，人民從這裏又能得到甚麼呢？監獄裏生活得很太平，這就足以認為監獄也很好嗎？」（12）

9 見注1。

10 參原文：「……全體人民為甚麼要出賣自己呢？國王遠不能以生活必需品供應他的臣民，反而只能從臣民那裏獲得他自身的生活所需。」（盧梭 12；第一卷，第四章）

11 新世界中，在出生之前，就已被劃分為「阿爾法（ $\alpha$ ）」、「貝塔（ $\beta$ ）」、「伽瑪（ $\gamma$ ）」、「德爾塔（ $\delta$ ）」、「愛普西隆（ $\epsilon$ ）」五種「種階層」，其下加正負細分階級。（阿道斯·赫胥黎 2）



——由人民制定法律<sup>12</sup>，使他們受具公意的法律規管，而不是單純受君主的強力統治。<sup>13</sup>劃分胚胎階級的制度並不是重點，法律也可以定出各種階級，甚至像現在一樣，定出各種階級的資格，但它不能指定某人屬於某個階級，<sup>14</sup>民主與極權的差別就在這裏了。」

「好！那就讓我安排人民對立法發表意見吧！」當我正打算用智能聲控系統記錄這個決定時，盧梭為難地打斷了我：「但就在剛才，我發現了一個問題——只有團結、不迷信、有智慧的民族才適合立法，否則大概不可能共識出有利整體的法律。<sup>15</sup>」然後我那些對彼此沒有感情、視福特的話為真理、一輩子從沒思考過的人民在我腦海中浮現，開甚麼玩笑！這些條件不是與我的人民相反嗎？

本來以為找到了方向，但一下子又重回到原點，會議室的氣氛頓時變得死氣沉沉。

「普遍人民之所以會如此迷信又沒有智慧，是因為他們從來沒認真思考過自己人生的意義。」蘇格拉底打破了沉默。

「那如何能逼使他們思考呢？」我問，他續說：「要向他們提問，<sup>16</sup>問他們為何不能與別人建立感情，問他們為何要聽從福特的話，那麼他們就會開始思考，如同一個囚徒獲得釋放後轉身走向光明的地方，會發現以前所看到的都是虛假的和騙人的。<sup>17</sup>」

12 參原文：「服從法律的人民也就應當是法律的創立者」。（盧梭 50；第二卷，第六章）

13 盧梭認為人民不應服從強力，參原文：「強力不能構成權利，人們只能有服從合法力量的義務。」（11；第一卷，第三章）

14 參原文：「法律可以劃分公民為若干等級，甚至於規定取得各該等級權利的種種資格，但是它卻不能指名把某人某人列入某個等級之中」。（49；第二卷，第六章）

15 參第二卷，第三章「如果人民能夠充分了解情況而進行思考的話……」一段（40）及第二卷，第十章「甚麼樣的人民才適宜於立法呢？……結合聯繫在一起……沒有傳統又沒有根深蒂固的迷信的……」一段（64）。

16 參見《柏拉圖對話錄·普羅泰戈拉篇》，蘇格拉底說：「我接近真理的方法是提出正確的問題。」（柏拉圖 192）

17 參見《柏拉圖對話錄·理想國》，蘇格拉底以洞穴比如解放思想一段，「如果一個囚徒獲得了釋放並且站立了起來，那麼當他轉身走向光明的地方時，他會發現以前所看到的一切都是虛假的和騙人的，但現在他終於可以看到真相了。」（柏拉圖 321）

「我也認為必先這樣開民智，才有立法的基礎。」盧梭同意蘇格拉底。

「不夠。」孔子突然開口，「思而不學則殆<sup>18</sup>，除了思考，還要學習。我前日一天不吃飯，連覺也沒睡，就是為了整天思考，發現如果不輔以學習，根本沒有益處。<sup>19</sup>大家剛才覺得我對新世界的要求太多，但其實所有都可以透過教育一步一步付諸實行。既然想要人民思考和學習，我建議建立一所學校，讓所有人民都可以在那裏學習，而且更是要互相學習，互相發問之餘，又能見賢思齊。」

「確實，新世界要改善的有太多，單憑兩個安排是沒法改變現況的。建立學校，使每個人都有學習思考的機會，讓他們學懂自己去爭取自由才是長遠之計，不如就先建立學校，對每個人進行強制教育吧，如何？」盧梭問。

「好，這就是我們第一個安排，你們會幫忙做新學校的老師嗎？」眾人點頭，與此同時，智能聲控系統已經自動記錄了這個決定。「那你們對第二個安排有甚麼建議？」我望向未曾發言的一行禪師和莊子。

一行禪師緩緩拿起桌上的桑麻，說：「我建議取消桑麻。」他看我們露出了疑惑的目光，續道：「新世界的人民，無論有甚麼煩惱，都會吃桑麻，讓自己忘記所有不開心的情緒，對嗎？」我點頭，但還是不明白他的用意。「他們如此抗拒不開心，是因為他們被開心與不開心的概念束縛着。大家想想看，如果沒有『左』，『右』就不能成為『右』；如果沒有『魔』，『佛』就不能成為『佛』；如果他們的記憶裏不曾留有不開心的回憶，開心又怎能算是開心呢？<sup>20</sup>人不可能永遠

18 原文：「子曰：『學而不思則罔，思而不學則殆。』」（《論語》2.15）

19 參原文：「子曰：『吾嘗終日不食，終夜不寢，以思，無益，不如學也。』」（《論語》15.31）

20 參原文：「我們被我們關於善和惡的概念束縛住了……善和惡也是如此。你不可能只是善的。你不可能把惡的都清除掉，因為有惡，善才存在，反之亦然。」（一行禪師 157）

覺得高興，桑麻帶給他們的，是虛假的快樂罷了，如果他們永遠逃避不開心，便永遠不能感受真正的快樂。」

忽然，莊子抬頭道：「我一直在想，我們是否真的需要改變新世界呢？」「甚麼？」我感到頭昏腦脹，莊子搔一搔頭，繼續說：「我的意思是，我們之所以要改變新世界，是因為我們依據自己的成見作為判斷正確的標準，故認為他們現有的生活方式是錯的，但誰能保證我們的固有執念是對的呢？<sup>21</sup>在新世界人民的眼中，我們不吃桑麻才是錯誤的啊！這世界並沒有對與錯之分！」

「既然你認為吃桑麻沒有對錯之分，那你要不要吃一口？」一行禪師微笑道。莊子果真拿起幾片桑麻往嘴裏送，只見他忽然失去意識，又突然嘻嘻地笑着，大家都嚇呆了，只有一行禪師語重心長地說：「他一起來，就會忘記曾為這個會議而苦惱，那麼當會議完結後，他又能憑甚麼去感到高興呢？」

「君主，如果你想你的人民得到幸福，就必須取消桑麻。」一行禪師誠懇地說。

後來，我命令把所有桑麻銷毀，桑麻自此在新世界裏消失。雖然引起了一輪暴動和抗議，但在學校的教育下，人民很快學會如何正確地處理情緒。會議那天晚上，我拖着莊子沉重的身軀返回保留區，腦海裏卻不斷浮現他的說話，確實，我憑甚麼保證這兩個安排是正確的呢？我深深地嘆了一口氣，忽然想起蘇格拉底問我的問題——「你理想中的烏托邦是怎樣的？」

月下，我低頭笑了。在我理想中的烏托邦，人民真心地歡笑，自由快樂地生活着。為了這樣，即使我不肯定自己所做的是否正確，也願意去試。

21 參原文：「如果依據自己的成見作為判斷的標準，那麼誰沒有一個標準呢？」（陳鼓應 101）

## 徵引書目

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## 老師短評

林同學的作品給我很深的印象，是她對「痛感」的重視。她說，《美麗新世界》中快樂藥「索麻」令我們永遠快樂——但永遠快樂，不正正就是永遠都沒有真正地感受快樂？的確，現代社會鼓勵我們正向思維，對負面的情緒冷處理，但是，情緒並不會因此而自動消失。只有感受和面對它，才能看到情緒背後的真正問題。這篇文章是一個很好的提醒。值得一提的，是林同學寫作故事的能力甚佳，寥寥數筆就把各個思想家的面貌刻劃出來，這不止要熟悉各個經典文本，還要有不錯的想像力才能做到。希望林同學繼續從事創作，期待你日後的作品！（李智達）



# 綻放在絕望裏的希望之花

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## 一、引言：活於沒有希望的世界

「這個世界正在死去。」

環顧這個世界，全球暖化、能源枯竭、戰爭人禍、疾病肆虐，生活中的一切一切似乎真的在應驗着這句話。人類如何在這個絕望的世界裏擁抱希望經已逐漸成了現代人人生的一大探討。故本文將從《心經》和《聖經》兩本經典出發，嘗試從佛教和基督教的角度去淺談這條人生命題。

## 二、定義：希望為何物？

要論述希望，我們首先要瞭解甚麼是希望。魯迅先生曾經說過：「絕望之為虛妄，正與希望相同。」無實曰虛，反真曰妄。希望和絕望兩者從來都是不真，不實的，我們很難直接地探討。為此，我們不妨採用物理學觀測的方法來研究，首先透過參照物來看絕望，再借絕望來看希望。如果我們能夠找到脫離絕望的方法，那我們就能夠有希望地活着。奧地利心理學家 Viktor Frankl 就曾給絕望設立了這麼一條等式：

絕望 (Despair) = 痛苦 (Suffering) - 意義 (Meaning)

意即絕望就是受着一些無意義的痛苦。人可以受苦，但必須承載在着某意義，才能夠支撐下去。絕望有諸多的定義，為何特別提起這個呢？這是因為佛教與基督教正是嘗試去使這個等式不成立而摒棄絕望，繼而擁抱希望。

### 三、《心經》：度一切苦厄

佛教去除絕望的方式在於消滅痛苦，當痛苦去除時，那絕望就不成立了。人不絕望自然能夠感受到希望的存在，而敢於追求美好生活。所以對於佛教而言，希望的基礎是在於「離苦」。為甚麼是選擇消除痛苦，而非加上意義呢？因為佛教認為苦是能夠被消滅的，四聖諦<sup>1</sup>中的滅諦就指出了苦是能夠滅淨的，而人是能夠脫苦的，更主張在現世便要滅苦，而不是等至來世<sup>2</sup>。

如果我們有一雙互即互入（一行禪師 142）的眼睛，將不難發現絕望是由希望組成的，人會感到絕望是因為對希望的執着。人對於某事物抱有希望，是因他對該事該物存有定相。例如，人希望年輕貌美，正是執着於青春和美貌的定相。當希望未能如願（即年華老去），便會產生煩惱，糾結於如何令希望成真（保持青春美貌）。有漏<sup>3</sup>皆苦，這些煩惱便成了痛苦的源泉，而痛苦亦將成為絕望的基礎。有人可能會說變得年輕就是意義，有意義的痛苦便不是絕望，但卻不知諸行是無常的，諸法是无我的（148），人能掌控的只是助緣，是有限的，主因還是一切因緣和合的造化。當花盡心思來成就希望而不得願時，失望將徹底破碎之前賦予的意義，人將不知道為何而付出努力，絕望正是這樣而來的。我們對於希望的「無明」——惱怒癡迷與我執，造就着我

1 佛教裏的四種神聖的真理，分別為苦諦，集諦，滅諦和道諦。

2 《箭喻經》中就借故事說到人應該在意當刻的生活。

3 佛教術語，漏即煩惱。



們的絕望。而《心經》就是在教導我們如何通過如實觀去解除對希望的執念，從而消除痛苦。

難道說我們的希望正是建立於拋棄希望嗎？這不是自相矛盾嗎？會這樣問，那是因為還沒參透事物的空性。萬物都是互即互入的，希望也不例外。難道希望不是與絕望互即互入嗎？如果我們對每一件事都不抱有希望，不也就每一件事都不會有絕望嗎？而更深層次的想法是，如果對每一件事物都沒有定相的固執，不就代表對其所有可產生（發展）的相（方向）都抱有希望？諸行無常，不就代表着一切都充滿可能性，充滿希望嗎？其任何相都得滿足的話，希望不就存在於每一處地方嗎？

《心經》說：放下執着，人將看到遍地如夏花般絢爛的希望。

#### 四、《聖經》：信者得永生

有別於佛教，基督教並非透過減去痛苦，而是給痛苦加上一個意義，使人不會感到絕望，從而擁抱希望和美好人生。與佛教相同，基督教也認為人生來就是痛苦的，這是因為亞當和夏娃犯下的「原罪」，上帝為了處罰人類而作的預許（〈創世紀〉3:14-19），苦難自此世世代代相隨。但基督教認為罪是不得擺脫的，也不同于佛教，着重現世修為，基督教主張死後的應許，即所賦予的意義。所以，對於基督教來說，希望的基礎在於明白和接受苦難的意義。

《聖經》賦予苦難的意義為贖罪。為了讓人類重獲失去的樂園和永生，耶穌降生人間，以人類的肉軀接受贖罪的苦杯<sup>4</sup>和死亡（〈馬可福音〉）。人只要能坦然地面對和勇敢地接受苦難，跟隨及參與基督的救世工程，就能夠和他一樣在死後復活，再次進入伊甸園享受無盡

4 「苦杯」在《聖經》的用法指苦難。

的福樂。因為耶穌曾這樣說：「如果有人要跟從我，就應當捨己，背起他的十字架<sup>5</sup>來跟從我。」（〈馬可福音〉16:21-28）十字架是基督的痛苦，也象徵着只要人們能夠承受基督的痛苦，便能夠進入天堂。因此，人們只要把希望建築於死後永生的幸福上，明白到自己所受的苦並不是沒有意義的，而是為進入天鄉作準備，便不會感到絕望。

可是死後的世界沒有人知道，我們如何確認這希望的基礎是堅定的呢？聖經說人會這樣想是源自人的心硬<sup>6</sup>。人必須對神有信心，信、望、愛三德是基督精神的支柱（奧古斯丁）。耶穌在每一次驅鬼、醫治和復活死人的時候，都會不厭其煩地說着：「你的信心救了你」（〈馬可福音〉5:34、10:52）；「對於信的人，一切都能。」（17:23）基督所賜下希望的基石，不單是天家的應許，更在於對基督的信心。

《聖經》說：明白苦難的意義，人將體會到如秋葉般靜美的希望。

## 五、兩者誰更幫助我們獲得希望和美好人生？

眼見現世希望的愈加缺失和絕望的日漸膨脹，很多人心裏必定有一個疑問：兩條迥然不同的道路，哪一條才是更為舒坦的人生路呢？畢竟人生苦短，早日上路為佳。對此，我認為兩者並沒有誰比誰好，只是在乎於個人的特點。不同特點的人選擇不同的經典作為希望的支柱，皆有神妙的作用。以下片見望供參考。

先說樂觀和悲觀的人。悲觀的人適合《心經》，而樂觀的人更適合《聖經》。生性樂觀的人會很容易忽略大部分的苦難，自然他們面對絕望的情況也比較少，不會被過分的絕望所困擾。為此，他們有更多時間去消化《聖經》所帶給他們苦難的意義，棄絕絕望而擁抱希望。相反悲觀的人心態消極，容易感受到苦難的存在，也就很容易一

5 十字架在此象徵苦難，因為耶穌人生的最後苦路是背着十字架走完的。

6 耶穌數次表達門徒的信心不堅定時，便會說他們心硬。

蹶不振，陷入消沉，較難明白和接受《聖經》給予苦難的意義，因而變得絕望，所以他們更適合《心經》，直接改變對於希望的執念，減少對苦難的敏感度。

再說內心剛毅和內心軟弱的人。軟弱的人更適合《聖經》，而剛毅的人則適合《心經》。《聖經》和《心經》的一大分野在於透過「自力」和「他力」獲得希望。《心經》主張人的「自我覺醒」，獲得般若，成為菩提埵（一行禪師 143），而斷絕痛苦，獲得希望。《聖經》則是着重於對神應許的信心。心經要求人的參悟之心來放下執着，而在滾滾塵世，要拋下執念是一件何其困難的事，內心脆弱，不堅定的人很容易放不下希望，而被絕望吞噬，所以堅強的人更為適合。聖經則讓人把希望寄託在神的身上，只要對神有信心，他們便可獲得永生，人不必獨自面對絕望，神會與他們同行，所以軟弱的人較為適合。

最後是現世和非現世主義者。兩本經典對於希望的着重在時間點上有所不同，《心經》明言人的修行是為了使我們的生命中每一刻都成為真正的生活（一行禪師 165），希望是寄予現世的生命，而《聖經》則把希望投放在死後進入伊甸園的美好裏。所以非現世主義者可以參考兩本經典的洞見，而現世主義者則應較能接受心經的希望觀。

儘管兩本經典對希望有着不同的立足點，但皆是為人類在絕望的時代裏點燃希望的星火，照亮世界的金石良言。

## 六、結語

本文選擇了從絕望的角度去觀望兩個宗教對於希望的立足點，看似悲觀，不過不是更符合在生活上的應用嗎？人們在滿懷希望的時候會想如何獲得希望嗎？不會，人只會在絕望的時候才想擁抱希望，所以只有瞭解甚麼是絕望和如何消滅它才是尋找希望的不二法門。祝願各位在閱讀了兩本經典後能夠在黑夜過後迎來晨曦，柳暗花明又一村。

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## 老師短評

本篇文章以「望」為切入點，剖析《心經》和《聖經》對「望」、「希望」兩組概念的解說，反思人該如何脫離望，尋找希望。文章情理兼備，具理論框架，段落鋪排清晰、流暢。信源同學能整理、比對、解說兩篇經典文本，並加入自己的反思，實屬不錯的嘗試。（呂永昇）

# **The Wandering Idiot to be Named “Philosopher” —A Reflection on How Philosophy Interacts with Reality**

**LI Xinting**  
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*Sincere thanks to Dr. Yeung Yang,  
who has taken me through this intellectual journey  
and made this work possible.*

In an interview Jonathan Wolff stressed the importance as a philosopher to listen openly, in view of the limitation of personal talents and philosophical methods when applied to policy areas<sup>1</sup>. Wolff suggested an “engaged” way of doing philosophy based on a distinction-and-interaction model between philosophy and other fields. His experience shakes my perception of what philosophy is like—Since practical areas can inspire philosophy, can philosophy also be utilized in dealing with practical problems? Are philosophy and practical fields mutually penetrative, or just communicable as separate bodies of knowledge?

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from the questions attempted.

Sparked to explore the place of philosophy in the contemporary world and philosophers in their surroundings, I invite Socrates<sup>2</sup> in *Symposium* and Zhuangzi in his free-wandering scripts to enrich this inquiry. The qualities of the thinkers do not necessarily tell the full picture of philosophy, but may facilitate my proposal of what could actualize the name “philosopher”.

## **Introduction: The Unsettled Nature of Philosophy**

Philosophy, literally in Greek, means “love for wisdom”. For few can deny that wisdom is a good thing, we can borrow the definition from Diotima and Socrates that to love is to desire for not-owned goodness, which implicates in context that philosophy, is the desire for wisdom which the pursuer, i.e. the philosopher lacks, or at least with no guarantee of long-term possession (Plato 200d–201a).

Zhuangzi tries to wander free from provisional notions in concert with the true rule of nature. “Whether I succeed in discovering his identity or not,” he sings, “it neither adds to nor detracts from his Truth.” ([Office of University General Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong] 82) But he cherishes this unsettlement, which prevents one from blindly receiving any “bodily form” to which one holds on and consequently doomed to the solidification of mind, the end of livelihood (82).

Yet not everyone in lack of something can feel that lack and develop desire for complement, as figured out by Diotima in distinguishing “the foolish” from “lovers of wisdom” (204a). Here we can see philosophy as

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2 The image and vision of Socrates in this essay is to some extent subjected to Plato’s narrative in *Symposium*.

a practice of the remaining leaps: to become aware of one's lack of wisdom, and further to grow a desire for it.. What is distinct in "philosophers" then is not necessarily the wisdom they possess, but their awareness of their own ignorance, their capacity to be intellectually "resourceful" out of such thirst that one never sees an end of pursuit<sup>3</sup>.

## **Being Destructive to Create New: Philosophers Ask Fundamental Questions**

Philosophers develop such constant recognition of their own ignorance from a mind habit of questioning and examination. They do not fear, and even thrill at reexamining what people take for granted or believe within their horizons. Philosophers embrace destructive efforts on widely accepted explanations of how things work, only to make space for exploring the true reason behind. Zhuangzi suggests reconsideration of the right of power establishment, by questioning how this difference has come into place: "One who steals a hook is put to death; another who steals a state becomes its prince." ([Columbia UP]) Through this conduct of questioning one may draw the necessity to examine the fundamental legitimacy of society against human's natural freedom, rather than take the existing as the right. And it is this preserved uncertainty that has launched human exploration of better ways of coexistence in our near history<sup>4</sup>. In fact, one becomes as much destructive against established beliefs as productive of the embedded

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3 Borrowing the personified portrait of love in *Symposium* 204d.

4 Here I am not indicating that Zhuangzi's questioning has inspired the later social thoughts, but it's the destructive philosophical thinking embedded in Zhuangzi's inquiry that inspires and communicates with the constructive human practices to reflect on forms of society and improve the members' wellbeing.

uncertainties, which powers life in constant exploration, towards “human excellence” in Socrates’s vision (Phillips)<sup>5</sup>.

I have once exercised this mind of questioning, which brought me an interesting reflection on how I produce and hold judgements. One day a friend asked me whether I preferred face-to-face or online teaching. “Out of question,” I commented without delay, “face-to-face lectures. Otherwise why did I have to come here on campus?” But when I recalled the talk days later, I found I did not give the reason why I loved face-to-face teaching at all, and in this way I might have lost a chance to really ponder on this change of learning format. “Sometimes one hurries to attribute value to something just because it costs rather than it deserves,” flowed my mind. In removing the barrier of assumptions to pave way for real thinking, I felt I was the moment a philosopher!

## **Impairment as Completeness: Philosophy beyond the Disciplinary Circle**

It is the unsettled nature of philosophy that constructs its special nature of “impairment”, which leads to a philosophical mind to naturally appeal to other realms of practices towards “completeness” (Zhuangzi [Office of University General Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong] 84). In this sense, philosophy can never be a separate specialty but a part of life which anyone regardless of profession can integrate into their own.

However today, we have witnessed philosophy raised as an intellectual

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5 Inspired by *Socrates Café* chapter title: “Seeking Ignorance; Human Excellence.”



privilege. It seems weird to claim oneself “a philosopher” without relevant academic titles and works, while the mere conduct of questioning, which is already not trivial, falls short of, or even out of people’s expectation of philosophy. There rises a dilemma of naming, as recognized by Diotima, where one “abstract a part and call it by the name of the whole” (205c).

Upon this partial naming a “circle” of philosophy has occurred. Insiders forget there is something other than philosophy, and outsiders throw comments inward as if philosophy is totally external to them. A series of funny questions arise. The philosophers ask, “Why things that go down well in this circle do not run as smoothly outside?” The outsiders ask, “What can philosophy do except making me more confused?” But would one ever ask, why a part of something is not its whole? This only perpetuates impairment by requiring completeness from a part.

It is miserable that “philosophy” becomes only particular people’s work at a time when the term becomes unprecedentedly pervasive. The disciplinary boundaries like “philosophy and non-philosophy” are affecting how we see and contact the world. When Zhuangzi asks about the true color of the sky ([Office of University General Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong] 76), or the “True Lord” of nature and inside human body (82), we see an implicit start of scientific inquiry. But what that inquiry entails may not be the haste to solve it, but an insight of universality fuelled by free imagination. A specialist today may claim what is within “my field” and what is not, but forget the fact that it is the same world that sparks our curiosity, intellectual and beyond intellectual. Disciplinary boundary is not supposed to be a barrier before us to approach the world from various perspectives of our choice and create integrated horizons.

## Releasing the Grasp of Form: The Philosophical Passion to Understand

Another reason for “non-professionals” to keep away from philosophical thinking may be people are too anxious to be sure of and in control of things, while philosophical inquiry often adds to feelings of uncertainty. Zhuangzi observes how people firmly cling to notions of right and wrong which are claimed to be, persisting that they are on the side of victory (82). In this way they trade their freedom of mind for partial knowledge and consequently a sense of informed tranquillity. But is that sense of tranquillity true happiness, or merely an illusion backed by the indifference to the eternal sorrow of mankind? Zhuang only feels sorrowful for their firmness, for it is only bounded by situation and perspective (83).

Unlike Zhuangzi, Socrates believes that there is a definite truth beyond human perspective, manifested by the morality of Gods. But Diotima corrected Socrates’s formulation of absolute opposites and suggested there may be an “intermediate state” for people in love to go through (204b–c). This also bears an implication of the motivation of philosophical practice in the form of love. Doing philosophy does not mean making judgements of right or wrong, good or bad and utilizing those labels to classify people and discriminate values. In fact, it is the recognition and acceptance for an “intermediate state” that makes space for the refinement of human life towards nobility, and opens a window to understand human needs and limitations in order to pursue excellence. We could possibly argue that the passion of both philosophers lies more in understanding than judgement. For

Zhuangzi, it was highly likely the fuelled times that so inspired him. Amid a world of war, torture and its justification he prescribes a living state of “easy wandering.” To wander, he suggests, is neither to avoid nor to engage deep, but to let the *understanding* flow as a medium of livelihood. Even one who forces virtuous conduct to their own standard on others, he believes, “plagues” people and doomed to be plagued if they “do not understand men’s spirits and minds” ([Office of University General Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong] 92).

Zhuang attributes the failure of understanding to the favor of solid form. Form is the agent of identity, but can also obscure identity as it potentially substantiates discrimination and partiality. People communicate by words. Do words really say something or nothing? How do we catch them and attribute value to them? (83) That all depends on listening. The art of listening is as important to train as the art of expression. Students and new employees in speech-enhancing workshops are often told “how you say something is far more important than what you say.” But this is only half of the story. If we as audience really follow an easy mind in favor of familiar or persuasive forms, it is unfair for those who are less good at expression but have equally inspiring ideas to share. And if a philosopher believes that complex views always thrive in sophisticated styles of expression, s/he is likely to be tricked by this favor of form that costs him/her a fruitful moment of understanding.

“The piping of Heaven” is able to “bring out of ten thousand things their own nature in all different ways” (81); In the great expression is great listening, which is to listen without right-or-wrong judgement but only in search of understanding. It has no form but manifests in infinite forms,

bearing an admirable potential to understand and thus live in concert with whatever it encounters. Understanding is therefore in the same way, the core of philosophical passion as well as the wisdom of life.

## **Conclusion: How Doing Philosophy Is Relevant in Our Contemporary World**

As soon as we switch our perspective on philosophers, from a profession to anyone who could come to be, we have seen that philosophy is nothing more and nothing less than a resourceful moment of feeling ignorant. Everyone has the right and capacity to practise a moment of philosophy in the flow of their life, not in solution-seeking haste or tranquillity-seeking anxiety. It is not necessarily a moment easy and joyful; it may well be heavy and lost<sup>6</sup> ([Office of University General Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong] 81), but the right is in us to go through the feeling as it is. Philosophy does not provide direct solutions to real-life struggles and could even induce more confusions and uncertainties. But we open up and examine them so that we do not need to be forced in joy or pain by the appearance of our encounters or any authorities, but only forced to be free, in our own, real feelings. An examined life becomes our own.

Being honest to one's own ignorance also brings chance to recognize and receive others' limitations. Doing philosophy is not only about self-liberation, but also facilitates ways of living with each other in reciprocal fulfilment. Socrates uses logical inquiry to lead people to reexamine their subconscious or misled assumptions in the formation of the views they hold.

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6 From Zhuangzi, *Discussion on Making All Things Equal*, mentioning the feeling of loss by the character "Tzu-Chi of South Wall" overwhelmed by the Piping of Heaven.

In “In Dialogue with Humanity” tutorials I also had a taste of philosophical conversation. It does not have any presupposed purposes, or necessarily leads to agreement, but during the conversation ideas and thoughts from multiple perspectives are opened up, examined, and developed. At a time when people strive to claim borders between each other, I believe one way to enhance mutual understanding is to facilitate such kind of conversations within communities of diverse backgrounds. Christopher Phillips<sup>7</sup>, a philosopher, made such attempt by inviting people to his discussion session series as an experiment of Socrates dialogue, and an inheritance of Socrates wisdom to spark new imagination of public life.

Jonathan Wolff, in the interview, insightfully pointed out that philosophers engaged in policy areas have a “long-term” role. “Anyone can do committee work, but few can change the terms of the debate.” (Popescu) We debate on what we see, while that wandering idiot, passing with a scrutinous gaze, in asking questions unanswerable, renews what we could see. In fact, we all have the chance to be in the idiot’s place, who is later named “philosopher.”

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<sup>7</sup> The author of *Socrates Café: A Fresh Taste of Philosophy*.

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## Teacher's comment:

LI Xinting's work is exemplary of the independent inquiry that arises out of rigorous lines of questioning. Her thinking is disciplined

and generous. Her interpretations and analyses of the textual ideas in relation to the context of her inquiry are evidence-based and perceptive. They penetrate multiple layers of meaning, preserving ambiguities and complexities. In a clear and distinct voice, she prosecutes her argument with sound reasoning, and accomplishes what she aspires to—in her own words, “to produce and hold judgment”. Her critical reflection on what it means to philosophize implicitly deposits a long-term challenge to the idea of the research university today and the role of General Education in it. (YUENG Yang)





# 通往幸福的兩座橋： 公利、私利的關係與未來

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## 引言

上世紀末，蘇聯解體，資本主義成為最主要的經濟模式<sup>1</sup>。其經濟自由促進政治自由，推動民主政治，人民能夠自主。在此政制下，人民能夠在親手建立的社會中追求各自的理想生活（私利<sup>2</sup>），不必假手於人。

但近年出現民主退潮，像新加坡等專制國家奉行賢治，如家長般包辦人民福祉（私利），比民主國家更有效地保持社會穩定、經濟發展（拉里·戴蒙德 91），人民似無必要主宰自己的生活。同時，資本主義似未能兌現理想生活這諾言，反而造成貧富懸殊等問題，以致具社會主義色彩的經濟政策實驗（公利<sup>3</sup>）在不少地方受到關注，像北歐的全民基本收入<sup>4</sup>。

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1 筆者明白蘇聯的社會主義乃至現今的資本主義或非完全達到學理上的標準，但至少就歷史背景而言，社會主義因此被淘汰卻是不爭的事實。

2 自由民主和資本主義側重個人主義（不等於利己主義），以個人利益為主，姑且稱之為私利。

3 相對於資本主義，姑且稱社會主義為公利。

4 雖言北歐模式自成一體，但本文旨在探討具社會主義或經濟公平精神的資本社會。

當然，筆者還會在政治社會方面討論公、私利，不限於經濟。而從以上可見私利由誰掌握，以及公、私利間的調配等頗影響社會和人們的生活是否理想。本文先從政治社會方面，以黃宗羲、盧梭兩位先哲的思想指出和論證公、私利間的兩種關係——「區別性」和「確保性」；再從經濟方面以馬克思的學說補足民主社會的缺陷，論證馬克思的「理想勞動」精神是理想社會的關鍵因素。

## 公利、私利的區別性

周保松教授曾言：政治理論背後一定預設某種對人和社會的基本看法（208）。明末大儒黃宗羲認為人性自私：「有生之初，人各自私」（31），但亦勸君主不應「使天下之人不敢自私……以我（君主）之大私為天下之公」（31），肯定人民的私利而否定君主之私，即以民為本。所謂「天下之公」，是由天下人各自的私利匯聚而成，解決過往公、私利對立的問題<sup>5</sup>。無論天下的公利抑或天下人的私利，都異於君主之私，故君主不可假公濟私。但黃氏並沒指出天下之公與天下人之私的區別性，而儒學出身的他卻有一套單一價值觀統攝公、私利。像改寺觀庵堂為書院、禁毀「無用」之書等損及人民私利，卻可與公利混為一談，究竟黃宗羲如何擔保他所理解的公利就等於人民私利的總和？至於賢治的當代中國，「709大抓捕」中，政府以「尋釁滋事罪」等罪名拘捕上百名維權律師（陳健佳），這些律師的理想（私利）是維護人權，但官方卻有一套「維穩」價值觀去詮釋公、私利，公、私利變得沒有區別，人民的私利隨時因踏足公利禁區而喪失理想生活。

5 中國傳統專制社會中的公、私利對立是因為君主常以一己之私代表天下的公利，故往往與天下人的私利有衝突；黃宗羲既區別君主之私與天下之公，故非本文所重，而本文旨在指出黃氏未解決的地方——天下之公與天下人之私的區別。

對此，東西方的私利觀雖有不同，但以自由而論，仍有可比較之處<sup>6</sup>，而民主論者盧梭同樣承認和肯定人性自利：「人性首要的法則是維護自身生存，人性首要的關懷是對自身關懷」（Rousseau 53）<sup>7</sup>。有別於黃氏，他提出社會契約是人間一切合法權威的基礎，在此制度下，「人生而自由，但無往不在枷鎖中」（52）：人類有天賦自由（私利）；人民的私利並非純粹地各私其利，而是存在公利的限制。這公利是由人民自願同等地讓出相關自由（私利）（61）而成，成為法律，盧梭稱之為「公意」，私利為「眾意」<sup>8</sup>。法律是對所有人起作用（喬納森·華夫 96），「主權者<sup>9</sup>對某個別對象發出的號令……不能成為一條法律，只能是一道命令」（Rousseau 79–80）。盧梭清楚地區別公、私利，故「709大抓捕」中，政府的行為是錯誤的命令（私利）而非法律（公利），剝奪人民的私利並非應然，公私、利的區別性乃理想生活所在。

## 公利、私利的確保性<sup>10</sup>

黃宗羲雖認為公利非天下人所能、所應追求<sup>11</sup>，但仍頗信任人的

6 黃宗羲所指的人的私利實為道德上的情感、欲望，即「存天理，去人欲」的人欲；盧梭的社會契約中的私利，更宜以「自利」理解之，即在自然狀態下，人為保全自己的生命、財產等而做出有利自己的行為，是有必要而迫不得已的，在道德上是成立的。但彼此皆有共通點：東方的私利側重道德上有私欲，亦即有私欲的自由，這與生理上的欲望（像吸毒的自由不可被證成）不同，故其自由可被合理證成，亦決定人的行為與價值取向，與西方的個人自由在某程度上吻合，故文中仍可統而一論之。

7 本篇引文由作者翻譯。

8 原文：“The latter (the general will 公意) considers only the general interest, whereas the former (the will of all 眾意) considers private interest” (71).

9 原文：“The public person, formed thus by union of all the others, . . . , which is called, . . . , sovereign when it is active” (Rousseau 62)

10 確保性可分為兩層，一個是確保「可以」去追求理想生活，一個是確保「能夠」達到理想生活。此部分所論的確保性在前者。

11 筆者在「公利、私利的區別性」此部分中已指出黃氏的公利、私利並無明顯的區別性，天下人各自的私利匯聚而成天下的公利，故此處毋庸贅言。（簡良如 232）

德性（簡良如 232）。筆者認為他力圖將德性注入制度，在君臣原職、法律和學校等方面確保天下人的理想生活<sup>12</sup>。像君臣、法律的設立是為天下而非己<sup>13</sup>；學校、士子應公論朝廷的是非對錯<sup>14</sup>。但筆者認為以德性為本的公利對私利仍未有確保性，因為當中充滿人治色彩。黃氏雖言「天下為主，君為客」（31），君主的等級並非至高無上<sup>15</sup>，但黃氏始終承認君與臣民的地位有別<sup>16</sup>，凌駕於國家機器之上；儒生集團的建議未必被採納，甚至因其有權箝制言論、迫害宗教而腐化<sup>17</sup>。更重要的，是黃氏的學說並沒發展出一個具神聖性的法律概念，法律仍由朝廷制定。觀乎現代中國，鄧小平改革開放，創造不少私企，使經濟突飛猛進，大大改善人民生活；但習近平執政後，走向「國進民退」，使人民的私企國有化，以致經濟遲緩，地方出現龐大的政府債券（陳建甫 73-77），讓人民承受。可見賢治下，人民的私利不受確保，理想生活可被隨時予奪。

面對如此漏洞，盧梭以凌駕一切的法律公意（公利）填補之。這公利由人民制定，對人民的私利有確保性，因為「人對同類不具任何天然權威……只有約定才可成為人間一切合法權威的基礎」（Rousseau 55-56）、「社會秩序是為其他一切權利（私利）提供基礎的一項神聖權利……是建立在約定之上」（52）：人生而平等，皆可主宰自己的生活（私利），但為確保私利，大家同等地讓渡相關自由而

12 筆者雖不認同黃氏以一套單一價值觀為人民詮釋的「理想生活」，但此部分旨在論及確保性，故姑且站在其立場去探討。

13 黃氏指出君「不以一己之利為利，而使天下受其利；不以一己之害為害，而使天下釋其害」（31）；臣「為天下，非為君」（34）；法律「藏天下於天下」（36）。

14 「必使天下之具皆出於學校……公其（天子）非是於學校」（43）。

15 「非獨至於天子遂截然無等級也」（39）。

16 「臣之與君，名異而實同」（35）。

17 「奏議無裨實用，序事無補史學者，不許傳刻。其時文……應酬代筆，已刻者皆追板燒之」、「寺觀庵堂，大者改為書院……小者改為小學……分別其有學行者，歸之學宮，其餘則各還其業」；此處所指的「儒生集團」可包括丞相、臣下、士子。（鄧育仁 33-34）

匯聚成公意，構成法律。所以，既然非公利不可保私利，故服從公利即服從自己，仍像以往般自由（61）；若有人「侵犯其中任何一個成員（的利益）就是在攻擊整個共同體（公利）」，全體就會強迫他服從公意（64）。可見公利對私利的確保性乃理想生活所在，而公、私利的確保性和區別性只存在於民主社會。

### 再思考公利、私利的確保性

盧梭以建立公、私利的確保性，指出社會契約「以道德與法律的平等來代替自然造成人與人之間身體上的不平等（智力、力量）」（68）。所以，無論貧富貴賤，人民都可投票得出公意（喬納森·華夫 97），帶來理想生活。但筆者認為這確保性只讓人民「可以」追求理想生活，而非「能夠」。契約賦予人民的地位是道德和法律上，卻不是經濟上。但經濟可影響一個人的自由<sup>18</sup>，乃至生活和社會，像消費、職業、金權政治。筆者只就職業方面，以馬克思的學說探討公利如何確保私利。

首先，馬克思並沒像黃宗羲、盧梭般指出人性自私自利，但私心膨脹是由創造經濟繁榮的工業化、城市化帶來的另一影響<sup>19</sup>，並提出人類的特性——「自由自覺的活動」（Marx 175），因為人能將其「生命活動本身變成自己意志和意識的對象」（175），即自己的勞動行為、結果、相關的社會關係等都屬於自己的，是有意義的。像畫

18 人們常追求的自由多屬英國哲學家伯林所言的「消極自由」，即免於外在干預而行動的自由（請注意，此處的「干預」並非指法律，因為這「枷鎖」般的干預已由盧梭的社會契約合理證成。而經濟影響自由，像一個人沒錢，就不能滿足購買其所欲的自由；若他搶掠，反而身陷囚籠，失去自由。參周保松，《政治的道德：從自由主義的觀點看》〈市場、金錢與自由〉一節。

19 筆者雖指出馬克思沒有提出人性自利一說，但不妨礙人們存在私利這一事實以及私利應否值得追求。（洪鑣德 406）。

家畫畫這行為正是他想做的，作品也是他所能、所擁有且與他密切有關，與他人不存在貿易關係。這種勞動又稱作「實踐」，姑且稱之為「理想勞動」<sup>20</sup>，而筆者認為這屬於私利，因為人的理想勞動各異。

但在資本（私利）社會中，這種勞動卻被扭曲為「異化勞動」，即令人的勞動行為、結果等與己無關（173），屬於他人（資本家），使勞動意義「變成僅僅維持自己生存」（175），無異於動物（174–175）。像今天的富士康工人表示若不上班，工資根本不足以維生（潘毅 237），更遑論能否轉尋理想職業；這雖是嚴重例子，但其異化勞動卻不同程度地存在於現今社會。

筆者並不採取馬克思「廢私存公」的做法，但建議建立有其「理想勞動」精神的民主社會<sup>21</sup>。這能賦予社會契約沒有給予人民的基本經濟地位，稍異於法律公意，在經濟上，畢竟貧富有別，人民需因應自身而讓渡一定的私利，匯聚成公利，這公利會對所有人起同等作用。這雖看似損害個人自由，但其實法律確保一個人擁有其財產的自由，同時也限制了他人擁有該財產的自由<sup>22</sup>。建立「理想勞動」精神的方法有很多，而筆者認為無條件基本收入<sup>23</sup>最吻合此種精神，既有助人民實踐理想勞動，又比現存的社會福利體制更具普遍性<sup>24</sup>，因為

20 因為馬克思在此處描述的勞動是屬於理想狀態下的勞動，又為更好地與隨後談到的「異化勞動」作比較，故決定稱「自由自覺的活動」（實踐）為「理想勞動」。

21 筆者不取馬克思「廢私存公」的做法，而用其「理想勞動」的精神，是因為《1844年經濟學哲學手稿》是馬克思在青年時所作，較關注人性的自我異化；成年後不再強調人的類本質，而開始以政治經濟學的觀點批評社會典章制度。筆者仍以盧梭的民主社會（或資本社會）為基礎，並非欲以馬克思學說將社會典章制度改頭換面，而是糾正關鍵問題。相關的馬克思思想發展簡史，可參見洪鑣德 406。

22 像原本公園是一項公利，是屬於人民的，大家有使用它的自由（但不可破壞它，因為這等於破壞公利）；政府將它賣給富商，它就成為一項私利，受私有財產權確保，雖確保該富商擁有和使用它的自由，但無可否認，在理論上，法律亦同時限制他人使該地的自由。

23 亦稱作全民基本收入。

24 所謂「普遍性」，即在經濟上，人民同等地讓渡的私利而匯聚成的公利，會對所有人起同等作用。

它是政府定額、定期發放給每位成年的社會成員的收入<sup>25</sup>，沒有條件限制。它雖不能確保人民舒適的生活水平，但可減少全民的就業壓力，騰出空間自我培訓，或免除生計考慮，挑選適合自己的理想工作（菲利浦·范·帕雷斯 120）。若富士康工人生活在此種精神下的社會，不只「可以」，而且「能夠」追求各自的理想生活（私利）。故經濟上的公利、私利的確保性更是理想生活所在。

## 結語

公、私利有別，但關係密切，它們的區別性和確保性等關係只會真正地存在於民主社會，不會發生在賢治社會。它們對形成理想社會和生活尤其重要，但只在政治社會上是不足的，還需兼及經濟方面。人民幸福所在，並非要大公無私，也不是放任自由，而是貴在公、私利間的靈活調配。

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25 無論貧富貴賤、獨自生活、與他人同居、是否願意工作，每個成年的社會成員都可以和理應得到這份定額收入，不只是公民，而是所有具永久居留權者都可獲得。（菲利浦·范·帕雷斯撰 109）

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## 老師短評

金佑同學一文，嘗試以人的本質為切入點，探討符合人性的理想社會與制度。文章放棄以公利、私利對立的視角，着重兩者之間的協調機制，討論公利如何確保私利，反思如何建立一個有效的制度，讓公利和理想社會的特質得以彰顯。金佑同學能根據需要按輕重主次整合經典文本資料，適切拓展，實屬不錯的嘗試。（呂永昇）



# **Paradox of a Purposeful Life: Oedipus' Tragedy from the Buddhist Perspective**

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A year ago, when I attended the admission interview of the Medicine Faculty, the first question of why I would want to become a doctor came as no surprise. Of course, I passionately described my grand aspirations of saving lives and safeguarding public health. It is somehow ironic, because I question myself at times whether I truly understand what exactly saving lives is. However, according to the social norms, when purpose and meaning are the fundamentals of good life, it makes no sense to say otherwise.

Interestingly, this essay aims to suggest otherwise. By engaging Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* with Thich Nhat Hanh's translation of the Mahayana Buddhism's *The Heart Sutra* and his commentary *The Heart of Understanding*, I argue that the purposeless and meaningless aspects of life should not remain a taboo to be feared and avoided. They could have their significance in leading the good life.

## **Analysis**

*The Heart Sutra* embodies the Buddha's core teachings that the practice of the perfection of transcendent wisdom, or prajna-paramita, is

known to be “the Insight that Brings Us to the Other Shore” and “to put an end to all kinds of suffering” (“New Heart Sutra”). This advocacy is based on the prerequisite that this is a world dominated by sufferings, and we as living beings could never escape experiencing hardships.

It is especially true for Oedipus. The tragedy unfolded as he, the King of Thebes, promised his people to save them from the devastating plague by avenging the murderer of his predecessor, Laius. Oedipus had always been a hero. Despite tireless attempts to rewrite his destiny, the search step by step unveiled the realization of the Oracle’s prophecies that he killed his biological father, revealed to be Laius, and slept with his biological mother, who turned out to be his queen Jocasta.

Oedipus’ line “I live in fear. . . . I have no choice” (lines 1244–1245) contrasts sharply with his earlier line “[f]ear is no excuse” (line 302). “What man ever suffered grief like this?” (line 1777) echoes to the Buddhism’s prerequisite. Oedipus has two well-defined purposes of life. One is to responsibly and righteously protect his people, for example, from the epidemic. Another is to be the master of his fate, altering the predetermined sinful misfortunes, including his effort to flee Corinth where he believed to be his birthplace.

Yet, sufferings haunt around as Jocasta pleaded, “Oedipus – // you were born to suffer, born // to misery and grief” (lines 1354–1356). The seemingly meaningful pursuits in life leads Oedipus to his self-destruction, ultimately blinding his eyes. Bodhisattva may have commented: if only Oedipus could have read The Heart Sutra. Considering the Four Noble Truths, Oedipus could only comprehend the first phase, Dukkha, interpreted as the truth of suffering.

Oedipus fails to proceed to the second stage to recognize Tanha, or

the cause of suffering. The immediate cause is his egocentric attachments, rooted in the Three Poisons, namely greed, hatred and delusion. Oedipus claimed the throne by solving Sphinx's riddle, and in the eyes of the people of Thebes "[i]t was a sign. A god was in it." (line 73). Arguably, his motivation for the relentless search to remove the curse from the city could originate from his desires to be admired, worshipped as a godlike figure and trusted in times of adversity.

Oedipus' accusation of Creon, brother of Jocasta, and Tiresias, the blind prophet of their conspiracy to overthrow him when Tiresias pointed out that he was the killer further supports this inference. His theory on "Money, power, one great skill surpassing another, // . . . , other men's envy grows and grows" (lines 519–520) shows how hostility is gradually developed when truth becomes unexpected and unbearable. With overwhelming bitterness, he concocted the allegations to convince himself with the illusion that he was guilt-free.

The underlying cause is his distorted concept of "self". Upon first appearance in the play, Oedipus reaffirmed his identity, "Everybody everywhere knows who I am: Oedipus. King." (line 11). "My power is absolute in Thebes" (line 313) demonstrates Oedipus' faith in his authority to be enduring and mighty. His unexplainable belief in the truthfulness of the prognostications proves his innocence of the network of causes. He failed to perceive the impermanent and interdependent nature of existence of beings and development of circumstances.

The Five Aggregates conclude "self" comprising of both physical and psychological elements, including feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. They all "bear the mark of Emptiness" ("New Heart Sutra"). The same rationale applies to the Eighteen Realms of Phenomena

that describe the world view. Therefore, the tendency in human nature to believe the actuality of an exclusive “self” and a fated life is flawed. This is due to the impression of different contrasting qualities, for example, we care about survival because we fear death.

Oedipus’ status of being powerful only becomes promising when witnessing the struggles of the powerless, for instance, the civilians plagued by the Sphinx. His attachment to the transitory possessions of knowledge and fame drives him to follow the traces of the so-called destiny. Similarly, he suffered because he regarded himself corrupt and immoral. These criticisms are justifiable when there is the entrenched prototype of virtues in the community. These invisible tags, therefore in reality, are “empty”.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s illustration of the sufferings of the prostitutes provides further insight (*The Heart of Understanding* 155–157). The conception of being defiled makes their lives hell. By taking a step backwards, they may realize that others’ sense of purity is built on their despair. This differentiation then becomes indefensible, because they do not bear the sole responsibility of their way of life. In most cases, the heavy burdens of poverty lure them into prostitution. This logic eventually relieves their sufferings.

The self-created labels, “sinful” and “impure” respectively, reflect the commonalities between Oedipus and the prostitutes. Both wind themselves in the false ideology of “self”. They develop a strong attachment to the ideal qualities: to be virtuous and pure, also echoing to our primary discussion: to be purposeful; when all could only be accentuated by the undesirable qualities (157). Oedipus was clueless about this line of reasoning, consequently suffered endlessly with his pursuit to escape committing “sins”.

This brings us to another concept outlined by Thich Nhat Hanh: interbeing. One prominent example is that through a piece of paper, we acknowledge the existence of the trees, the rain, the clouds, the Sun, the timbermen, their parents, the wheat and even abstractly the time, the space and our minds (141–142). Thus, the acceptance that one contains everything in the universe corresponds to the visualization that one is “empty” because it does not have a permanent independent “self” (144).

Oedipus was extremely disturbed by his unethical acts, even though all were unintended. But when we explicate the interbeing of the blood flowing in his flesh, we are well aware of the subsistence of his parents then his grandparents, the water then the ocean, the minerals then the stones, the air then the atmosphere. It is subsequently reasonable to suggest that his last life could once be a cloud, a plant, a fish or simply anything. Deductively, his biological parents are not wholly accountable for his birth (148–150).

However, it must be highlighted that this is not meant to absolve those who deliberately commit sinful deeds. To determine that the sufferings Oedipus placed himself in are unnecessarily torturing, it must be made clear that his circumstances are involuntary, but how? According to the *pratitya samutpada* (Dzogchen Ponlop 8–9), occurrence of each experience in life is due to the happening of a previous incident and in preparation for a future encounter, such that everything is changeable and interdependent.

Tracing back, the origin of the curse was Laius' transgression to abduct and rape the son of Pelops, Chrysippus. Mythologists suggest that the social mores back then allowed Laius to court Chrysippus, hence Laius' craving was potentially to humiliate Chrysippus (Rosenman 119–132). In the meantime, Oedipus would be nowhere to be found. He would have no way to intervene in the dispute, even though he would very much have

wanted to. He might have intercepted the drunken Laius from having sex with Jocasta, but this is ultimately imagined.

Burdened with the curse, Laius and Jocasta could have made the choice to guarantee the death of their son Oedipus. Yet, Jocasta handed over the baby to the shepherd and ordered to “abandon” him “on a mountain” (line 1480). Her decision thus becomes incomprehensible, especially when she was also overwhelmed by fear of the potential realization of the prophetic words.

By considering the pregnancy and birth of Oedipus as the sixth link “contact” between his mother and himself, the seventh link “sensation” was developed in Jocasta from the experiences of, for example, seeing his tiny curling fingers, hearing his first loud cry or even feeling the foetal movement. It gave rise to the eighth link “craving” when Jocasta’s motherly nature was prompted. The desire not to directly inflict harm on her own flesh and blood, and to avoid suffering from immense guilt and pain beyond words, naturally established.

The shepherd was expected to obey the queen’s command. He had no reason not to, or else he would be subject to severe punishment within the hierarchy if exposed. Even so, when pity stirred his heart, the one moment he felt deeply moved was already influential enough to change his mind. The “contact” of seeing and touching the baby stimulates the shepherd’s “sensation” of compassion, following with the “craving” to spare his life.

The significance of the unpredictable nature of every character’s decision made at each crossroads weaving into the network of causes and conditions challenges the pursuit of purpose in life. If in order to lead a good life, then Jocasta’s purpose was to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy, and the shepherd’s purpose was to be dutiful and obedient. However, the



illustrations above prove that the ever-changing circumstances in life could pull them away from attaining the purpose, ironically end up pursuing purposeless.

The same applies to Oedipus when he aimed at regaining control over his destiny. If fate does exist, then Oedipus' tragedy would be inevitable as it was the punishment for his father's sin. All his efforts would be in vain, because he could only change the present but not the past. So, his purpose could not stand. If fate does not exist, then his phobia of the Oracle would be the cause of suffering, guiding him to experience the self-fulfilling prophecies. Without overcoming the fear, his purpose could still never be accomplished.

## **Conclusion**

Back to the primary question of whether purpose is a must to a good life, I argue that purpose is equally empty as all other phenomena, when it has neither an intrinsic value nor independent nature. Oedipus' heroic aspiration to serve the people is always appreciated, but his persistence in rewriting his "fate" creates the tragedy, showing that developing a strong attachment to some purposes may bring sufferings and become self-defeating.

Similarly, in clinical settings, my purpose to save lives contradicts to withdrawing life-sustaining treatments from patients suffering incurable or terminal illnesses. However, forcefully inserting feeding tubes or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation may only increase patients' sufferings or even go against their will to die with dignity. I have to be purposeless in some situations.

Undeniably, being purposeful may help us grow and prosper. Yet, sometimes being purposeless may encourage a lesser attachment to different pursuits, especially when circumstances are out of our control. I still believe in getting the best out of ourselves, just that purposeless could serve to fine-tune our status, so that we suffer less.

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## Teacher’s comment:

LEUNG’s article is a very good example of intertextual “close-readings.” In her in-depth reading of Sophocles’ masterpiece *Oedipus the King* with Buddhist concepts (such the Four Noble Truths, Three Poisons, Five Aggregates, emptiness, interbeing and etc.), LEUNG demonstrates her ability to analyse the existential predicament of Oedipus and human

at large. Surprisingly, Oedipus looks like a psycho through the lens of the grand master Buddha. Through this imagined therapy session, LEUNG also helps us to rethink about the relationship between purpose and well-being of life critically. (CHENG Wai Pang Damian)

# 淺談《心經》與《存在主義是一種人道主義》對行善的認知

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## 引言

2020年對於很多人來說可能是十分艱辛的一年，由去年（2019年）的社會運動、環境問題，到今年的新冠肺炎。其中，澳洲更是自去年9月開始的各省山火至今年年初仍未熄滅（〈澳洲山火〉）。在云云眾多有關澳洲山火的新聞當中，有一段最令人印象深刻的，講述到有一隻樹熊在公路上向路人求救，好心的路人給予這隻樹熊自己的飲用水，但樹熊卻因路人用了錯誤的方法餵水，令水直接沖入到肺部而導致吸入性肺炎致死（Lee）。另外近日的新冠肺炎，其中內地李文亮醫生在病毒爆發前，已經在微信警告同行將有傳染性高，類似SARS的肺炎出現，換來的卻是被派出所「網際網路上發布不實言論」作出警告和訓示，最後李醫生亦正正因確診感染新冠肺炎而逝世。雖然李醫生最後被當局追勳為烈士，卻引起不少華人及國際社會的激烈迴響。澳洲山火中的樹熊和李文亮醫生的案件不禁令人反思我們對於行善的規限與尺度。何謂善惡？我們為何要行善？我們對行善界限和尺度又到底認識有多深？本文將分析分別代表東方宗教

的《心經》和西方無神論思想的《存在主義是一種人道主義》兩個文本，探討兩個思想對行善的標準與尺度的看法，從而研究佛教與存在主義對善惡的看法、標準和尺度，來思考行善的意義。

## 善與惡的標準——《心經》與《存在主義是一種人道主義》的比較

有別於其他宗教，《心經》與《存在主義是一種人道主義》都無獨有偶地對善惡的觀念沒有絕對明確的標準，卻仍然對事情的善惡有一定的看法。

對佛家而言，世間萬物本性皆空，所以善惡的概念亦是在人對事物的認知而建構出來的。《心經》內曾提及，「色不異空，空不異色；色即是空，空即是色。受想行識，亦復如是」（一行禪師 141）。意思是指，構成每一個人、每一個「我」的五蘊（色、受、想、行、識），其實皆是「空」的。所有事物都是因為緣而構成及存在，但同時亦會因條件的變化而有所改變，因此一切都並非永恆，此乃「本性皆空」。所以，一切的善與惡，都是由一定的因緣而構成，當這些因緣存在，善惡的標準才會出現；但當這些條件消失，善惡的標準亦隨之改變，因而「性空」。這就是黃嘉樹所講的事物本性皆空，但其的存在是基於因緣所產生，變化無常，不可以固定而恆久。（25-36）以事物「善惡」的觀念是因相互依存而產生。正如，潘宗光教授在《心經與生活智慧》一書就以夫妻名分的概念去解釋和理解空的概念。未婚的男子不能稱自己為丈夫，必須結婚後有妻才可以稱自己為夫；同時未婚的女子不可以稱自己為妻，必須在婚後，有丈夫才可稱自己為妻。（40）善惡的概念也是一樣，它們是並存的。就如一行禪師在「善惡之縛」提到，我們不可能只是善而把惡全都清除，因為有惡，才有善的存在，反之亦然。當有英雄就必定要設置一個對手，

佛需要魔來扮演惡的角色，佛才能成佛。就像上文提及的夫妻概念，沒有夫就不能有妻，「空掉了獨立的存在」，佛這一個善的概念亦本是「性空」。所以佛是由非佛的因素構成，善亦是由非善的因素構成。潘宗光提到，肯定與否定並不存在截然分離的界線，而是互相滲透和影響的。就像磁石上的南北兩極一樣，既是相反，也是相成。基於因緣所生法，事物呈現出變化無常的表面現象。看似兩邊對立，其實是互動依存，沒有獨立的存在，所以根據佛家的法稱為空。（41）而我們對好壞、善惡的認知亦如此，都是一種對立的概念。由於我們了解到事物既有兩邊對立卻又互相依存的特性，我們不應從表面現象作出取捨判別，而是深入認識現象背後的因緣條件，明白兩者的關聯性。回到澳洲山火樹熊的例子，路人見到樹熊從火海中逃走，出於憐憫幫助它，絕對是出於善的因，但卻種出了惡果令樹熊得到吸入性肺炎去世了。這正正就是上文提到的善惡相縛，凡事都沒有絕對的善，亦沒有絕對的惡。

同樣地，對沙特的存在主義而言，因為沒有神的存在，導致善惡的概念失去一個絕對的標準。早於沙特《存在主義是一種人道主義》的公開講座，西方哲學家已開始推崇無神思想的存在主義。其中以杜斯妥也夫斯基在《卡拉馬助夫兄弟們》中的「如果上帝不存在，一切是否被允許？」論題，以及尼采「上帝已死」帶出對基督宗教教義失去其影響力的討論最為人熟知。可是，在沙特《存在主義是一種人道主義》這公開講座的歷史時期，更令人反思基督宗教及神存在的意義。在同一時期，納粹德軍在佔領法國時所扶植的傀儡政府（法奸）開始遭人清算，同時世界亦經歷猶太人種族屠殺和美國向日本投放原子彈等等人間悲劇，令不少人開始反思神的存在，以及人的善惡標準。所以沙特的存在主義認為，因為上帝並不再存在，事情的善惡及好壞已沒有絕對的標準。一般人會提倡本質先於存在，如其他有神論者，事情好壞的本質在存在時已預先設好其價值。相反地，沙特提出

存在先於本質。他提倡每件事情或事物是在沒有先設的價值，而是依據人們的選擇而建構的，因此對沙特而言，事情是沒有絕對的善惡標準。若以存在主義的角度去分析，李文亮醫生的行為並不應該用善惡的標準去分析，對他而言他亦只不過是依照自己的發現警告身邊的同行，以自己醫生的身分選擇做他認為是對的行為，事件的本質亦所以無分善惡。

## 對他人的責任

根據上文而言，存在主義和心經並沒有絕對的善惡標準，那麼我們就不用行善了嗎？雖然無論佛教和存在主義對事情的善惡都沒有絕對的標準，但兩者都共同地給予我們一個行善的原因。兩者亦同時指出，我們行善最大的原因，就是對他人及自己負責任。

就以佛教而言，正正是因為萬物皆空，事物都是由互相影響的因緣而產生，所以我們每一個人都必須對他人負上責任，做出我們認為對的事。在《般若之心》，一行禪師就以《心經》緣起性空的概念提出了「互即互入」的概念。他用一張紙的構成來比喻說明「互即互入」的概念。根據一行禪師，一張紙的構成是因為很多非紙的因素構成，包括原材料樹木、灌溉樹木的雨水和雲、支持樹木生長的陽光、砍伐樹木以取得原材料的伐木工人等等（141-143）；而同時亦有更多看似與紙更遠的因緣的元素而構成：例如食物讓工人溫飽而獲得動力造紙、伐木工人的父母等等，如此類推。這些看似與造紙並無關係的元素其實都是紙的因緣，無論少了以上任何一項因素都會令這一張紙不復存在。「互即互入」的概念強調現象之間的互相依存，看似沒有關係的現象其實對另外的現象抱有責任。從一行禪師《般若之心》內「馬里拉妓女」一節提到，沒有一個人可以宣稱自己沒有責任。因為正如那一張紙，每件事物都不能單獨存在，而是其他事物互即互入



地存在。所以我們應該對周圍的事物負上責任（156）。因此，我們不應拘泥於善惡的概念，而是因為要對他人和其他事物負責而行善。例如澳洲山火的例子，若路人不選擇拯救樹熊，樹熊的滅絕會影響澳洲的生態系統，從而可能會導致路人的食物鏈斷裂，而最後會因互即互入的理論而影響到自己。同時若身處在香港的我們無視澳洲山火的問題，澳洲的山火會直接加劇地球的氣候變化，而且澳洲山火亦直接影響了國家的經濟，香港與澳洲緊密的經貿合作亦因此會受到影響。引用一行禪師「互即互入」的理論，即使身處香港的我們亦需要對氣候暖化而導致的山火負上責任。

另一方面，按照沙特的看法，因為沒有上帝給予的絕對標準，所以人類有自由的權利去選擇自己存在的目的與意義，同時也應為自己，甚至他人的存在負上責任。而且沙特曾說，存在主義的首要條件就是「主觀性」的存在。因為沙特的無神存在主義撇除了上帝作為神聖至上的客觀標準，所以事情的善惡好壞就取決於人類為自己存在所定下的標準。同時，正因為人擁有根據自己主觀的價值標準而訂立自己存在意義的權利，人必須對自己甚至他人為自己的選擇負上責任。就如上文所提及人稱法奸的德軍傀儡政府人員，有部分人會為自己辯護，是為了家人才成為法奸。根據沙特，每個人對自己的存在意義是不可能沒有選擇的權利，所以法奸絕對可以選擇不成為出賣自己祖國的傀儡。但既然他們作出出賣祖國的選擇，就要負上未來德軍戰敗後被人清算的責任，而且亦應為因其背叛國家而犧牲的人命負上責任。就如沙特在文中引用軍隊軍官在戰爭中的選擇作為例子，軍事領袖在戰爭負責組織進攻，無論選擇進或退，亦必須對他帶領的士兵性命負上責任。同樣，李文亮醫生即使知道會遭受當局的壓力，亦選擇警告同行。他的選擇正正是出於對同僚甚至是市民的責任。在與病毒的戰爭中，他因選擇了將資訊轉發給同伴而受到當局的壓力；就像沙特引用的例子，戰爭中的軍官因為士兵的性命而選擇推攻而受到上級的壓

力一樣。

## 行善的界線

既然我們明白到善惡並沒有絕對的標準，但行善其中一個最大的原因是對他人負責，那麼行善對於我們而言有一定的界線嗎？

對於佛教而言，我們行善的同時亦不應執着我們的行為是否一定會帶出善的果。《心經》提到，「是故空中無色，無受想行識，無眼耳鼻舌身意，無色聲香味觸法，無眼界，乃至無意識界。」（一行禪師 141）人們對事物的經驗，以及所衍生的概念，都是由這十八界所結合。眼、耳、鼻、舌、身、意，佛教稱其為「六根」，是讓我們認識外界的感覺器官；色、聲、香、味、觸、法，佛教稱其為「六塵」，是對應「六根」的外界環境；最後，耳識、鼻識、舌識、身識、意識，佛教稱其為「六識」，是六種認識的作用。「六根」，「六塵」，「六識」這十八個元素的和合，再加上接觸，互相為緣而產生對一切法的認識（黃家樹 42-44）。人間的諸法都是由種種的因緣按一定規律而構成。若具備條件現象就生，條件缺乏現象就會滅。而且，事物的條件只會在特定的時間、空間和因緣下才能存在，無時無刻都在變化。我們對於事物善惡的觀念亦如此。因為條件俱備，事物才能夠成為我們概念中的善；但若條件消失了，事物中「善」亦可以因無常而改變，甚至失去。所以我們不應該對身邊事物的善惡過於執着，才不會陷入法執。一如澳洲山火中的樹熊，路人不應因種下的惡果而不繼續行善。因為現象的構成並不是因為路人一己之力而造成，亦包括其他因素，例如政府對拯救這場山火是否積極。若路人單單覺得因為自己給樹熊餵水就能被救，就會因為覺得現象世界之構成是可以單靠孤立的條件而陷入法執。相反，若路人只着力當下為樹熊餵水而這一刻救了樹熊，其他的就放手於其他的因素，那麼我們就不會陷入對於種下善或惡果的執着。因此即使善惡相縛，我們仍要行

善，不能縱容惡繼續存在。

同樣地，對於沙特的存在主義而言，我們個人的選擇除了對他人需要負責任，同時我們的選擇亦會為人類設立共同的道德標準。既然沒有了神設立至高無上的標準，我們就要創立一種世俗的道德，以及一個遵守法律的社會。人們亦必須認真對待這些標準價值，例如人要誠實、不打老婆、不說謊、撫養子女等等。有部分人認為，正正是因為存在主義認為上帝再不存在，所以這些先天的道德價值標準變回隨之而失去。人是絕對自由的，但同時，人在世上必須對自己的所有決定而負責：不單是為自己，甚至為他人，以及所有人類負責。雖然我們無法在每一個人及任何人身上找到可以稱為人性的普遍本質，然而一種人類處境的普遍性仍然是有的。因為人在宇宙中的基本處境有一定的限制，所以即使人的意圖有所不同，在限制下任何一個意圖都具有普遍的價值（薩特 23）。所以當一個人去選擇作出一個決定時，他不單需要為自我承擔負責，也絕對地承擔其責任對文化模式的相對性影響。（23）在我們日常生活中，排隊的概念亦是同樣地衍生出來的。因為一個人產生了覺得插隊會影響到他人自由的想法而開始排隊，就建成了一個共同的價值，開始跟隨這一起排隊。李文亮醫生的事件亦有相同的價值，正正因為李醫生認為他的同僚甚至國民也有對病毒的知情權，他的案件令其他地區、國家甚至國民開始意識到當局對病毒資訊透明度不足的問題，同時亦開始反思中國對言論自由、資訊透明度的問題。因此我們行善時不單單對自己，對他人要負責，更要明白到對共同價值的必然影響。

## 結語

佛教與存在主義，兩派的思想雖然對行善的出發點截然不同，但兩者在善惡的標準，行善的原因及行善的界限亦有相似之處。

佛教認為因為本性皆空，所以善與惡都是因為因緣條件而構成，

是無常的，所以並沒有一定的標準。但正正基於因緣互即互入的關係，我們更加應該行善。因為我們行善或惡，最終亦會對我們自身有影響。我們卻絕不應本着行善一定會種出善果的想法，因為不同的條件因素會隨時間消失改變而變成惡果，但因為我們無力去改變其他的條件，我們能做到的是着眼當下而行善，否則我們就會陷下法執。

存在主義則認為沒有神的至上價值，所以我們有絕對的自由去選擇自己的行為和價值。同時我們亦需要為自己的選擇負責：不單單是為自我負責，亦需要為其他人負責。因為我們的決定不單會影響到他人存在的自由，更會為我們共同的文化價值作出影響。所以即使沒有至上的善惡標準，我們亦需要因為我們共同的文化價值而行善；而且，我們不單要為行惡自我負上責任，更要為他人的自由，甚至社會價值的影響負上責任。

總括而言，兩者亦殊途同歸，即使沒有一定善惡的標準，因為對自己，他人甚至社會的責任和影響，我們亦應該行善。在現今善惡標準黑白模糊的社會，這也正好可以讓我們反思行動的價值和影響，為我們對善惡的堅持重新給予一個肯定。

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## 老師短評

本文以《存在主義是一種人道主義》和《心經》的思想去探討行善的界限和尺度。文章的文本選擇很恰當，因為在課程指定讀本中，討論善惡問題的文本不少，但此文就選了兩個對善惡沒有絕對標準的文本作比較。文章對兩篇文本的善惡觀，對他人的責任等觀點分析合理，不過相對而言，同學對《心經》的把握較好，《存在主義是一種人道主義》的某些觀點，如「主觀性」，可解釋得更好。又，同學解說觀點時有時引用過多同質的例子，以致文章結構有點累贅，句子用詞也有一些沙石。（楊彩杰）



# Hope and Hemlock

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Do you know the Moirai's work? Do you know the Keres' claws, Phobos and Deimos' shadows? Do you know the taste of hemlock? You who have guided me to realize a utopia that I have no place in; you know.

Our ancestors were men born free and wild, but they united forces and entered the civil state because an individual's subsistence was no longer possible in the state of nature (Rousseau 60). They gathered as a people to pursue a common good<sup>1</sup>. The emergence of a political body shall be to lead the aggregated forces according to the general will for the common good. It shall exercise its sovereignty for the public welfare but nothing more. Our ancestors had trusted Aeneas, yet he was a robber in a sentry's disguise. He and his men possessed the natural power of materials and strength, and once they obtained the political power to mobilize the people too, they dropped their glamour and preyed on the helpless people to further their own interests. If a government cannot maintain peace among the people

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<sup>1</sup> The common good is the public interest, the highest common factor of all individuals' particular interests without the conflicting parts (71). To quote a noble named Rousseau, "[R]emove from these same wills (mine: private wills that consider private interest) the pluses and minuses that cancel each other out, and what remains as the sum of the differences is the general will" (71). Thus, in a civil state where the general will belies any public matter, everyone's interests can be equally protected.

and cannot fulfill the purpose of the association of the people, then it is illegitimate. Our ancestors would have run away, but they had nowhere to go, for surviving in the state of nature was no longer possible. So they protested, and were silenced; they resisted, and were suppressed.

Our history has no shortage of legendary warriors who overthrew a dynasty. But in the end, they were merely lusting for power. The new king would impose laws upon laws to reward his supporters and punish his challengers to stabilize his rulership. Yet heavy laws never bring political and social stability. As the number of laws increases, the king's power swells, the people's control over their lives shrink, giving usurpers all the more reasons to topple the government (黃宗羲 36). Kings rose and fell, like smokes on a rolling wheel, crashing over those of us on the ground and painted a glorious trail with our cheap gore.

We rebels dared not hope for a ruler instead of a rogue; we dared not hope for peace and prosperity instead of suppression and slavery. All we wanted was rightful retaliation. But you, shrouded in mystery, came to us and spoke of the coming of a legitimate ruler, an altruistic character who strived not for his own interest, but for the welfare of all-under-Heaven (31). You bestowed me the Ring of Gyges, which granted me unlimited power for 100 days. For the first time, we dared hope. I willed; the tyrant collapsed, his armies crumbled. Shackles were shattered and peasants ran wild in joy. The people tore down the golden veil of our broken city, shattered the pensive looks on the tympanums with their dirty feet. Sickles and scythes reaped no crops; they reaped the fruit of righteous vengeance, ripe with the ichor of aristocrats; but they also reaped the fruits of sinful avarice, heavy with the blood of the defenseless.



I stopped those who listened and slew those who did not. My name was no longer chanted; it was a prayer murmured by dying nobles and hopeless mothers; it was a sneer, a curse, a scream, on the lips of my old comrades. I am Adrestia, the handmaiden of Nemesis, the bringer of just retribution. For fifty days my wrath scorched the city, until you came again in an incandescent storm of light and fire, and wrenched my vengeful heart from my chest. Just or not, Adrestia was a savage warrior, a perpetuator of the state of nature like any other brutes in this city, which had been turned into the battlefield of discrete aggregations of private interests. It was time to bring the people into a true civil state, to guide them to form their general will for their common good, and to give them a legitimate ruler.

I forced everyone into the agora for a public deliberation; the shaky aristocrats and the sobbing children, the rabid wolves and the ravenous vultures. I saw, for the first time, the wolves' fear of betrayal and the vultures' fear of starvation. The predators' eyes reflected the same despair in the prey's, even as their owners barked and shrieked at me. I silenced them with a bleeding heart, so I could speak of the urgent matter of electing a legitimate leader.

Hesitantly, a noble noted that putting our city's fate on a person's virtues and wisdom is too risky, for it is human nature to laze off and concern only self-interests (31). Indeed. Though the fear of our ancient deities has kept some of our rulers in check and granted them legitimacy among the people, there are often conflicting interpretations for the same religious dogma, and there is no telling if the meanings will be twisted by the ruler for personal purposes. There must be other ways, besides blind trust and religion, to keep in check a leader's power. Another noble named Rousseau proposed the

separation of authoritative power and legislative power, lest the legislator creates unjust laws to his personal ends (82). His idea was supported by a smith, who claimed that the separation of power into different branches also enables a more efficient running of the government, just as the division of labor improves the dexterity of workers and prompts inventions of new means to streamline a branch's operation (Smith 135).

But what if the government branches collaborate to abuse power? There must be an external safeguard. Huang, an Eastern scholar, suggested that scholars at school shall be encouraged to put the ruler under scrutiny and offer him advice (45). I was dubious. Can we trust the elites represent all-under-Heaven and not just themselves? Doubtlessly they are well-educated, but will they always be correct? While the school members may be allowed to discuss politics in the government's grace, will the government take their advice? I realized then, our political system should grant every citizen certain power to supervise, change, and possibly replace a government.

While a stable political structure bestows the government the license to mobilize people, the right to freedom enables the public to resist the government's power. A strange traveller with two tiny windows on his nose said in his homeland, while natural liberty stemming from force is what topples a government, such civil liberties as freedom of expression and participation rights underlay any subversion that leads to the ultimate downfall of a government. But unregulated liberty is not the answer to social stability. It was the unbridled natural liberty of the rulership which contributed to Aeneas' arbitrary government, yet on the other hand, it is self-contradictory to suggest any form of stability can be achieved by the people's full freedom to overthrow a government. There is no clearer evidence than the gruesome atrocities committed by some of our people

after the fall of our past leaders. Hence, the government's license and the civilians' liberty should balance each other. One shall not exist without the other, or it will expand indefinitely and revert the civil state to the state of nature. But the powers of the people and the government need not be enemies. Rights to participate in politics, for example, encourages people to express their opinions for the government to improve its stability, who can use the subsequently increased power to reinforce citizens' right to freedom. Laws shall set the boundaries of the liberty of the government and that of the people, but education is required for both parties to know how to use their liberties to their greatest advantages, which is through cooperative efforts for the common good.

Rousseau reminded us, that despite its cohesive vigilance against corruption, there will be tension within the people, for a person's liberty often impairs the other's. Therefore, everyone who is rational will agree only to the same obligations and shall receive only the same rights (59)<sup>2</sup>. A man called Mill proposed the harm principle, which deems it righteous to curb a person's liberty only when it will do harm to others (99). When universalized, the principle fundamentally suggests that everyone has the maximum degree of freedom, legally restrained only where it will do harm to the others. Thus, the tension between citizens' individual liberties can be resolved through equality.

The mobs had calmed down, so I released the silencing charm on them. At that moment, the Ring of Gyges gave us a vision of a prosperous city, where every citizen spoke cautiously and listened humbly, for they

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2 His words were such: Whether it is the statement of one man to another man, or of one man to a people, the following sort of talk will always be equally nonsensical. "I make an agreement with you that is wholly at your expense and wholly to my advantage; and, for as long as it pleases me, I will observe it and so will you." (59).

knew the fallibility of their opinions. Speeches of truth and falsity were expressed, and from their collision, a deeper and livelier impression of truth was experienced. Diversity and originality were welcomed, and from them, ingenious ideas grew and propelled various developments (115). The equal right to freedom achieves more than social harmony, but social progress, if every citizen has the respect for diversity, the spirit for improvement, and the deep consideration for the common good. It certainly requires education more than laws to realize this dream<sup>3</sup>. However, education is only a guidance. Ultimately, the general will may choose to abandon the old common good for a new cause, one that may, possibly, upsets the equal liberty in the state. But then, we should be aware of the fallibility of the utopia we dreamed of, and our future generations must always be allowed to revise their common project and the ideal of their legitimate government.

Anyhow, we yearned to realize the vision. Rousseau reiterated that the association of a people comes before a government, and so a legitimate government must keep the people together and honors the ends to which the people is formed. Mill added that the government shall, with the help of laws and education, secures everyone's equal right to liberty, for it enables social stability and human progress.

The discussion went deep into the night. Our hope towards our future rose with the moon. But then, the people turned to me. They looked at me, and they saw the sister of fear and panic. They wanted this threat gone. Rousseau and Mill tried to calm them down and discuss for a consensus,

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3 I wondered if this vision was a prophecy. Perhaps it was! Perhaps our people will be taught of the inseparable tie between social utility and individual utility, so that their personal ends will be planned in accordance with the public welfare. Perhaps the cohesion within our people will arise from the cultivation of human empathy and moral feelings, just as the Eastern scholars preached.

lest there be a tyranny of the majority, but to no avail. There will always be a tyranny of the majority. In our new city, this giant will be restrained by laws, it will be tamed by education, yet still, it will be in its grace that the minority lives. And it has no grace towards me. Before the hordes could advance on me, I soared like an eagle into the night sky. I flew towards the moon, which had sailed to the center of the sky. It marked the start of the first day of our new city. It marked the end of my 100th day. Phobos and Deimos paralyzed my limbs; Keres dragged me down. I screamed out for you, but I did not know your name. I fell.

I thought that was it then. But Atropos' hands are unhurried. Did your ring give a last burst of power and save me? Did you save me? Maybe you did, so that I would find myself looking from behind the bars at Rousseau's face, whose owner would tell me I can choose to be exiled or face death penalty. I pondered. I pursued vengeance, I pursued justice, but now, in the end, I want most a home where everyone is free and equal. I want to be part of our new city. I shall be part of our new city.

They have fetched me my hemlock now. It will be my honor, which I am grateful for, just as I am grateful for your gift. I do not know who you are, but somehow, I know you are looking at me. You are looking at everything.

Farewell, then. Achlys awaits me.

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## Teacher's comment:

This is an imaginative piece of work on the reflection of political ideals. With sharp philosophical insights, Tsz Yan comprises a poetic attempt to

illustrate the search for a fair and just human society that counts for the will and power of every citizen. I enjoy reading such aesthetic intervention on the texts of political theory. (LEUNG Cheuk Hang)





# 「逍遙與空」

## ——一種人生態度的結合

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### 第一章 相遇

Tina獨自坐在百萬大道旁的花壇邊，來來往往的學生中似乎沒有人注意到她，這讓她安心不少。忽然，不遠處有兩人向她走來，他們的衣服上分別印有「逍遙」和「空」的字樣。Tina開始感到慌張，心想「那些字是甚麼意思？他們何要走過來呢？」正當Tina準備離開的時候，那兩人已經走到她跟前，與她起話來。

莊： 同學你好，我姓莊。

釋： 你好，我姓釋。

Tina： ……你好，我叫Tina。

莊： 你看起來似乎有很多煩惱，不妨與我們分享一下，或許我們能夠給你一些建議呢？

Tina： 我甚麼要跟你們我的煩惱，你又不是我，你怎麼會明白我的煩惱呢？

莊： 你也不是我，怎麼知道我一定不會明白你的煩惱呢？<sup>1</sup>

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1 參考「子非魚，安知魚之樂」的對話。（《莊子·秋水》；陳鼓應 137）

釋： 今天我們在這相遇，皆是因緣所致，你與我們的交談，日後或許會成一些新變化的因緣也未可知。

Tina覺得自己快被這兩人的話繞暈了，最後竟然真的坐下來，與這兩人傾訴一直以來的煩惱。

## 第二章 煩惱的原因

Tina： 去年我的文憑試成績不好，一個大學學位都沒有得到，所以自修一年，重考文憑試，終於進入大學。原本以進了大學就可以輕鬆一點，誰知道大學裏人人都在追求好的GPA，都說要考到一級榮譽學位，將來才有機會找到好工作。我每天都讀得很辛苦，既要面對新環境，又要與人比拼學業成績，但其他人兼顧學業的同時都有豐富的大學生活，為甚麼只有我面對這麼多煩惱呢？

莊： 唉！你這人果真是被俗世觀念所限制了。剛才你與我們講述自己的經歷時，用了幾次「好」、「不好」這些字眼，你留意到嗎？讓我問問你，你覺得GPA 3.0是一個好的成績嗎？

Tina： 當然是好的，GPA過三<sup>2</sup>在大學已經是很不錯的成績了。

莊： 那麼與GPA 3.9相比，哪一個是更好的呢？

Tina： 自然是GPA 3.9。

莊： 也就是你認同GPA 3.0在更高的成績面前是沒那麼好的？

Tina： 算是吧……

莊： 那我再問你，你認為自己的GPA好嗎？

Tina： 那當然是不好了，我讀得那麼辛苦卻只有這種成績，四年後

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2 「過三爆四」是當代大學生日常交談中十分流行的詞語，形容GPA達到3.0或以上，在普遍大學生心中這算是不錯的成績。

如何以一級榮譽學位畢業呢？<sup>3</sup>

莊： 若是與GPA不過二的同學相比，你還覺得自己的成績是不好的嗎？

Tina： 如果在這些同學面前自己成績不好，恐怕會被他們鄙視吧……

莊： 看，這世間萬物本來就沒有絕對的價值和分別，所謂分別不過是因為我們看待事物的角度、場合和參照物不同而產生，因此泰山可以是小的，一根毫毛可以是大的<sup>4</sup>，而成績也沒有絕對的好壞之分，上下、左右、大小、美醜、好壞等價值不過是相對的罷了。

Tina： 價值是相對的這點我認同，不過你的意思是叫我與那些成績差的人比較，以自我安慰嗎？這態度似乎不妥吧。

莊： 你還是沒有明白我的話，你口中的「差」不過是沒你高分罷了，並不是絕對的「差」，我並不是要鼓勵你與他人比較，相反，我希望你放下世俗觀念，不要再糾結於這些相對的分別，天下萬物都是等同的。你固執地拘泥於這些分別，用盡所有時間去追趕世人眼中「好」的東西，成為世人眼中「有用」的人。但世人眼中的好未必是絕對的好，有用未必是絕對的有用，狸狌和麋牛<sup>5</sup>的例子你在中學時總讀過吧。執着於世俗價值只會徒添煩惱，不讓世俗成見限制自己，才能達到精神上的逍遙啊！

3 新聞中 Tina 並沒有提及自己的確實成績，這裏假設 Tina 的 GPA 大約在 2.0 至 3.0 之間。

4 「天下莫大於秋毫之末，而大山為小。」（《莊子·齊物論》；陳鼓應 105）

5 在世人眼中有用的狸狌，因善於捕獵而墮入機關中死去；在世人眼中無用的麋牛，因不會捕獵，所以不會墮入機關陷阱，得以安享天年。（《莊子·逍遙游》；陳鼓應 97）

釋： 我的看法與莊同學有些不同，我認為你的煩惱之所以出現，是因為你過分執着於一時的苦難、煩惱，執着於自我。其實我相當理解你的心情，畢竟人們在遇到不好的事情時，總是會開始自怨自艾，又擔心這種不好的情況會持續下去。不過我還是希望你能明白「諸法皆空」的道理。

Tina： 甚麼諸法……甚麼空？空是甚麼意思？是空空如也嗎？

釋： 並非如此，「諸法皆空」是指所有的事情都是在不同因緣結合下發生、出現變化。就像我們今天在這裏相遇，這件事的因緣便是你坐在花壇邊、我們兩人走在百萬大道上、我們恰好看見了你，這些因緣導致了我們相遇。

Tina： 因緣與我的煩惱有甚麼關係呢？你是想說我之所以成績不好是有原因的嗎？這當然有原因了，還不是因為我天資不如他人，才會讀得那麼辛苦，到頭來成績還是不如理想。

釋： 你對因緣的理解似乎不夠充分啊，天資固然是決定你成績的一個因緣，但卻不是全部，試卷的難度、評核的方法、其他同學的成績等等都是因緣，你口中的「成績不好」這件事是因緣而生，而非因你而生，何必將源頭完全歸結到自己身上呢？而且剛才我也提到，因緣導致變化產生，因此你的煩惱能夠在因緣結合下產生，也能在因緣結合下消失。既然這世間所有事情都不過是因緣生滅、不斷變化的現象，又何必糾結於一時的煩惱呢？<sup>6</sup>

Tina： 我明白了，所以你的意思是，雖然我現在為成績苦惱，但將來也許會有變化，因此不必在意這一時的際遇。對吧？

釋： 不錯，而且不僅事情是因緣生，人也是因緣生的，你的身體

6 「因為空，一切事物的存在才成為可能。」（一行禪師 147）人們總認為人生無常是個帶有貶義色彩的詞語，但在一行禪師看來，無常代表變化，正是因為有變化才有希望。

因父母結合產生，你的感受因你與世間萬物的接觸產生<sup>7</sup>，這些與外界的互動成為了因緣，而這些因緣構成了不斷變化的「你」，因此你也不必將自己看作是一個孤立的載體，過分執着於自我，總覺得是「我」正在經歷這些煩惱。

Tina：那就是「我」也是由一些因緣組成的，是這些經歷組成了「我」，而不是「我」承受着這些經歷，所以不必糾結於「自我」這個概念。雖然聽起來有些抽象，不過還是謝謝你的建議。

### 第三章 人生態度的實踐

Tina：你們了那麼多大道理，甚麼逍遙、空、因緣，但要將這些道理在生活中實踐，其實很困難吧。莊同學，如果我毫不在乎世俗價值，不追求世人眼中的「好」成績、「好」工作，那麼我要如何在這競爭激烈的社會中生存下去呢？

莊：不被世俗價值所限不代表我們要做一條終日無所事事的「鹹魚」啊，我想的是我們要順應時勢、順應自然，當條件允許時，自然能得到應得的，但當條件所限，追求無法實現時，也不必求，安然接受得到的結果就可以了。<sup>8</sup>這種既來之則安之的態度不是能使我們更輕鬆嗎？

7 佛教中的「我」由五蘊組成，而五蘊是指一個人的物理存在、感官經驗、感受、行為、意識，這五蘊都是在各種因緣結合下不斷變化的，因此構成了不斷變化的「我」，所以是「五蘊皆空」。(143-145) 如果沒有這五蘊，便不會有「我」了。人們總覺得「我」是一個獨立存在的概念，但實際上我們每個人都不過是一團正在不斷變化的物理和心理現象罷了。

8 「天下有道，聖人成焉；天下無道，聖人生焉」(《莊子·人間世》) 這是莊子對孔子的評價，他認為在亂世中，我們可以做一個有品德的聖人，卻不能強求自己有所成就。因此逍遙的重點是順應時勢，不要在時勢不允許的情況下強求達到過高的目標。

- Tina： 你的解釋似乎也得通。這麼我應該安然接受自己的成績，安然接受生活中遇到的種種，隨和一點，對嗎？
- 釋： 比起隨遇而安，我倒是認為你應該積極一點。既然人生處處都有因緣而生的變化，而這些因緣由你與其他人和事的互動而來<sup>9</sup>，你大可以努力為自己創造一些因緣，比如你想提升成績可以與同學一起溫習、互相請教，又或者與老師交流，這些因緣積累起來能為你帶來好的結果。因此不一定要被動地順應自然，畢竟時勢影響着你，你也影響着它啊。
- 莊： 釋同學的觀點我不太認同，雖時勢也受人影響，但憑一己之力想要改變時勢實在是太過困難吧。而且你也了人生處處是變化，雖然變化帶來可能，但有時變化不一定是我所希望的，如果我積極創造因緣，最後卻因外界因素所限沒有得到想要的結果，那豈不是更失望。依我看還是做一個「逍遙」的人最適合，無常的人生中無論發生甚麼事情我們都能安然應對。
- 釋： 你所的「結果」也不過是一件事的結果，一時的經歷不是永恆的，因此沒有甚麼最終、最後一，若你保持積極的心態，大可以把一時的失意當作是自己的因緣，繼續去追求新的變化，這樣不也能應對所有事情嗎？莊同學的法未免太過絕對吧。
- Tina： 你們不要爭論了。我覺得你們的話都有可取之處，但也不是完全正確。（對莊同學）「時勢造英雄」雖然是普遍人都有的看法，但不可否認的是有時人們的小舉動確實也能對時局造成影響，因此如果我抱着逍遙的態度，認為人會被時勢所限，便少了些與外界的互動。（對釋同學）積極的態度確實

9 一行禪師提出「互即互入」的理論，指出在這世上，所有的人和事物都是互相依存、互相影響着，有左才有右，有窮人才有富人，沒有一個價值、一件事、一個人是獨立存在的。因此外界不斷影響我們，我們也不斷影響外界。（141-143）

很寶貴，但有時這世上的事情不一定是我們努力爭取便能做到的。因此要讓我在這種無奈的時刻滿懷積極之心實在是不太現實啊。

釋： 那你看該怎麼做？

Tina： 既然一味逍遙的態度缺少了一點動力，一味積極的態度又有可能受現實打擊。不如我們把這兩種道理結合，應用在不同時候。在做一件事的過程中，我們抱着「諸法皆空」的思想，積極地追求好的變化，在面對結果時，我們抱着「逍遙」的思想，安然接受自己所得的東西，這樣不是兩全其美嗎？

莊： 哈哈！看來你的煩惱已經解決了。

## 徵引書目

- 一行禪師，《與生命相約》，明潔、明堯譯，載《與人文對話：通識教育基礎課程讀本》。梁卓恒、葉家威、趙茱莉、劉保禧等，第四版，上冊，香港中文大學大學通識教育部，2016。頁141-166。
- 陳鼓應，《莊子今注今譯》（節選），載《與人文對話：通識教育基礎課程讀本》。梁卓恒、葉家威、趙茱莉、劉保禧等編，第四版，上冊，香港中文大學大學通識教育部，2016，頁91-137。

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## 老師短評

Tina的確很煩惱，很困惑，為甚麼她努力，卻如此；別人看來輕鬆，卻又……Tina的不忿、不解、不平，竟把可能只打算安慰幾句的

那兩位同學，扯進一場論辯裏。莊同學盡量解釋事物只是相對，我們放開約定俗成的價值，心境才可以逍遙；釋同學說空，萬事如流，無「我」在其中。劉紀婧不僅讓Tina被動地聽，還要她主動地問：齊物只是失意者的自我安慰？知道凡事因緣而生，真就能解決問題？這些質疑，不只是故事裏虛擬問難，也是對經典價值應有的提問。不論適然順勢，還是創造條件，尋求改變，在故事的結尾，劉紀婧就她對文本的理解，提出了實踐的方向。閱讀經典，可就人生處事上，「讀」出一些啟示來，讓我們參考、反思。在故事裏，劉紀婧不但解讀了文本，還凸顯了經典的價值。（何偉明）



# 自由與束縛，何者讓我們人生美好？

鄭嘉汶

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我： 歡迎來到《經典有偈傾》，今集很榮幸邀請了政治學家雅克·盧梭、至聖先師孔子，以及崇尚自然的道家莊子。歡迎三位。

盧梭： Bonjour！

孔子： 無恙乎？

莊子： 無它乎？

我： 哈哈。今集的題目是「美好人生：以束縛達致自由」，「自由」和「束縛」貌似是矛和盾的對決。我們都知道，「束縛」是指一些拘束或限制，法律和道德規範都是現代社會的束縛。那麼，人人嚮往的自由到底是甚麼？

盧梭： 人是生而自由的，但隨處身在枷鎖之中。（Rousseau 52; bk. I, ch. 1）我是說人出生以來便有自然自由，但相信你所說的「自由」，泛指現代的社會自由。自然自由即是原始狀態，擁有武力強王者，在生活上享有更多便利；相反弱者……就只能被欺壓。

我： 幸好隨着時間轉變，人類思想進步，逐步改善社會體制，維繫社會秩序。我曾拜讀盧梭先生你的《社會契約論》，裏面提到社會秩序是其他權力的基石，但不是來至自然，而是來至「契約」。（52; bk. I, ch. 1）

盧梭：所謂的「契約」只是一種概念，以保障人民的社會自由。試想想，個人的力量不足以改變原始世界的不公平，又難以產生新的力量，但人能結合並運用現有的力量。（56; bk. I, ch. 4）社會契約就是結合所有人的力量，維護每位結合者的利益，而因為每位結合者都是服從自己，便和以往一樣自由。（56; bk. I, ch. 4）

我：所以透過社會契約，人放棄了自然自由以換取社會秩序的好處，從契約中保障自身人權和財產。

盧梭：沒錯。

孔子：據夫子的社會契約，未免太過理想了。萬一整個團體中，有部分結合者不滿契約條件，難保他不會拉攏其他人，一同撕裂合約，擾亂秩序。

盧梭：確實如此。公共的意志我稱之為「公意」，法律便是基於公意而立。先生所說的情況是眾意，眾意着重私人利益，而公意為了公共利益。若除去兩者的差異，剩下來的都是公意。（71; bk. II, ch. 3）最理想是為政者以公意作為從政的首要考慮。

我：剩下來的公意，不就只有那麼一點點嗎？公民為了那部分自由，接受法律的約束，貌似獲益不大。對勢力強大者而言，他們失去更多利益，卻要履行各種義務，對他們公平嗎？

盧梭：這就要看你怎麼定義「公平」了，社會契約是希望做到人人平等的公平。

我：但從外在因素大幅度限制人的行為，而每個人認同的價值不同，有部分人未必能打從心底認為這是美好人生啊！

盧梭：所有人共同的想法就是公意。

我：法律是公意所定，而不是上一代的公意決定。這一代人想修改不合時宜的律例，須經過多重障礙，多個部門的首肯，然

後又有反對派的聲音，大家再花時間討論，才達成公意。從外在束縛人性，又要所有人認同，真要實行的話，是漫長的過程。不是時間長短的問題，而是民眾能否真正心服口服。

孔子：所言甚是。不論為學或是為政，都應是為道德，才能使民眾打從心底信服；而「禮」就是實踐的方法之一。

盧梭：請恕我愚昧，何謂「禮」？

孔子：從行為表現來看，禮是節度秩序，對社會的規範。

我：不過不少禮節規範，現今被批不合理或不合時宜。例如父母離世，按傳統，子女守孝三年。（1.11）

孔子：丘不是現代人，不清楚晚輩的世代。丘生於春秋亂局，望以禮重新建立秩序，並說服各諸侯國推行仁政。重要的是，「禮」是體現「仁」及其他道德情感的手法。正如守孝三年是報答嬰孩時父母三年養育之恩，透過行為規範表現出「孝」。此之為攝禮歸仁，以客觀表現訴說情感。

盧梭：「禮」和「仁」又如何為政？

孔子：儒家以「禮」規範人，背後目的是推行「仁」。「仁」，即是要「愛人」、「知人」。（12.22）正所謂「上樑不正下樑歪」、「政者，正也」，若領導者以正道率領民眾，民眾豈會不從？（12.17）丘等一眾儒家學者，都希望由上而下的身教感化民眾，從個人修養使社會回復秩序，從「修身」到「齊家」、「治國」、「平天下」。人人行善，不爭不貪，所有人的生活自然更美好。

我：每人對美好人生的定義不同，但聽完兩位的想法，相信都希望平民百姓得到保障，而為政者以人民作為出發點。儒家希望以禮培養仁德，人人實踐仁德，便不會有不公義之事。相反，盧梭先生是以外在的人權和義務出發，避免發生不公之事。

孔子：克己復禮為仁。（12.1）

我：「一日克己復禮，天下歸仁焉。」（12.1）只要君主或為政者實行仁政，在下位的人自然會跟從。我想，夫子半生從事教育事業是想培育人才。品德優秀的學生出仕，在高位以德服眾，以德化眾。這樣以身教和禮節，從內教育和培養民眾德行。

盧梭：然而先生的理論，同樣何嘗不是過於理想呢？這套仁政和身教理論，沒有對應現實的制度和系統啊！看觀中國，我不認為有如先生所希望的按步實踐。若為政者以人為本，為何又實行不了香港民眾的公意，何來美好人生？

孔子：看來後世忘本矣……

盧梭：但倘若儒家學說順利推行，從教育入手，加上我方的契約理論，豈不是內外雙管齊下，軟硬兼施？

我：兩位嘉賓對於如何讓人生美好各有見解。盧梭先生代表的西方學說，認為要綜合眾人的想法，從公意約束自己和其他結合者，保障自由。孔夫子就以「禮」推行仁德，即使有所約束，也是為了在最大程度允許個體自由發揮，同時對整體利益有所保障。

莊子：兩位都是以束縛達致自由，而兩者的自由都是外在的。吾認為，真正的自由應是內在的。

盧梭：噢。

莊子：作為道家學者，吾等崇尚自然。人是大自然的一部分，當然要順應自然，不應刻意人為。

盧梭：中國的想法是如此消極，這怎能改變社會呢？

莊子：請問各位的人生是苦多於樂，或是苦樂參半？

我：煩惱和痛苦佔多……這是因為我們都有欲望，所以想繼續追求更多吧。

莊子：正是如此。所以倒不如知其不可奈何而安之若命。（《莊子·人間世》；陳鼓應 117）

盧梭：即是？

我：人生有許多無可奈何的事，比起硬碰硬，不如用平常心面對。這可說是一種消極的處世態度。

莊子：並非單純消極，是「無待」。與「無待」相反的是「有待」，即是有所依賴，需要依賴外在條件。例如要有足夠的水才能負載大船，強風才能承受巨大的翅膀。（《莊子·逍遙遊》；92）有所限制，就未能做到逍遙自在。真正的自由，應要做到「無己、無功、無名」。（《莊子·逍遙遊》；94）

我：無我、無功名、無名利？這三點就是「無待」？

莊子：正如主持人一生有多個煩擾，終身役役而不見其成功，荼然疲役而不知其所歸，可不哀邪！（《莊子·齊物論》；100）當我們忘記這些榮辱得失，擺脫這些世俗框架，不依賴外在條件，不用特意有所作為，才能達致內心真正的自由。沒有煩惱，可來苦？此不就是美好人生嗎？

我：那麼，我們應拋棄對名利的追逐，甚至包括對仁義道德的追求？

孔子：嗚呼。怎能這樣！不修身養性，怎能預備為國所用！

莊子：比起當一隻神龜，屍骨藏在廟堂之上，任人供奉着；我更希望當一隻自由自在的龜，在泥巴裏逍遙快活地爬行。（《莊子·秋水》；136）

我：但我不太明白。若要放棄名利成就，去追求夫子所說的內在自由，不也是受此限制，一生為自由勞碌嗎？

莊子：聖人不求小的勝利而求大的勝利。（《莊子·秋水》；133）

盧梭：所以莊先生的理論，同樣是以束縛達致自由呢！

莊子：也可以說，要達致內心的自由，首要知道哪些是人的限制，從而有清晰目標打破界限。

我：今集探討美好人生，三位都給予了獨特的見解。為了保障人人平等的自由，還是要有些禮節、規條束縛人；若要追求內在的自由，首先還是要認清哪些是你的束縛。今集《經典有偈傾》就到這裏，再次感謝三位，亦感謝你的收看。

## 徵引書目

陳鼓應，《莊子今註今譯》（節錄），載《與人文對話：通識教育基礎課程讀本》。梁卓恒、葉家威、趙茉莉、劉保禧等編，第四版，上冊，香港中文大學大學通識教育部，2016，頁91-137。

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## 老師短評

鄭嘉汶同學以防止社會不公為主題，以此探討盧梭的「法」與儒家的「禮」之間的分別，並說明兩者跟自由的關係。這是個聰明的做

法，這一方面涉及內與外的比較，也有理性與情感的對比。再者，在找出兩者的共通點後，鄭同學再引莊子來帶出面對不公時的另一種內在自由。這個部份令文章的內容更豐富。整體而言這是一篇不錯的論文。（盧駿揚）





# Ladder towards Freedom

**TSE Wai Yi**  
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Tina was wandering around the campus, feeling like everyone around was staring at her, teasing her. She sat down at a quiet corner. A stranger sat down beside her, and said, “You look tired, had you spent all night studying?”

“Yes... I need to outcompete my classmates and graduate with first honour.”

“Wow, sounds like you’re really into studying. But don’t you spend time doing things you enjoy? Like playing guitar... or drawing? You must have an interest, right?”

“No, interests are just a waste of time. All I want to do now is to study well, get a good grade, then enter a nice company after graduation, in which I’ll be fairly paid.”

“What a meaningless life! You’re giving away your species essence in return for good grades and fine payment? How is your life different from that of an animal!”

“I don’t see the problem. I need money to live, and a good grade to enter a fine company where I can achieve that, it’s just that simple!”

So, that man—Marx started talking about his views on labour.

“Labour, in the nature of human, should be universal and free, which is what distinguishes man from animals—animals like birds and ants produce only for survival, for their immediate needs or those of their young, such as building nests and formicaries. Men, as a conscious being, produce universally and freely even when they’re free from any physical need. (Marx 175–176) A father would build a swing in his backyard for his children; people would bake a cake for birthday celebration; a child would make a clay sculpture for fun... In such kind of productions, the nature of the producer is expressed in the product, the object produced is therefore the objectification of men’s species-life. (176)

Now look at what you’re doing! You’ve abandoned your universality and freedom, putting yourself in the production process named ‘studying’ to obtain ‘academic results’ as a reward. Studying now becomes a kind of wage labour, which you and many other people think is the only possible mode of living. But are you truly living as a free man when everything is alienated from you?

When you study for good grades and thus for entering a good company, your action is not for expressing yourself, but for the benefit of the company that you are going to serve. This makes your act of production alienated from you. (173) And as you are not doing labour freely and universally, but instead doing it in return for grades and wages, you are doing labour like an animal, making you alienated from your species-life. (176) Furthermore, by repeating machine-like labour—reading and reciting, you transform yourself from a man to an abstract activity and a stomach, which is increasingly dependent on the school as it is them who give you what you desire. When you become so highly dependent on the school for your existence, you must compete with others—other machines on the assembly line. Competition becomes the only interaction between you and your classmates, for only

the ones with better performances would get a good grade. So now, you're even alienated from other people. (176–177) I suppose you don't get along with your classmates, do you?

You turned yourself into a commodity, going through all those processes called education that make you a qualified product, then being put onto the shelf, waiting for your buyer. Alienation then goes on throughout your career as you repeatedly apply the skills you learnt for the benefit of your company in return for wages.”

Tina, “Indeed, part of your saying is correct. Maybe that's why I'm always anxious about social relations—I am too dependent on the academic grades that I consider my classmates as hostile competitors. But what about the knowledge I learnt? Just like what our teachers always say: knowledge is our only property that can't be stolen or taken away. As I am also gaining knowledge while studying, I'm not totally alienated from my action of production and species-life, am I?”

Marx, “Talking about the possession of knowledge, don't those advertisements always use slogans like “this new smartphone ‘possesses’ the latest technology”? But in fact, those technologies that they possess are not used for their own good, but enjoyed by you—the user who paid for them. You're just like a smartphone: most of the knowledge you learnt—those professional knowledge and skills, become a tool used by the company hiring you, but not by you as a human being. This is getting increasingly serious in the current career-orientated education system, with most people only valuing employment rate and salary level just like you—scholastic subjects that trigger students' thinking, like philosophy and mathematics, are less preferred by people; while ‘practical’ degrees like medicine, business, actuarial science and physiotherapy are honoured as ‘God's degree’. They guarantee future employment and salary, and mostly

emphasise on specific skills and knowledge that are deemed useful in one's professional career, instead of focusing on stimulating thinking. As you make use of the professional knowledge you learnt from these career-oriented degrees, it's your company that benefits from it. That led to the fourth alienation: alienation of product. What you produce does not belong to you, but by the one who pay you. Of course, you would obtain some beneficial knowledge in school as well, but those are, after all, just a very small proportion of what you study."

Tina, "I get your point, but... I could still live happily despite the alienation, so I guess I'm okay with it."

Marx, "Let me explain it in a simpler way. In Buddhism, a person is composed by five inter-related skandhas—form, feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness. (一行禪師 144) For instance, we must first see an object with our eyes, which is part of our form, before determining that it is blue in colour with our perception, and thus feels that it is beautiful. Only then will we generate the impulse to touch the object, while consciousness allows us to notice the process I mentioned above. Only when the five skandhas are intact, a person exists."

Tina, "Interesting."

Marx, "Now, imagine a factory worker paid to make pins. Under division of labour, he is only asked to do one task—to cut the wire into segments of 3 cm. (Smith 136) Normally, we generate our own impulses based on our first three skandhas. But the worker himself doesn't know the full process of pin production, so he wouldn't know what to do with the wire by his self-generated impulses. So in this case, his impulse is programmed by the factory owner, who told him to cut the wire into pieces of 3 cm.

As I just said, the five skandhas are all inter-beings that compose a person, so controlling the worker's impulse would mean controlling him

as a whole—Based on the instructions of the owner, the worker sees the wire with form, determines that that is 3 cm with perception, feels that it is the right place to cut it, and then his impulses told him to cut it. The worker sold himself to the owner during his working hours. And during that time period, he is not ‘him’. The only skandha left under his control while working is his consciousness—he is aware of what he has done, but it is more like... watching a programmed printer printing out document. Just like I said, he is alienated.

I bet you won’t become a factory worker, but even if you graduate with first honour, you would still be working with your skandhas being programmed according to your past studies and the protocols given by your company—they tell you what you should do, and what you shouldn’t, so that their profit is maximised. You don’t have the right to reject, because you depend on the salary given by your company to survive. So, the longer you study or work, the less time you remain as yourself. Eventually, you spend a larger proportion of your life not being yourself. Then, is that still your life? Are we still free men?”

Tina, “Alright, I get it. But let’s be realistic, in this modern world, you need money to buy food, rent a house, pay for electricity... To survive, you must earn money by selling yourself to others. Otherwise, you won’t even get to survive, let alone living freely! By sacrificing part of your time working for others, you can at least enjoy a moment of freedom after work. I appreciate your arguments, but you are too much of an idealist.”

Marx wanted to continue arguing Tina, that was when a drunk man interrupted.

Socrates, “Dear lady, I just heard you call this man here an idealist. May I presume that you think of yourself as a realistic person?”

Tina, “Yes.”

Socrates, "Please tell me, then, what is 'realistic'?"

Tina, "To accept things as they are in fact, and to make decisions based on them instead of on unlikely hopes."

Socrates, "Which points do you think, from your discussion just now, are facts? And which of them are unlikely hopes?"

Tina, "The fact is that people can only survive through selling their labour and knowledge to employers, working for them in return for salary. While Marx's ideal mode of freedom, with people producing universally and freely all day without caring about salary, is not a possible suggestion."

Socrates, "So you think that his idea is totally unrealistic, and is totally impossible to be achieved?"

Tina thought for a moment, and replied, "Yes. After all, the society needs productivity. We can't just free everyone from their work and ask the government to afford their living, right? As said by Adam Smith, the annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life which it annually consumes. (131) The things we consume must be produced by someone, so someone must take up those jobs even if that derives them from their species-life. Of course we want to produce freely and universally without being constrained by waged labour, but if none of us does those essential labour, we'll lose everything that we're enjoying—food, electricity, even this very bench we're now sitting on... The current system is the best and only possible one."

Socrates, "That's reasonable. But isn't that just the current situation?"

Tina, "What do you mean?"

Socrates, "You made a 'realistic' decision to spend time on studying, aiming to enter a good company, is that correct?"

Tina, “Yes.”

Socrates, “And you are not going to work in a company today or tomorrow, you’re only going to start your career after graduation, which is in the future. You are also likely to continue working for decades until retirement, which is pretty far from now. So your decision-making is to prepare for a pretty far future, right?”

Tina, “That’s correct.”

Socrates, “But don’t you agree that things change over time?”

Tina, “Yes, changes are inevitable.”

Socrates, “As there are changes over time, the ‘facts’ that you take into consideration today might not be applicable to the future that you’re planning for. If you are to make a realistic decision for your future, shouldn’t you also consider the possible situations in the future?”

Tina, “Alright, I admit that my definition on ‘realistic’ isn’t perfect. But regarding this matter on economic system, I don’t think it will ever change.”

Marx, “That might not be true. Isn’t there news talking about how factory workers are losing jobs to machines? The necessary productions you mentioned may eventually be solely replaced by machines, freeing all human beings from their waged labour, allowing them to return to their species essence!”

Tina, “But that’s still not feasible! There are too many irreplaceable jobs like political leaders, doctors... As long as there’re some essential jobs remaining irreplaceable, some people will have to sacrifice themselves in doing those essential work while others can get what they need even if they don’t do any waged labour. But if people can fulfil their material demands even without working, who would take up those essential jobs? No! People

would choose to stay at home, making a swing or baking a cake instead. In this case, the society will collapse eventually as no one takes up those essential yet irreplaceable jobs.”

Marx, “Some people might do those work out of interest—”

Tina, “Would people still spend so much money buying private housing if everyone can apply for public housing? No. That’s the same logic.”

Socrates, “Oh Tina, you remind me of my friends. Last night, we discussed about ‘love’. They differentiated love into either ‘heavenly love’ or ‘common love’, but I disagreed. According to my teacher Diotima, wise people won’t search for wisdom as they already possess it, yet the foolish would neither do so as they aren’t wise enough to notice the importance of wisdom. Then tell me, who would desire and search for wisdom? (203c–204b)”

Tina, “The intermediate ones?”

Socrates, “Exactly! Both you and my friends had missed out the intermediate classes, that’s why you only differentiate economic systems into purely capitalism and purely communism, while my friends differentiated love into heavenly and common love. From my perspective, love is a ladder—you can’t integrate immediately from the love of physical beauty to the ultimate love of beauty itself. But naturally, one would go up step by step, moving from the love of physical beauty to that of mental beauty and thus that of customs... (210a–d) The same applies to the ideal freedom as suggested by Marx—the society needs to proceed towards that goal step by step. The situation you described is just an intermediate in that process, not the final dead end.

You are now presuming that the ladder won’t lead you to your destination without even trying the first step. You know what? When climbing up the ladder of love, people may not know that there was a more



superior level either, they just eventually realise them. So try taking the first step! Then you will possibly find a superior level for you to climb onto. As you said, things change over time! Who knows whether a new and better upper level will appear before you!”

Tina, “Indeed... I guess I should accept the possibility that I may get to enjoy genuine freedom one day in the future, and better prepare myself for that day. Otherwise, when the time comes, I won’t even know what to do!”

Marx, “Great! Maybe you could start with developing an interest?”

Tina smiled, with the anxiety that she had been suffering from finally being eased.

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### **Teacher's comment:**

In the person of Tina, Wai Yi provides a vivid glimpse into the life of university students, a life not only of fun and hope, but also of pressure and anxiety. It is indeed a bold attempt to have Marx comfort Tina. Marx focuses on the alienation of factory workers. Wai Yi moves further to have Marx briefly explain the Buddhist concept of emptiness. The explanation is nonetheless *Marxist* because of its relation to tedious, monotonous tasks of factory workers. Wai Yi certainly knows it is very unlikely that Tina would become a manual worker, she makes clear that even professionals can be subject to similar alienation. Tina, as many of us, is too concerned with the brutal reality of life. Socrates enters the scene and engages Tina to an enlightening Socratic Q&A. Wai Yi's adaptation of the Socratic method is impressive; what is inspiring is the message of Socrates: We should not be trapped by the reality. Ideal is not just an empty expression; it is a driving force to motivate us to look beyond the harsh reality. After all, upon climbing the ladder of love, one has to look *upward*. (HO Wai Ming)

# 與自然對話

*In Dialogue with Nature*



# **Decipher the Secret, or Get Devoured by the Sphinx: Tackling the Question with the Aid of Science and Technology in the Provision of Tools and Answers**

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## **Introduction**

Falling asleep pondering the question of how the development in science and technology affected the difficulty in answering the question “what are we”, I had a very special dream. After I woke up, I formed the thesis of this essay. The thesis goes as the development in science and technology indeed eases the answering of the question “what are we” by ruling out wrong answers and leaving the right ones in the proliferation of available answers. That is to say, science and technology has aided the betterment in *truth searching tools* and the *provision of answers*.

Now I shall begin telling you about the happening of my dream...

## **A Fight between the Two Heads: Plato and Poincare on Searching Truth**

Once upon a time, in a very yellowy, sandy place, there sat a sphinx,

with two heads. He offered every passerby a riddle to answer<sup>1</sup>, if they failed, the sphinx would split the head of the person into two with its tail and each head devour one. They seldom argue, but things change on this day.<sup>2</sup>

Eric Kandel and James Watson, the neuroscientist and the molecular biologist (as I remembered), dressed in an exotic, archaic fashion, walked towards the land where the sphinx was guarding. As they were approaching the sphinx, the sight in front of them amused them, as they recognized that the heads of the sphinx were Plato and Henri Poincare<sup>3</sup>.

Upon the approach of the two, the sphinx smirked and said, “Decipher me or I’ll devour you.” He continued, “Some say we are souls, the others say we are physics and chemistry. Some say we are consciousness, and some other say we are biological machines. What are we?”

“Before you answer, here are the criteria we based on for judging whether you have provided the answer.” said the Poincare head. “The truth.” Plato head added. “*Recurrence*<sup>4,5</sup>, *simplicity*<sup>6</sup> and *similarity*<sup>7,8</sup>. Over the years of scientific development, these are also critical elements helping scientists to select among all the facts. Things that recur are things that are general, which can be applied in different situations, for example,

1 Based on the riddles of the sphinx, should originally be a “she” and with one head only.

2 Because the heads have always just come up with riddles of absolute answers, this time, things are less absolute.

3 I cannot be quite sure how they managed to, but it was a dream after all.

4 or the predictive power if it is more easily understandable

5 Original text: “This shows us how our selection should be made. The most interesting facts are those which can be used several times, those which have a chance of recurring . . .” (Poincare 160)

6 Original text: “All that we can say is that we must prefer facts which appear simple, to those in which our rude vision detects dissimilar elements.” (161)

7 Original text: “But what we must aim at is not so much to ascertain resemblances and difference, as to discover similarities hidden under apparent discrepancies.” (163)

8 These points are stated by Poincare, however, in this dream where Plato head is one of the judges that make rules for the game, has already learnt all about it.

heredity, once you've learnt about it, you can use it to predict what quality your children may have which is inherited from you or what your long dead grandparents may have which you inherited from them. Simplicity, something that is too simple to show the differences between individuals, can be found in the extremely large, like the universe or small, like atoms.<sup>9</sup> Similarity, is what you are able to observe over and over again, and that you have to observe under discrepancies that usually helps you to discover the valuable facts underneath.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the Plato head went red and protested, "Truth is Forms. Forms are perfect.<sup>11</sup> Forms are in the Realm of Forms where the unchanged<sup>12</sup>, incorporeal, intangible, insensible ideas<sup>13</sup> rest. Although you may use your sense experience as a tool, recall your souls from remembering its prior memory of the Forms, but to reach the truth, you've got to reason without assisting by the sense experience." The Poincare head turned green. "As such, all your nonsense base on the observations of the material world is not..." The Plato head no longer existed in the material world then, the Poincare head bit it off and swallowed it. It was only the root of the neck, the blood dripping proving the once existence of the Plato head.

Poincare the sphinx said, "Listen, it is for the sake of you lot. In his

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9 Original text: "The physicist, on the other hand, has sought the elementary phenomenon in an imaginary division of bodies into infinitely small atoms, because the conditions of the problem, which undergo slow and continuous variations as we pass from one point of the body to another, may be regarded as constant within each of these little atoms." (162)

10 Original text: "But what we must aim at is not so much as to ascertain resemblances and differences, as to discover similarities hidden under apparent discrepancies. The individual rules appear at first discordant, but on looking closer we can generally detect a resemblance; though differing in matter, they approximate in form and in the order of their parts." (163)

11 Original text: "In short, there are two realms; a realm of forms or ideas, containing the perfect form of everything: and the material realm in which these forms or ideas are imperfectly replicated." (Lindberg 13)

12 Original text: "... and they are absolutely changeless" (13)

13 Original text: "The forms are incorporeal, intangible, and insensible . . ." (13)

standard, most people will not acquire the truth unless they, like Plato himself has been through the ‘rough, steep, upward path’,<sup>14</sup> and can rid themselves from the aid of their sense of experience while you provide your arguments. And he can reject your answers by his arbitrary definition of truth then.” The men shivered.

A man in an ancient Greek cloak adorned with olive twigs was walking towards them afar...

### The Sphinx was Hungry: Plato and Kandel on Consciousness

Kandel started by defining the question. “What are we... What makes us human beings? I think we should answer the question in two parts, as Descartes defined, the body and the mind<sup>15</sup>...” “Yes, and the mind, which derives from the spiritual nature of the soul.” Says the man, who was Plato, again. “How can you be resurrected? It’s scientifically impossible!” yelled Watson.

Plato continued, “Similarity, which shows itself when we find that different individuals are so different<sup>16</sup>, but through reasoning, we can all

14 Original text: “And if someone dragged him by force away from there, along the rough steep, upward path, and did not let him go until he had dragged him into the light of sun . . .” (Plato [translated by C. D. C. Reeve] 7)

15 Original text: “In the seventeenth century, Rene Descartes developed the idea that human beings have a dual nature: they have a body, which is made up of material substance, and a mind . . .” (Kandel 182)

16 Original text: “But this we cannot believe—reason will not allow us—any more than we can believe the soul, in her truest nature, to be full of variety and difference and dissimilarity. [. . .]

Her immortality is demonstrated by the previous argument, and there are many other proofs; but to see her as she really is, not as we now behold her, marred by communion with the body and other miseries, you must contemplate her with the eye of reason, in her original purity; and then her beauty will be revealed, and justice and injustice and all the things which we have described will be manifested more clearly. Thus far, we have spoken the truth concerning her as she appears at present, but we must remember also that we have



find that we have similar souls, that are immortal, and contain the form of knowledge that we can recall that is of prior existence.<sup>17</sup>”

Kandel cleared his throat and started again, “If that’s all, let me proceed with my arguments, please. In the following, I shall answer the question with this, *our mind, or consciousness are from our physical brain*. The arguments I provide will fit the criteria of recurrence and similarity.

Let me first explain the term consciousness (ambiguous, not only strictly consciousness) a bit. It consists of unity and subjectivity. Unity being the way we perceive our experience as a whole<sup>18</sup>, and subjectivity being how we experience our own ideas, moods, and sensations directly but think of the other person’s indirectly<sup>19</sup>. I did an experiment that might shed light on the subjectivity in consciousness as an objective set of stimuli triggers different levels of emotional responses.<sup>20</sup> The experiment was purposed to help determine how visual perception becomes endowed with emotion. The experiment found that on showing a fearful face, in the conscious situation,

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seen her only in a condition which may be compared to that of the sea-god Glaucus, whose original image can hardly be discerned because his natural members are broken off and crushed and damaged by the waves in all sorts of ways, and incrustations have grown over them of seaweed and shells and stones, so that he is more like some monster than he is to his own natural form. And the soul which we behold is in a similar condition, disfigured by ten thousand ills. But not there, Glaucon, not there must we look.” (Plato [translated by B. Jowett] bk. 10)

17 Original text: “. . . sense experience may actually stir the memory and remind the soul of forms that it knew in a prior existence, thus stimulating a process of recollection that will lead to actual knowledge of the forms.” (Lindberg 14)

18 Original text: “The unitary nature of consciousness refers to the fact that our experiences come to us as a unified whole.” (Kandel 183)

19 Original text: “We experience our own ideas, moods, and sensations directly, whereas we can only appreciate another person’s experience indirectly, by observing or hearing about it.” (Kandel 183)

20 As Benjamin Libet proposed that “the process of initiating a voluntary action occurs in an unconscious part of the brain, but that just before the action is initiated, consciousness is recruited to approve or veto the action.” (Kandel 192) The variation in the results of the unconsciousness (namely the different responses due to different background anxieties) obviously affect the results of the overall consciousness.

all participants' fight-or-flight response was activated regardless, but in the unconscious situation, the people with higher background anxiety had greater response.<sup>21</sup> The similarity can be seen in the conscious response, that people of different background anxiety similarly showed fight-or-flight response. The recurrence can be seen in the prediction power of the result, that we only need to know the person's background anxiety to tell how much response will be triggered upon the exposure of the person to a fearful situation. It is with the *development in the science* that I have inherited the knowledge regarding the seven universal facial expressions<sup>22</sup> and Freud's idea of consciousness and unconsciousness<sup>23</sup>, and making me able to design the experiment. The development and the producing in *technology* like MRI<sup>24</sup>, allows me to detect the activity of amygdala."

"Yes, Kandel, you have shown clearly that your answer fits into the criteria of recurrence and similarity very well. However, Plato, your answer can hardly convince me. You argued (in *The Republic* [translated by B. Jowett] bk. 10) that the soul is one immortal thing that exists in every individual by 'proving' that evil cannot lead to the death of the soul as

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21 Original text: "Activation of the basolateral nucleus by unconscious perception of fearful faces occurred in direct proportion to a person's background anxiety . . . . Conscious perception of fearful faces, in contrast, activated the dorsal region of the amygdala, which contains the central nucleus, and it did so regardless of a person's background anxiety." (Kandel 190)

22 Original text: "Ekman, who has catalogued more than 100,000 human expressions, was able to show, as did Charles Darwin before him, that irrespective of sex or culture, conscious perceptions of seven facial expression—happiness, fear, disgust, contempt, anger, surprise, and sadness—have virtually the same meaning to everyone. (189)

23 Original text: ". . . the discovery of a correlation between volunteers' background anxiety and their unconscious neural processes validates biologically the Freudian idea that unconscious mental processes are part of the brain's system of information processing." (Kandel 191)

24 MRI was used by Eric Lumer and his colleagues to measure the activity of the frontal and parietal areas of the cortex as the regions when the image shown in front of a person change from one into another. (Kandel 188)

sickness can lead to that of the body.<sup>25</sup> However, I can argue in such a sense that body has been proven to be consisted of even smaller units like cells or even atoms thus the soul must be consisted of smaller units. If so, what you proposed was not simple at all and neither can it recur, let alone the logical problems in the way you argue!”

Then, Plato got eaten again.

### **An Alternative Answer for the Question: Watson on Body**

“Now I would like to present my answer.” Watson said, trembling. “Body, we all have different bodies. And my argument is that *our bodies are featured by these DNA molecules*. DNA is the genetic material that<sup>26</sup> show how you inherited many features from your ancestors.”

“The simplicity is shown in the extreme smallness, of a DNA molecule, that exist in all organisms although the sequences in the bases might be

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25 Original text: “Consider, I said, Glaucon, that even the badness of food, whether staleness, decomposition, or any other bad quality, when confined to the actual food, is not supposed to destroy the body; although, if the badness of food communicates corruption to the body, then we should say that the body has been destroyed by a corruption of itself, which is disease, brought on by this; but that the body, being one thing, can be destroyed by the badness of food, which is another, and which does not engender any natural infection—this we shall absolutely deny?

Very true.

[. . .]

And, on the same principle, unless some bodily evil can produce an evil of the soul, we must not suppose that the soul, which is one thing, can be dissolved by any merely external evil which belongs to another?

Yes, he said, there is reason in that.

[. . .]

But the soul which cannot be destroyed by an evil, whether inherent or external, must exist for ever, and if existing for ever, must be immortal?

Certainly.” (Plato [translated by B. Jowett] bk. 10)

26 Original text: “If you knew the sequence—the order of bases—along one chain, you automatically knew the sequence along the other. It was immediately apparent that this must be how the genetic messages of genes are copied so exactly when chromosomes duplicate prior to cell division.” (Watson 131)

different but the structures and formation are alike, the rule is applicable for all organisms and species. And it was with the scientific knowledge about the arrangement of amino acids in proteins, from Linus Pauling<sup>27</sup>, and technology development like Rosalind Franklin's x-ray diffraction technique that we got to discover the structure, and everything about DNA."

"Anything that simple, that elegant, just has to be right!"<sup>28</sup>

The sphinx Poincare licked his lip and said, "You two have separately provided some very good answers, one fitting the criteria of recurrence and similarity, the other simplicity. In another word, you respectively, have failed to decipher me, and..."

### **One More Riddle to Solve: Showcasing Harmony (Unity)**

"Wait!" Both shouted, "You didn't say we couldn't merge our answers together to provide one answer. You asked us one question after all."

"We are constituted of the body and the mind, but they are nothing separate. DNA and consciousness. The DNA affects many things, including personality, your emotions, your ways of thinking and these are part of the consciousness. And your consciousness can affect your DNA, in such ways as common as when you're sad and impulsively binge eating junk food which can be carcinogenic and mutate your DNA!"<sup>29</sup> Kandel said. "Body

27 Original text: "... Caltech's Linus Pauling, announced a major triumph: he had found the exact arrangement in which chains of amino acids (called *polypeptides*) fold up in proteins, and called his structure the  $\alpha$ -helix..." (Watson 123)

28 Original text: "Anything that simple, that elegant just had to be right." (131)

29 "Acrylamides, cancer-causing agents recently found in some fried and baked foods, can damage the DNA by causing a spectrum of mutations, researchers have reported. Swedish scientists triggered a furore in 2000 when they reported that acrylamides, used in industrial processes, can be found in a range of baked and fried foods." (Agence France-Presse)

and mind are inseparable!” Watson shouted.

“Very well. You guys have even shown the quality of *harmony*<sup>30</sup> in truth. You’re free to go.” Poincare said.

## Conclusion

This essay’s thesis is that the development in science and technology makes it easier to answer the question “what are we” by bettering the *truth searching tools* and multiplying the *provisions of answers*. The fight between Poincare and Plato has shown the competition between the truth searching tools emerged from different eras, and the one developed from science is kept as the better one. Then the *tool* including the criteria of *recurrence*, *similarity* and *simplicity* (and *harmony*) were used to select different answers for “what are we” among Plato, Kandel and Watson.

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30 “Harmony” as in... “What I mean is that more intimate beauty which comes from the harmonious order of its parts, and which a pure intelligence can grasp.” Following “The Scientist does not study nature because it is useful to do so. He studies it because he takes pleasure in it, and he takes pleasure in it because it is beautiful.” (Poincare 163)

Meaning that the different true facts have to be connected and showing a harmonious order which in this case is the unity of the mind and the body.

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### **Teacher's comment:**

The writer turns this obviously argumentative topic for an academic essay into a highly creative, imaginative and fascinating story complete with solid, well-supported arguments that are no less intellectual than what one might expect in an academic essay. The writer uses the story of “the riddle of the Sphinx” as her blueprint, bringing Plato, Henri Poincare, James Watson and Eric Kandel into the story and unfolds her arguments in the form of a conversation between the four characters—and not without amazing twists and turns in the plot. Striking an excellent balance between creativity and academic rigor, this essay is both convincing and fun to read at the same time. (SZETO Wai Man)





# **Man, Nature, and COVID-19: The Origins and Resolutions of the Pandemic**

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As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 quickly approaches the fifteen million mark worldwide, I recall a journal entry I wrote on January 28th, 2020. In this entry, I remarked how the number of cases had just passed four thousand and how uncertainty caused by the nascent outbreak would affect my immediate future in Hong Kong. That was 172 days ago, and the number of cases since then has increased by a factor of three-and-a-half thousand. Despite some naive conversations held with friends back in Hong Kong discussing if “the whole thing would just blow over,” in hindsight it now appears as though this pandemic was always inevitable. Far from being a matter of governance, transparency, or authoritarian control, I believe that this crisis was made inevitable by the very factors that will determine its ultimate outcome: our human values and our parasitic relationship with nature.

## **The Start of a Virus**

Around the time of the Industrial Revolution, world population swelled

to one billion (Roser, Ritchie and Ortiz-Ospina). That milestone took dozens of thousands of years to achieve, and yet in just 200 years since, we have reached a population of more than seven billion people and counting. As we grow in number and prosperity, the amount of space we need to sustain our civilizations expands even more rapidly. Today, no corner of the world save for the darkest depths of the oceans are safe from human reach. Advancing from hunter-gatherer societies into agricultural ones and eventually industrialized nations means that our impacts on the delicate balance of nature have become more and more severe. We are now well into what many scientists refer to as the “Anthropocene”, a new geological epoch in which man has decidedly triumphed over nature and has in many ways begun to shape it (Carrington).

In her book, *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson deliberates exactly this, though through the context of the destructive effects of manmade herbicides and pesticides. In the beginning of the sixth chapter she writes, “Although modern man seldom remembers the fact, he could not exist without the plants that harness the sun’s energy and manufacture the basic foodstuffs he depends upon for life” (141). Her emphasis on using the term *modern* man is very representative of the view expressed throughout the remainder of the text that humanity today holds very little regard for nature, apart from that which would bring him material benefit. This point is further illustrated when she writes, “Our attitude toward plants is a singularly narrow one. If we see any immediate utility in a plant we foster it. If for any reason we find its presence undesirable or merely a matter of indifference, we may condemn it to destruction forthwith” (141). If we generalize the above statement beyond its immediate contextual confines, we will find that Dr. Carson very effectively summarizes the reality of human values in the

modern world: we value only that which makes us become better off. There are, certainly, people like herself who value nature for its intrinsic worth, but through the economies and institutions we have built we have amplified the voices and actions of those who, much like the herbicide salesmen she mentions who seek to increase their profits by ruining the beauty of New England's countryside, act only out of immediate prospect for material gain (147). Such people must therefore believe that nature has value insofar as she presents to them instrumental worth.

Thus, through the institutionalization of such a way of thinking and such perceptions of the world, we have come to hold very little regard for the natural environment around us. We expand freely into untouched wilderness perfected by millions of years of evolution, and in the space of just one generation leave behind nothing but devastation. However, as Dr. Carson also points out, this behavior will surely harm us in the long run. We fail to take into account that there is a reason the natural world is the way it is, and that tampering with it so extensively will only amplify the repercussions we have been trying so hard to deny. Now, however, the consequences of our actions are hard to ignore.

## **From Disease to Pandemic**

This disregard and ignorance of nature was critical to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic which is the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It belongs to the coronavirus family, a type of virus which develops primarily in animal reservoirs and may only infect or “spillover” into a new population through direct contact (Forrester-Soto, “Coronavirus: Where Do New Viruses”). By blurring the lines between where society ends

and where wildlife begins, effectively declaring no place safe from the grips of our machines or the incursion of an invasive species, many—including Bill Gates—argue that it was only a matter of time before a pandemic of this proportion seized the world (Gates).

Furthermore, even though it was our value (or lack thereof) for nature and disregard for its boundaries and inherent worth that led to the emergence of this virus in human populations, it was our initial skepticism and aversion to change that has caused it to become the full-scale catastrophe that it is today. This, too, is rooted in our human values because it has become evident that, far from our predecessors who explored and discovered the world for the betterment and growth of human civilisation, we have now become reliant on growth for growth's sake. In our fast-paced lives and leveraged economies, staying static means falling behind and possibly falling apart. This is why I believe that far from enough people were willing to take the necessary measures early on to ensure the containment of the virus, and why so many people even today are unable to accept that we must change—even if just temporarily—in order to emerge on top in this battle against COVID-19. What could have been an isolated epidemic and exceptional lesson to the rest of the world quickly evolved into a global pandemic—an unrestrained wildfire kindled by humanity's disregard for nature and fanned by skepticism and aversion to change.

## **Possible Solutions**

If our entanglement in this crisis was as a result of the role of our human values and beliefs about nature, it will be the role of scientific

knowledge to help ensure safe passage into the future. There are currently dozens of different projects underway around the world to find a potential vaccine for the novel coronavirus, but it is not yet clear which—if any—will prove successful. This has resulted in what can be described as “a race to find the cure”, with governments as well as private corporations throwing their hats into the ring.

Though it would be amicable to believe that the race to find a vaccine is purely out of want to save human lives, I think it is just as equally a competition to potentially seize control over and reap the rewards of a post-COVID-19 world. Such a strategy invariably weaponizes scientific knowledge and the scientific community as a whole, a road which tends to lead to the triumph of one nation, civilization, or way of thinking over another. Like the manufacturing of the two atomic bombs used to coerce Imperial Japan into capitulation, science can be used as a tool to literally and figuratively shift the balance of power in the world. Nathan Sivin conveys this in his essay “Why the Scientific Revolution Did Not Take Place in China”, arguing that it would be a mistake to think that science and its role in society today is universal. He states, “science and technology have spread throughout the world, but that has not made them universal, in the sense of transcending European patterns of thought” (225). To him, modern science is undoubtedly reliant on its social and historical origins which have, through efforts not necessarily always related to the science itself but perhaps instead to politics and culture, been predominantly Western. Sivin further argues that “true universality would require modern technology to coexist with and serve cultural diversity rather than standardizing it out of existence” (225). Though he refrains from explicitly stating whether a truly

universal science is possible in the future, I take his statement to condemn science as being unavoidably an apparatus through which an increasingly globalized world becomes standardized.

Thus, any possible solution in the form of a vaccine to the coronavirus brought about by science will see scientific knowledge become a politicized matter, a role I strongly believe it should not play. The pandemic has only aggravated mistrust and racial prejudice between world governments and populations, and just as Trump has called COVID-19 the “Chinese Virus”, so too can a vaccine be dubbed the “American Vaccine” or the “Chinese Vaccine” (if it so happens that the vaccine is discovered in America or China) by those aiming to sow dissent or boast superiority (Gan). Such titles would surely escalate the “. . . profound differences between the character of modern scientific activity in the contemporary People’s Republic of China and United States” (Sivin 226). Therefore a vaccine could, over time, export the particular role played by scientific knowledge in the country in which the vaccine was found to the rest of the world. Sivin uses the example of “[t]he great disparity in Chinese and American definitions of psychology” as “one particularly obvious example that affects the life and death of particular theories in one society or the other”, but many such fields of study could be impacted—perhaps intentionally—by a country using its scientific knowledge and practices to influence the rest of the world for benefits far unassociated with the ideally-nonpartisan role of science (226). As a result, it can be argued that whether they hope to cement their role as a world leader in the scientific community or transfer that title unto themselves, such an opportunity is surely presented to the earth’s vying global powers by the COVID-19 crisis.

However, a critique to the argument laid out above must also be acknowledged, since it could very well be that the solution to the pandemic will not come in the form of viral resistance, but rather coexistence. Several countries—including my own—have started to openly welcome talk of living alongside the virus, citing the extensive damage done to their economies and the uncertain prospects of a vaccine as reasons to “go back to normal”. In either of these two paths, scientific knowledge can and must be used, but the way it is used and the solution which is favored will depend on our own human values and what we perceive to be of more importance. Though it would cost untold human lives, perhaps a resolution such as coexistence would force us to reexamine our views towards nature, possibility shifting our beliefs towards it from those which authorize us to parasitically benefit from its destruction to those which are centerpiece to a revived respect towards nature and its inherent worth; a view in which humans view themselves as being a part of nature, not apart from it. Such a paradigm shift, though admittedly idealistic, could help begin the process of reestablishing a balance between humans, nature, and the symbiosis of scientific knowledge and human and environmental well-being—not only to prevent further catastrophes such as this one, but to usher in an entirely new age of human organization and thought.

## **The Future**

What I sought to argue and reflect upon in writing this paper as stated in the introduction is that our flawed human values and our relationship with nature are what fundamentally caused the COVID-19 crisis, but they

are also what will eventually relieve us from it. Whether through applying scientific knowledge in finding a vaccine (and thereby shifting the role of science in the world thereafter) or by coming to terms with the virus and returning “back to normal”, it will be our human values that pave the way forward. Will we continue to fight an uncertain battle to find a vaccine and save invaluable human lives (though such a fight may be fueled by ulterior motives), or will we assign more importance to our economies and financial markets, pump them full of life and through them interpret what “healthy” looks like? Or is it possible that, reinterpreting the allegory of the cave in Plato’s *Republic* (6–7), man will be “freed and suddenly compelled to stand up, turn his neck around, walk, and look up towards the light”, finally seeing “the things whose shadows he had seen before” which he mistook for being the true nature of reality?

Perhaps only now, when we have been forced to sit at home and actually think and reflect, will we be able to question the notion of going “back to normal”; a notion championed by those privileged few traversing the road between us and the fire, casting as shadows on a wall false hopes and ideals we have been made to look at and accept as irrefutable. Going back to normal as defined by existing notions of normalcy would mean defeat—a failure on our part to learn from this crisis and readjust our beliefs about nature, about science, about ourselves as humans, and redefine what truly is of value and what is not. But if we are somehow successful in achieving such change and manage even the slightest glimpse of sunlight such that our eyes become reaccustomed to the new light of a better life, maybe then will be able to recognize how dark our cave dwelling has been all these years.



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### **Teacher’s comment:**

The essay by Serageldin Heiba is impressive for a number of reasons.

First of all, he provides a comprehensive analysis of the COVID-19 problem. All the fundamental aspects are identified and delineated briefly but accurately: historical developments, beliefs, human values, and facts of nature. He presents them in plain language and a pleasant rhetorical form showing how they interplay in our personal and social life.

Of particular importance is his choice not to shy away from presenting his personal views and preferences. At the same time, he is able to point out difficulties and limitations of his own views, thus providing intellectually honest and engaging arguments.

Finally, and most interestingly, the author is able to offer a non-ideological proposal for the future of human life through its relationship with nature. It is non-ideological because it recognizes the central role of

human values (and of how we rank them) and of the fact that, ultimately, what type of life we lead is ours to choose: “. . . the solution which is favored will depend on our own human values and what we perceive to be of more importance.” His proposal addresses both the spiritual and the practical needs of a human being, while distinguishing between fundamental and secondary values. He envisions a “symbiosis of scientific knowledge and human and environmental well-being”. Not “growth for growth’s sake” but exploring and discovering “the world for the betterment and growth of human civilisation” as “a part of nature, not apart from it”. (COLANERO Klaus John Charles)



# **On the Value of Scientific Knowledge and Its Significance**

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## **Introduction**

It is no doubt that our society attaches great significance on scientific knowledge—from studying spinning galaxies to spinning electrons, we invested a great deal of time and resources to unveil the mechanisms by which our world works, rendering the topic today a germane one—what is so valuable about scientific knowledge that makes countless scientists dedicate their lives to its pursuit?

## **Definition**

Before delving into the core of the question, two terms should be clearly defined—“scientific knowledge” and “value”. “Knowledge”, epistemologically speaking, means “justified true belief”(Lacewing 14). “Scientific”, on the other hand, means “falsifiable, testable and with predictive power” (Ajayi). The term “value”, however, is a controversial one: It refers to worth, how much something is entitled to. Nonetheless,

a key point about this concept arises—is value a transitive concept? To illustrate, if something, say a treasure buried in a desert, has value, and that another thing, say a shovel, can be used to obtain the former, does the value of the former confer value on the latter? This is where the concepts of “intrinsic value” and “instrumental value” come into play—intrinsic value measures innate worth, while instrumental value refers to the utility of the object in obtaining something external to it. When something is treated as a means to a higher objective, it has instrumental value; when it is treated as an end, something worth pursuing in itself, it has intrinsic value. Scientific knowledge, alongside most things, possesses intrinsic and instrumental value alike.

## **Instrumental Value of Scientific Knowledge**

The application of scientific knowledge in real life is the aspect most easily understood by the public: The attainment of scientific knowledge allows humans to understand the causation of phenomena, and through application of scientific knowledge, we can find the means by which we can alter, circumvent, dampen or magnify it to whatever extent we deem favorable. In most circumstances, the end that humans use science as an instrument to pursue is our quality of life, ranging from food, health to convenience. For instance, developing the classic mechanics model makes us understand that a force impressed on an object results in its acceleration (Cohen 53). Application of laws of rotational motion allows us to maximize torque or calculate the energy needed for a circulating object to shift from one orbit to another, producing products as small as a bottle opener and as

grand as a satellite, improving our quality of life by making various tasks more convenient, be it opening a bottle of champagne in a party or watching a live satellite TV broadcast of the World Cup.

One feature of instrumental value is that it is not universal—not all scientific knowledge yields pragmatic benefits, at least to a significant extent, in our daily lives. Although “science” deals with patterns in the observable world, only a minute portion of “things” in the observable world have great correlation to our daily lives. It is thus evident that most scientific knowledge has little instrumental value as it has little room of application in our lives. The discovery of a star galaxies away, for example, may have little to deal with how we live.

Following this line of argument, the instrumental value of scientific value is variable, contingent on external factors, such as the contemporary mode of living or the prevalence of related problems. Instrumental value of scientific knowledge of molecular pathways inside the cell may be little to a medical student, if it has little clinical relevance, with no diseases related to defects in the cell carrying out this molecular synthetic pathway (such as deficiency of certain enzymes); were it not for the potential in creating “better” humans by changing genes or curing genetic diseases like Hapsburg Lip (Watson 98), the discovery of DNA transcription and translation may not be hailed as such a breakthrough by the public.

## **Intrinsic Value of Scientific Knowledge**

The intrinsic value of scientific knowledge is different from its instrumental counterpart in that it is appreciated by few. The majority of the

population pursues utility, an end immediate to them, and lacks appreciation for the intrinsic beauty of things (Poincare 160). This is why the majority of men are reluctant to reflect.

This inborn beauty derived from the unadulterated truthfulness in knowledge, which grants us happiness in knowing what we know to be certain, as well as bravery and righteousness in affirming our beliefs. The caveman's exhilaration after he came out of the cave does not stem from a sense of intellectual superiority, but from learning how the seemingly two-dimensional shadows he saw on the wall are indeed projections by artifacts and fire—he had true appreciation of how the physical laws he discovered can produce the sensible world he observed for his entire life (Plato 8). Alongside happiness, the caveman also has a newfound bravery to he comes back to speak for what is right despite resentment from his fellow cavemen, because he knows it is the truth, a force that could make him die rather than live in falsehood (8). It is no surprise that Newton could defy contemporary common sense and propose a new model of motion, or that Darwin overthrew the creationist view of the world and proposed theory of evolution despite dominance of the Catholic Church... These scientists all felt an impulse to speak for things that can stand scientific falsification. This intrinsic value of science exists universally in all forms of scientific knowledge.

Scientific knowledge is beautiful in its simplicity. Scientific knowledge describes the causes for the repeated patterns that we observe in the sensible world, and more often than not, it is very simple (Poincare 161). As Newton puts it, "Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes", interactions in the colossal physical world are governed by a very small number of laws. However, due to the great complexity



of the world, most people find it hard to deduce universal laws of nature from thousands of seemingly unrelated elements, thus their perception of the world often deviates from the truth. People who appreciate scientific knowledge, however, learn to admire the resemblances and dissimilarities of the world, and attempt to understand the causation of these similarities and differences, and the harmonious order underneath seemingly conflicting elements. “The scientist does not study nature because it is useful to do so. He studies it because he takes pleasure in it, and he takes pleasure in it because it is beautiful” (Poincare 163), this innate quality is what fuels scientists to toil ceaselessly, notwithstanding repeated experimental failures and overwhelming frustration. How foolish would it be to say that Francis Crick dedicated the last three weeks in his life to the study of consciousness because it helped him make a living, when he was already teetering on the edge of death (Kandel 187)! There must be something greater than life itself in science that made this man give up all the ordinary pleasures of life.

Scientific knowledge is beautiful also in its complexity. The diversity and depth of scientific knowledge is intimidating—not only do facts outstrip us in number (Poincare 159), but the interconnectedness between them also overwhelms us. More often than not, a state of being, observable by human senses, is caused by multiple factors through unobservable pathways; but a factor, on the other hand, also affects multiple states of being. To add to this complexity, these factors often influence one another. Through a reductionist method, a scientist may be able to figure out how one factor influences a state of being by isolation of variables (Needham 214), but never can he make precise predictions when all factors are put into the picture. Where the reductionist approach fails, the only thing scientists understand is that they have a lot of things yet to be understood: How

could one design an experiment with constant variables when all factors are interdependent? This is where the beauty of scientific knowledge lies: They teach us that it is fine to live and not know. It is humbling to admit that many things cannot, and perhaps never would, be explained by scientific knowledge.

The above is not to say that one form of value is superior than the other—instrumental value and intrinsic value are both indispensable to scientific knowledge itself. Without intrinsic value, no one would appreciate the mechanisms by which the world works, and scientists would lose the perseverance and motivation to push the frontiers of scientific knowledge. Without instrumental value, however, scientific knowledge would lose recognition in society, and the scientists would lose support for their research.

The difference in conditional existence between instrumental value and intrinsic value also gives rise to the interdependence between the practical and theoretical aspects of science. As we see in Table 1, existence of instrumental value often depends on external circumstances. For instance, when mathematicians develop calculus to solve 3 dimensional problems, there are no practical applications of this mathematical tool. However, when physicians or chemists do encounter problems in their fields that require calculus, be it the electric field of a moving charge or the probability function of an electron, calculus gains instrumental value. Scholars then realize the significance of calculus in various scientific fields, which prompts mathematicians to develop more advanced tools in calculus, such as 3D vector calculus. Intrinsic value of scientific knowledge starts out as the primary appeal for humans, and when circumstances are right, the society appreciates their instrumental value, which in turn produces more scientists who uncover the intrinsic value of scientific knowledge.

**Table 1 Implications of the Distinctions  
between Instrumental Value and Intrinsic Value**

	<b>Instrumental value</b>	<b>Intrinsic value</b>
People who could appreciate	Vast majority of the population	Only scholars and scientists
Uniformity for all scientific knowledge	Non-uniform, only some scientific knowledge has this value	Universal
Condition of existence	Conditional	Unconditional

### **Why Does This Implication Matter? Or, Does It Not?**

Let us return to the original question, “What is so valuable about scientific knowledge that makes us pursue it?” One may question why the motive matters, as we pursue scientific knowledge no matter which form of value we appreciate. This circulates back to Poincaré’s question—do we pursue science for science’s sake, or do we use science as an instrument for external ends (Poincaré 159)? Perhaps the answer is both: While the pioneers of science pursue science for science, they are sometimes under influence of the society, which prompts them to apply the scientific knowledge to maximize utility. The ratio of these two motives, and to what extent it affects the selection of facts, however, remains veiled.

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### **Teacher's comment:**

In recent years, an increasing amount of resource has been allocated in scientific research worldwide. So, what is the underlying value of pursuing scientific understanding of the natural phenomena? In this essay, Wai Yan did a precise analysis of the instrumental and intrinsic value of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, he gave an insightful discussion of the interdependency of the two dimensions of value. This essay is clearly structured, and the arguments are well supported by relevant evidence. Wai Yan successfully brings readers to reflect on the value of scientific inquiry. (CHEUNG Hang Cheong Derek)



# @爸爸愛喜禾<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. 罪魁禍首<sup>2</sup>

吾兒<sup>3</sup>喜禾：

罪魁禍首可算逮住了，兒子！「雙對氯苯基三氯乙烷」<sup>4</sup>，你父親可是盯了這個名字足足兩分鐘，不可能記錯的。

醫生懷疑你母親懷你的時候吃了一些不太乾淨的東西，我心虛是自己偷了懶，瞧見菜葉「完整無缺」，就隨隨便便沖洗兩下——結果，闖禍了。

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1 《爸爸愛喜禾》是一本暢銷書，記錄了父親蔡春豬和他兒子喜禾的生活日常。在喜禾被確診為「自閉症」之後，爸爸蔡春豬以一個自強不殘、愛開玩笑的形象，用詼諧幽默的語言記錄生活中和兒子有關的種種細節，小心翼翼地繞開悲劇的漩渦，展現出笑中帶淚的樂觀和對生活的熱愛。此文基於真實的人物形象，虛構了在未來可能發生的故事，並以三封家書的形式呈現。為向原作者致敬，本文標題採用〈@爸爸愛喜禾〉，這也是讀者在微博上表示感動的一種形式。

2 自閉症至今病因未明。流行病學研究已經篩查出很多可能導致孤獨症的危險因素，但是沒有一種是導致自閉症發生的直接因素。比較公認的原因是基因變異與不良環境的交互作用，特別是新生突變可能是自閉症發病的主因，但具體致病因素和機制不明。研究顯示，一些因素如高齡父母、孕期感染、孕早期不良用藥或接觸化學物質等有可能增加患自閉症的風險。（奇異恩典自閉症教育分享平臺）為有力表達筆者觀點，本文假想喜禾的自閉症是由母親在懷孕期間誤食過量DDT引起，籍此討論人類和自然間的關係。該假設沒有任何科學依據。

3 「吾兒」是原著中作者採用的稱呼，本文保留了原文這個稱呼。

4 雙對氯苯基三氯乙烷是DDT的化學名，是一種有效的有機氯類殺蟲劑，為二十世紀上半葉防止農業病蟲害，減輕瘧疾傷寒等蚊蠅傳播的疾病危害起到了不少的作用。但由於其對環境污染過於嚴重，目前很多國家和地區已經禁止使用。然而，世界衛生組織於2002年宣佈重新啟用DDT，以控制蚊子的繁殖及預防瘧疾、登革熱、黃熱病等在世界範圍的捲土重來。

這不重要，兒子；重要的是，怎麼還有人在用這種殺蟲劑呢？卡森的話難道說得還不明白嗎？《寂靜的春天》帶給人們的反思難道還不夠嗎？——吾兒，你該去讀一讀，人總是不長記性，如今環境問題又愈演愈烈了。

這下話頭要追溯到上個世紀的戰爭年代了。那時候為了抑制疾病，大規模使用除草劑。瘧疾傷寒倒是被控制住了，但這可怕的化學藥劑如同幽靈一般在生命之網中不斷擴散開來，最終遍佈世界的每一個角落。你知道，生命和自然之間是存在微妙平衡的，環環相扣，關係緊密而又複雜：人們用除草劑干預自然，除雜草、滅蟲害，但人為抑止和濫用終會打破自然平衡。蝴蝶振翅<sup>5</sup>影響至今，上個世紀種下的惡果卻要讓你來承受<sup>6</sup>。

吾兒，我並不想再溯源追責，那沒有意義。我只想你明白一件事：你看，空氣裏瀰漫的奇怪味道，夜半不曾現身的星星，這是你聞得到看得見的污染；你父親因此呼吸道損傷，鼻子不如從前靈光了，這是你看得見的疾病。這兩者間的邏輯如同吃了壞掉的食物會拉肚子一樣簡明直接。但是，環境問題遠遠不止這些。

就像《寂靜的春天》裏描寫的那樣，曾經被認為安全無害的殺蟲劑被大規模噴灑後，不僅殺滅了害蟲，同時也威脅着其它有益的昆蟲和植物。化學藥劑不易分解，於是通過食物鏈逐漸在生物體內富集，最終積聚頂端，也就是我們人類體內。到頭來，人類自食其果。而這些，是你看不見的污染。人類活動和整個生態系統緊密相連，牽一髮，動全身。你務必要認識到，環境問題遠非簡單意義上「污染再治理」<sup>7</sup>的口號，它是一旦打破就再也回不去的脆弱的平衡！

5 此指「蝴蝶效應」。

6 此指喜禾因為人類過量使用DDT導致毒素在母體富集而患上了自閉症。

7 此處影射那些為發展經濟，採取先污染環境再治理政策的國家。



吾兒，最後，請記住卡森的這句話：我們在自然界裏散步，就彷彿大象在擺滿磁器的小房子裏散步一樣<sup>8</sup>。

也請你今後務必留意，處處小心。

你的父親

二〇二二年三月

## 2. 冒失鬼

吾兒喜禾：

今天是個重要的日子！那個每天只會搖頭的主治醫生可算點頭了，你的病這下終於能治癒<sup>9</sup>了！

兒子，你還記得小時候有多優秀嘛？有張表你得了好多個鈎：不跟人對視，一個鈎；對呼喚沒有反應，兩個鈎；不玩玩具，……專家說，你是高功能低智慧自閉症，直接在你名字上叉了一把大叉<sup>10</sup>。

你父親當時不死心，反覆問為甚麼，究竟啥原因啊。

專家說了很多很多，甚麼神經元腦細胞……我聽不明白。在一大堆專業名詞裏，我獨獨記住了一句：生命不就是物理化學<sup>11</sup>嘛，沃森

8 引自卡森 (Rachel Carson) 的《寂靜的春天》，原文：“Once again we are walking in nature like an elephant in the china cabinet.” (154)

9 自閉症至今尚未有治療的方法，此文假想未來的某一天人類發現了自閉症的治療方法，從而有了這封家書。

10 此段改自《爸爸愛喜禾》的前言部分〈給兒子的一封信〉。原文如下：「專家還拿了一張表，讓我們在上面打鈎打叉，表上列了許多問題，例如是不是不跟人對視、對呼喚沒有反映、不玩玩具……符合上述特徵就打鈎。吾兒，每打一個鈎都像在你父母心上扎一刀。你也太優秀了吧，怎麼能得這麼多鈎？！專家說，你是高功能低智慧自閉症——吾兒，你終於得到了一把叉，還是一把大叉，叉在你名字上。你的人生被否決了；你父母的人生也被否決了。」（蔡春豬 前言）

11 語出沃森 (James D. Watson)。原文：“Life was just a matter of physics and chemistry.” (141)

都是這麼說的，既然這病也在物理化學的範疇裏，肯定會有辦法的。就是這句話，讓我莫名心安。

但你總不讓你父親省心。自我看了坎德爾的那本《追尋記憶的痕跡》，我又不確定起來。我想着要是你也讀過，我們就能好好探討一番了。

吾兒，你相信靈魂嗎？你覺得肉體和靈魂是分離的嗎？現代醫學讓我相信生命不過就是物理和化學，你看，你的自閉症也能以醫學手段治療了。要是你的靈魂在跟我鬧脾氣，那再高超的科學技術也哄不好你啊。但物理化學真的能解釋一切嗎？我又隱隱覺得，你更像是一個冒失的靈魂進錯了身體，靈魂與身體不相匹配，自然無法駕馭協調。不然，你幹嘛見啥就上嘴用咬的？你幹嘛老是盯着自己的手，也不願意理爸爸一下呢？

後天就要進手術室了。吾兒，你願意繼續用這個軀殼盛裝你的靈魂嗎？我擔心一旦進了手術室，你的靈魂可能就要被「囚禁」起來了。那會，可能沒地兒反悔了。吾兒，希望能儘早聽到你的回答。

急。急。急。

你的父親

二〇二六年六月

### 3. 奴隸

吾兒喜禾：

思前想後，還是提筆給你寫了這封信。昨天夜裏又瞥見你窩在房間裏更新你的知識庫<sup>12</sup>了。兒子，這次更新了些啥？看這時間，像是

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12 此封家書建立在人類可以通過傳輸資料進入大腦來學習知識的大背景之上。

直接把經典力學和高等數學都打包了吧？！

吾兒，我理解你的心情。前十六年，你落下太多知識了。手術後這三年，你急吼吼地想把它們統統補回來。好在有「知識晶片」幫忙，這個過程倒是輕鬆不少，現在你也基本趕上進度了。父親知道你渴求甚麼：你渴望你的知識庫更新後，能像牛頓一樣博學；能和周圍的同齡人一樣，倒背黑洞的演算法則；你急切地想要證明自己，我和你們一樣！但是，這有甚麼好驕傲的呢？你父親小時候，這些知識都是學習來，思考來的，哪像現在靠腦子裏一塊合成电路板就統統解決了。

吾兒，不知不覺，你已經二十了。弱冠之年，好勝心最盛、自我意識最強，卻也最容易被誘惑、最容易迷失。在這個年紀，我希望的，不是你能張口背公式、徒手開根號，而是你能像牛頓一樣思考，像牛頓一樣求真。這對你來說應該不難：小時候你能盯着梧桐樹葉看一個鐘頭，想必很有思考潛力了。

你現在跟牛頓一樣聰明，我自然是教不了你甚麼，但我這裏有一位很好的老師，他願意給你講一個故事——一個發生在地下洞穴裏的故事。我猜，你應該聽過，甚至《理想國》這本書就在你的資料庫裏，但這不要緊，請你回去靜下心再讀一遍，用你的全身心，再讀一遍……

你看，洞穴裏的囚徒把牆上的影子當成他們以為的「現實」和「真理」；你聽，他們正在嘲笑那個走出過洞穴親眼見過太陽的異類。吾兒，感受到了嗎？你想成為那些無知的囚徒嗎？反正，我不希望。我不希望你被科技的枷鎖束縛住，無力掙脫，還在那兒自得其樂。

如今，知識可以一鍵同步，牛頓定律婦孺皆知，卻也無形中給你們的思想戴上了鐐銬。你抬眼看看身邊，有多少人是把下載下來的知識默認為真理的？

吾兒，那不是真理，甚至不是你擁有的東西。你可以說它是被增強的第六感官，但其中植入的資訊比你五官感受來的還要表像、還要

虛幻。那甚麼才是真實？如果真實指的是可被感知到、被嗅到、被嚐到、被看到，那所謂真實無非就是經過你大腦處理的電信號<sup>13</sup>罷了，這些所謂的知識同樣也是。我這麼說，並非要你摒棄感官經驗，感官經驗是必要的，只是，你要用你的理性思考它，質疑它。你要始終堅信，洞穴外面還有一個世界，想要出去，首先，你不能淪為科技的奴隸。

吾兒，請永遠不要停止反思，請永遠不要停止求真。我曾告誡過你，實用的態度以善為最高目的，今天我想說，科學的態度以真為最高目的<sup>14</sup>。下載在你知識庫裏的不是恆真的東西，它也會犯錯誤。要是沒有一個人願意求真，昨夜，你更新的，估計就是《亞里斯多德全集》了。

你的父親

二〇二九年五月

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13 此為電影《駭客帝國》中的經典臺詞。原文：“What is real? How do you define real? If you're talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, what you can taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain.”

14 引自朱光潛《談美》。原文如下：「實用的態度以善為最高目的，科學的態度以真為最高目的，美感的態度以美為最高目的。」（10）

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## 老師短評

徐翔同學非常巧妙地借助暢銷書《爸爸愛喜禾》的人物背景，以一個自閉症小童父親的身份，寫出了深情款款的三封書信。這三封信

分別以卡森的《寂靜的春天》、坎德爾的《追尋記憶的痕跡》和柏拉圖的《理想國》為切入點，旁徵博引，層層遞進，探討了人類探索自然過程中的得失與迷惘，強調在擁有高度發達的科學技術的今天，人類更應行事謹慎，堅持求真和反思。徐同學行文流暢，語言生動有趣，簡潔有力，且惟妙惟肖地展現了原作者蔡春豬的神韻，是一篇不可多得的佳作。（楊潔）

# 生命：有限與無窮

## ——致霍金先生的一封信

蔡靜怡

伍宜孫書院 工商管理學士綜合課程

尊敬的霍金先生：

您好。見字如晤。於伽利略紀念日降臨，愛因斯坦誕辰日辭別，您76年的生命傳奇與永無止境的精神豐碑令我震撼。「即使身處果殼之中，仍自以為無限宇宙之王。」(Shakespeare 239)<sup>1</sup>對於生命，您在著作《果殼中的宇宙》談及，縱然身體受到諸多局限，精神仍能自由探索宇宙(104)。希望通過這封信，從歷史與未來的視野、哲學與科學的視角，由人類擴展至自然，由個體延伸至整體，與您探討生命的永恆主題，探尋何為必須承襲的守則，何為突破局限的關鍵，何為開拓創造的源點，從而實現生命從「有限」到「無窮」的蛻變。

先從我們自身談起。無可否認，作為精神的載體，碳基身體的有序構造由「遺傳密碼腳本」決定(Schrödinger 194)，但這是否意味着如沃森(Watson)所言，「生命僅僅是物理化學的組合」(139)? 生命的物質基礎給予我們感知、選擇、處理外部信息的能力，可正如柏拉圖「洞穴寓言」中揭示，我們往往拘泥於目力所及的低層次真

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1 本篇所有引文由作者翻譯。

實（Lindberg 14），棋盤陰影錯覺<sup>2</sup>等實驗也印證着生理功能的「有限」。而您僅憑一根手指與世界的聯絡，便將極有限經驗條分縷析、追根溯源，聯想時間盡頭，發掘黑洞奧秘。您啟發着我，感覺經驗與理性思考無謂孰優孰劣，只有將有限的「輸入」通過意識層面的反思、類比、邏輯證明、追問，才能明確表像背後的因果，「輸出」「大腦中建構的意識模型」<sup>3</sup>，探求更高維度的真理，以精神抵達「無窮」的境界。如葛詹尼加（Gazzaniga）所述：「大腦是自動化的，而我們是自由的。」（轉引自Kandel 192）

然而，人們突破「有限」生命守則的嘗試，並不僅限於精神層面。近日，首例基因編輯免疫愛滋病嬰兒在中國誕生。雖有胚胎實驗14天原則<sup>4</sup>禁止人類基因編輯，您擔心的事終歸發生——人性難以抵抗基因編輯的誘惑（Hawking, *Brief Answers* 53）。我不禁想到，目的同為規避頑疾，美國在二十世紀掀起的消極優生運動<sup>5</sup>演化出納粹主義的文明浩劫，而今天基因編輯成功的先河，很可能引發您預言中的「超級人類改造」。到了那時，我們這樣的普通人類是否會在「優勝劣汰」中消亡？我們應如何防止未來技術滑向失控？依我拙見，個體的局限乃至缺陷恰恰是整體多樣、無窮的外在表現，若優生從鼓勵變為禁令，基因工程從治療疾病變為製造「完美」嬰兒，就背離了生命

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2 棋盤陰影錯覺（checker shadow illusion）屬於視錯覺中最常見的亮度錯覺。因人腦依靠經驗與環境自動做出明度補償，產生兩個同色方塊顏色不同的錯覺（Adelson 399）。

3 原文：“Meaning is so simple as another model of reality that we each build inside our own brain.”（Hawkings, *Brief Answers* 96）

4 利用體外受精、遺傳修飾等技術獲得的囊胚，體外培養期限自受精或核移植開始不得超過14天。因為14天前人類胚胎尚未分化出神經結構，不具人類特徵，不涉及倫理問題。（中華人民共和國科學技術部、衛生部1）

5 此處「消極優生」（negative eugenics），即通過政策強制阻止遺傳因數較差的人生育後代。與高爾頓（Francis Galton）「鼓勵遺傳因數優秀的人生育」的「積極優生學」（positive eugenics）相對。



發展的初衷。況且，暫不提脫靶效應<sup>6</sup>的風險，當所謂的改良得到推廣，人類基因庫變得相似而單一，實質減小了「無窮」的可能，環境的變動或基因設計的微小差錯就將導致全人類的危機。再者，個人生命意義受天性與教養的雙重作用，而「憐憫與合作的本能增強着它們所處的社會」（Darwin, *The Descent of Man* 101），尊重與互助使整體有機運作突破個體局限，產生 $1+1>2$ 的無窮生命力。

除了「干預」自身基因，人們又借力於人工智能，突破生理限制。智能設備大幅提升了工業、醫療各領域效率，看似力量無窮，但電腦遠超人腦的容量、精確度是否預示我們「地球最高智慧生命」的地位限期將至？技術創新爆炸式增長：因果框架、自我升級、模擬人腦神經網，您預言中擁有「自由意志」的超人工智能並非危言聳聽。但請允許我稍微反駁您的一個觀點——人類的大腦可被拷貝到電腦中獨立運作。人工智能得益於龐大的數據庫支撐，但億萬年進化賦予人類產生直覺、用於長期規劃、抽象思考的大腦模塊，而神經回路引起的主觀體驗（Kandel 185）是至今無解的難題，更無法實現簡單的複製。更重要的是，作為自然生命，我們擁有情感，會對現實產生主觀的喜怒哀樂，對其他生命表現競爭、互助等社會行為。如李開復教授所言，同情心與創造力將我們與人工智能分隔開（Lee）。因此，不同於人工智能，我們與外界的交互並不受限於簡單的程式執行，也更具無窮的可能性。但無可否認，將發展控制在專門化而非全能化，將應用限制於服務而非戰爭，才能在和諧共融中讓科技助力「無窮」。

「有智慧的人一定不會與其他生命相離，不管那生命有沒有語言。」（Le Guin 121）我們再將目光轉向人類社會之外，「有限」與「無窮」的雙重特性同樣適用於其他生命。漫長自然選擇中，稀少而

6 控制學術語，此處指基因編輯作用位元點偏離原定目標。

具不利變異的族群終究滅絕 (Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* 83)，但由於基因與生態系統的多樣性，無窮的變異類群不斷開拓新的棲息地 (86)，而如候鳥遷徙、蟻群分工的社會行為<sup>7</sup>更增加着延續的潛力。然而，人類的涉足是否會打破自然的精妙平衡？您接受BBC專訪時告誡人們，若繼續對自然無節制干預，地球生命將岌岌可危。

漫長進化歷程穩固了人類的優勢地位，這是否意味着我們無須給予動植物道德關懷，如笛卡爾 (Descartes) 人類中心論中將它們視作工具 (105)<sup>8</sup>？中國古代文獻中「倮蟲之精者謂聖人」強調人與自然不可分割 (Needham 205)，美國學者卡遜 (Carson) 用「生命之網」形容這種牽一髮而動全身的聯繫 (146)。當我們為口腹之欲過度捕撈，為開拓公路肆意噴灑除草劑，使多樣性減少，物種絕滅的速度、範圍遠超自然狀態，我們便讓生命的「無窮」反變為「有盡」——2,4-D增加作物中硝酸鹽含量，糧庫死亡<sup>9</sup>頻發 (151)；亂砍濫伐削弱了森林分解病原體的能力，埃博拉病毒爆發 (Butler)。由此，我明白與其自以為處於「金字塔頂」而一味功利攫取，不如維繫不同生命間的紐帶。幸而，更多人已意識到，應將有盡的資源轉化為可持續發展的「無窮」動力，從黃石公園的生態防治、粵港澳大灣區的生態旅遊開發，到校內風靡的「走飲管」大潮，社會與個人皆努力減少了行為對生命整體的負外部性<sup>10</sup>。希望您的預言不至在未來應驗，人類不至成為威脅所有生命的「入侵物種」。

關於生命的難解之謎尚多。是否存在外星生命？宇宙孕育生命的終極意義為何？相信未來，如您一般不懈追求的探索者，將逐漸揭開

7 指群居動物相互作用相互影響的行為，通常表現為分工合作、等級結構等。演化生物學家道金斯 (Dawkins) 認為，生物體中基因總是有利基因自身傳播，同族群內基因往往相似，因此常出現利他、合作行為。(378)

8 此處為早期「人類中心主義」代表思想，由「我思故我在」引出人是一切事物與生命的中心。

9 含大量硝酸鹽的作物在糧庫中儲存時，釋放 CO 氣體，引發進入者化學肺炎而致死。

10 指個人行為對社會整體總福利的不良影響，典例為環境污染。(Mankiw 196)

謎底。薩根說：「我們是宇宙對自己的省思。」（Sagan 321）在我眼中，基因決定的缺憾或優良的體徵是生命共同遵循的法則，獨立思考的意識是我們突破的節點；進化孕育的多樣性是創造生命繁榮的真諦，個體間的包容是生命開拓發展的潛能。究竟是一味利己發展不計後果，還是「腳踏實地並仰望蒼穹」（Hawking and Mlodinow 2），實現生命從有限到無窮的「守破離」<sup>11</sup>，全在於我們的價值判斷與價值選擇。

暫且頓筆。願我們作出正確的生命選擇，也願您在世界另一端繼續自由地飛翔。

對話自然的探索者

2018年12月6日

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## 老師短評

靜怡通過一封寫給物理學家霍金的書信，基於「基因編譯嬰兒」、「人工智慧」、「環境問題」等熱門議題，探討了生命永恆主題之中，何為必須承襲的守則，何為突破局限的關鍵，何為開拓創造的源點。她非常仔細地閱讀了文本，行文如行雲流水，引經據典，信手拈來。看似舉重若輕，卻體現了她扎實的功底。（楊潔）

# **Interpreting the Beauty of Science through J. S. Bach's Music**

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## **Introduction**

Science and music are representatives of sense and sensibility to many people, and we often describe a law of nature with “scientific” and a piece of music with “beautiful” but rarely the reverse. However, quoting the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi: “heaven and earth proceed in the most admirable way, but they say nothing about them” (“Knowledge Rambling in the North”), the underlying laws of nature’s proceedings have their own innate beauty. In this essay I will draw parallels between science and music of a special composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, to appreciate the beauty of science.

## **Shared Aesthetics: Harmony, Simplicity and Vastness**

The beauty of science originates from intelligence and the harmonious order of simplicity and vastness (Poincaré 163–164). Music is an example of the beauty of science, as the inward, intimate, interior beauty of intellectual

discernment can be expressed in an external approach acoustically, vocally or instrumentally.

## Harmony

Harmony is one of the most emphasized elements in music. Essentially, harmony is achieved by various music notes, which are the vibrations of air; because air vibrates at different frequencies, different pitches are formed. Pythagoras made the earliest discoveries about the tuning of harmonious music notes, which is known as the Pythagorean tuning, tells the intervals<sup>1</sup> of harmonious notes by ratios. For instance, notes of harmonious intervals have whole number ratios, in practice, playing half the length and the whole string of a lyre<sup>2</sup> would give the same notes of one octave span. If we examine this method from the point of view of modern physics,  $A_{440}$ , or  $A_4$  in pitch notation, corresponds to an audio frequency of 440 Hz and the audio frequency of  $A_5$ , the same note an octave above  $A_4$ , is 880 Hz. So the chord of  $A_4$  and  $A_5$ , which are of eighth interval, being played together will be the most harmonious. By using this approach of calculating ratios between notes, Pythagorean deduced the one of oldest scale which became the basis of all Western music activities for a long time (“Pythagoras of Samos”).

The origin of the music scale is deduced and calculated by a mathematician, and harmonious music does not simply emerge from a random outburst of imagination, instead, it is generated by applying the laws of physics in the right, pleasant way. Musicians of all times need to study music theory thoroughly to learn the features of notes, intervals,

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1 In music theory, an interval is the difference in pitch between two sounds.

2 A string instrument in Ancient Greece.



tempos, structures and so on so that they can learn the acoustic law of harmony and achieve intended musical effects.

The same beauty of harmony lies in science as well, just not limited to an acoustic way of expression. For instance, Euclid applied “skillful organization in presenting and developing mathematical propositions” (Dunham 258), the elegant structural flow from definition to postulates and proposition in his deduction accords with the several music themes consist of music notes organized in an elaborate way and finally developed into a full piece of sonata. Euclid used simple syllogism to obtain propositions in the mathematical universe, which turned out to be a refined music composition of points, lines and shapes. This unifying character between music and Greek geometry originates from the logical thinking process and ends at intellectual harmony, it is not only an exercise of techniques and reasoning, but also a demonstration of artistry.

### **Simplicity and Vastness**

Apart from harmony, simplicity and vastness also accompanies the beauty of music, and Bach's music is a typical example. For instance, in *Chaconne*<sup>3</sup>, the basic theme consists of only four bars. However, Bach added various musical variations and compositional effects to the short theme, and the final work became one of his most appreciated violin solo. Fellow composer Johannes Brahms described: “On one stave, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings.” (“Partita for Violin”).

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3 The fifth and final movement of the Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004, by Johann Sebastian Bach.

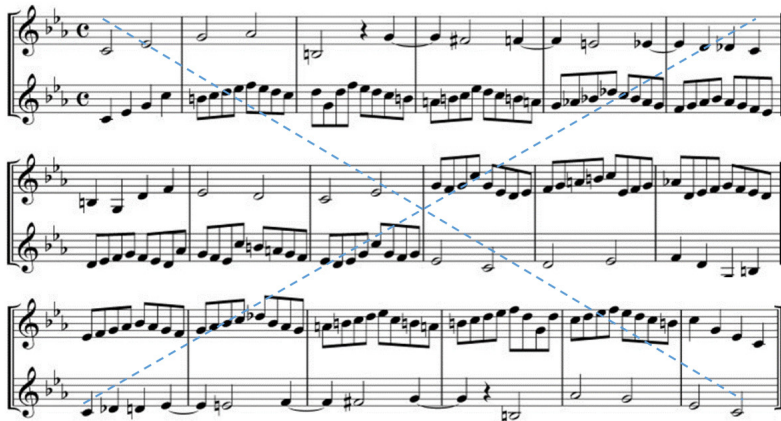
The philosophical transition between simple elements and the grand vista of the whole world applies to both arts and science. When Watson and Crick confirmed the two-chained double helix structure as the result of base-pairing, they instinctively felt “[a]nything that simple, that elegant just had to be right”. (Watson 131). It is this simple mechanics of chemical substance that encompasses the secret of heredity, of the human body, and lives on earth. British poet William Blake once wrote, “To see a World in a Grain of Sand // And a Heaven in a Wild Flower, // Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand // And Eternity in an hour” (“Auguries of Innocence”, qtd in Blake, “To See a World”), while the vastness of the galaxy brings about awe and admiration, what scientists are looking for is always as simple and elegant as the melody of four bars, and this is the key to decode the mysterious vastness.

### **Common Rationality: In Search of Natural Laws**

So far I have reached the conclusion that science could be as beautiful as music in terms of outer aesthetics standards. However, science observes absolute facts and pursues objective truth by reasoning, whereas music hardly resists subjectivity and sensibility. The two subjects seem to be contradictory, would they still share the same inner beauty in essence?

In fact, rationality and the pursuit of universal laws can be detected in Bach’s music, these efforts manifest beauty, sense and rationality at the same time. For example, *The Musical Offering* is a collection of keyboard canons and fugues by Bach (“The Musical Offering”), and one of the most intriguing pieces is a “crab canon”. As shown in the following music score, a crab canon is an arrangement of two musical lines that are complementary

and backward (“Crab Canon”), which is very rare and unique in music compositions. This rigid, subtle form with designated music theme is not designed for free, emotional, improvisational composing. Instead, given the fact that devising a piece in two voices that produce a pleasant sound whenever played forward or backward is extremely difficult, I see this composition as an exercise testing the boundary of musical composition. The composer went beyond the surface of the melody, and it is the fundamentals of harmony that are contemplated and it reveals the rational nature of the piece.



Graph 1: Music Sheet of Crab Canon

At the beginning of western science, Plato differentiated the sensible realm from the invisible realm, stating the importance of using rationality and evidence to discover truths (Lindberg 12), and scientists have been searching for laws underlying visible phenomena ever since. Bach's special intelligent investigation into the boundary of music is not at all less pleasant to listen to, in fact, its thoughtfulness increases its charm of tonic harmony, so there is no reason for a similarly rational scientific act to be branded

as not beautiful. The use of reason itself in search of a clearer visage of mankind and the universe is one of the most remarkable and gorgeous things we have done.

A fascinating fact pointed out by Douglas Hofstadter is that the structure of a crab canon is similar to palindromes, and DNAs are of the same organization (Hofstadter 209), which consist of double helix/melody interweaving contrapuntally. The striking resemblance draws me to a perception: the painstakingly discovery of DNA structure just as adorable as a carefully composed crab canon.

## **The Unity of Truth and Beauty: Completeness and Consistency in the Process**

When the analogy of Theory of Forms is applied on music, Bach composing a piece of music is like a carpenter giving the “initial idea or definition of a table” (Lindberg 12), the performance carried out by a string quartet is destined to be the “imperfect replica” (13) of Bach’s intention, and music scholars are the truth seekers trying to solve the initial idea of the composer. Bach’s music is so elegantly and ingeniously organized that the process of decomposing it is also beautiful. Music theorists found out that in *The Musical Offering* only a single music theme is used for all collections, and underlying similarities connect the apparent richness.

Scientists are similar music analysts in a way that they are trying to find out the “form” of a table designed by the carpenter. Science is beautiful by nature as it is not a business that only rewards beauty to winners of successful discoveries, instead, it entitles beauty to the process

of truth finding. For instance, in the exploration of inertia, Galileo carried out controlled experiments and found out that a ball rolled down would roll up another incline to the same height as started, then he initiated the concept of inertia. These are the first two steps of making a discovery: sensory experiments show a certain pattern and justify a phenomenon. His successor Newton took two steps further: Newton summarized the patterns and identified a quantitative relation, moreover, he upgraded the concept of inertia and applied it to the celestial motions. (Cohen 55, 59) Galileo missed hitting the “final target”, but I doubt if anyone who is not a defendant of Roman theological authority has ever called his work a hideous failure. Every step taken in scientific discovery, though inevitably off the right track from time to time, has its own meanings and takes us closer to the truth.

The beauty of scientific discovery lies in the innate completeness and consistency of the research methodology—the formal deduction. Sivin holds a view that the Scientific Revolution unprecedentedly created knowledge with “no value except truth value” (235), I would argue there is beauty alongside truth value: the process of truth seeking is a logical flow of scientific experiments followed by a complete and cohesive deduction form, and the existence of such research approach reveals the potential for a new discovery as well as beauty. As in the case of inertia’s discovery, it shows the operation of the formal system: first, carrying out experiments and concluding patterns; second, explaining certain phenomena; third, conducting theoretical construction of physical formulas; and finally, tracing the source to universal mathematical origins. Completeness and internal consistency are indicated in the logical approach to derive propositions from axioms or other existing findings. So is the unity of truth and beauty,

which is manifested through this unbreakable cohesion of the deduction system, suggesting rationality could be utilized and truth could be found.

## Conclusion

When the American biologist Lewis Thomas was asked what message humanity should take to other civilizations in space, he said: “I would send the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach.” Bach’s music remarkably illustrates the encounter of scientific beauty and musical glamour. It is qualified as the representative of humanity as a demonstration of art, of science, of the artistic beauty of science.

Science shares homogeneous attributes with music. Aesthetically, science is harmonious, simple and vast; in essence, rationality is a superior exercise of human intelligence; more importantly, the beauty is not derived from successful discoveries only, its roots are embedded in the logically complete and consistent process of research, which entitles science its innate beauty. Hence, science illustrates the encounter of sense, sensibility and beauty, all of which are the backbones of our civilization.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

Ziling made a brilliant choice of Bach to demonstrate the similarities between the beauty of science and that of music, highly convincing and sentimentally beautiful. She grabs the essence of scientific beauty, namely, the harmony, simplicity, vastness and the rationality lying behind, further elaborates the fact that it is not so different from artistic beauty as it first appears. For me as a teacher, it also provides an opportunity of learning, to know more about classic music which I am not familiar with. (WU Jun Vivian)



# 論求知、自我與自然

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新亞書院 中國語言及文學

## 1. 引言

作為一種知性體，人具有求知的慾望和自我的概念，而作為一個居於自然的生命體，又不可避免地要去觀察、理解與干涉自然。三者之間錯綜複雜的關係，以及三者間是否存在一個平衡點的思考，對於面臨高度的科技發展與環保危機的現代人而言，無疑值得深入探討。因此，本文將從個體的角度出發來分析知識、自我與自然三者的關係，並嘗試思考三者的平衡點與取捨。

## 2. 知識追求、自我追尋與自然秩序的相互影響

### 2.1 知識與自我

知識與人類的自我之間的關係經歷了三個過程，從起初將自我提升視為知識追求的目標，到對知識的過度崇拜造就了自我價值觀的扭曲，再到藉由對知識的追求重塑自我。

最初，人對於真善美的追求，換言之即一種對於自我提升的追求，往往投射在對於知識的追求中，故「真理」與「良善」是相互等同的存在。根據柏拉圖的學說，求知的終點可以被概括為可見事物背

後「完美的、無形的、高不可攀以至於只能透過哲學思考去抵達的永恆秩序」。<sup>1</sup> (Lindberg 13) 然而他也在《理想國》(Republic) 中假借蘇格拉底之口，提到「善」(the form of good) 的觀念，在真正的知識世界中，「善」是最為終極且需要付出極大努力才能抵達的目標，而一切的真實與美感都來源於這種「善」的極致，也是追求理智與知識的人或群體必須見證的事物。(Plato 8-9) 簡而言之，世界的光明與真實俱源於善，而真實的秩序又塑造了可見的世界，因此身處這一世界的人追求真實的過程，亦等同於追求善性的過程。由此可見，早在古希臘時期，追求知識的過程被視作靈魂向「善」的昇華，哲學的思考和理智的探究通常是為了精神上的自我提升。

隨着牛頓對科學的革新與哈雷彗星回歸的證明，人類進入了信奉知識的時代，對知識的探求第一次改變了人的自我價值觀。在這一時期，人將對科學知識的掌握視作超越與征服自然的表現，這種思維造成了兩種後果：一、出於對科學的過分信賴，人類高估了自己對自然知識的認知程度，不計後果地濫用科學；<sup>2</sup>二、人類賦予知識極高的地位，把獲取知識視為所有事情的唯一目的，拋棄了原本求知即求善的想法，甚至利用知識來正當化一些原本反道德的行為。優生學的出現及它所衍生的「種族」排斥現象便是其中顯著的例子：當時群眾篤信達爾文的進化論，並將其套用於人類的社會結構，把貧富、道德等社會問題都歸結於「天賜」的基因，一方面用來證明自己在基因上的優越性，另一方面則假借「為了社會延續」的理由正當化了對於弱勢群體的排斥。(Watson 109-114) 而這種學說之所以風行，正體現了人類對已掌握的知識的過分自信與崇拜所導致自我價值觀的扭曲——將「真」視為超越善與美的唯一準則。

然而時至近代，隨着人類對自身的研究達至新高度，對知識的追

1 本文中的引文由作者翻譯或概括。

2 關於這些負面影響，後文討論求知與自然的關係時會更加詳細地涉及。

求反而使人迷失了自我。生物科學尤其腦科學的研究成果，以及人工智能的發展重塑了人的自我認知，甚至引發了對「自我」是否存在的懷疑。對DNA的研究證實了構成人的元素是最為基礎的化學成分，人類傳遞基因的方式也是「信息複製」——與機器的運作極為相似。（Watson 131–139）將「靈魂」與「肉體」相互對立的固有認知，也隨着對潛意識和人腦運作過程的深入發掘而受到衝擊。科學家發現構成「靈魂」與「自我」的自由意志早於被個體意識到其存在前，就可以通過探測腦電波運作——一種簡單且基礎的物理過程——被察覺到。（Kandel 191–192）這一發現動搖了高層次的靈魂的存在，有跡可循的自由開始使人懷疑「自我」是否只是腦電波運作下的一種幻覺；而基礎的物理過程帶來了「再現自由意志」的可能性，使得人類「擁有靈魂」的獨特優勢也遭到質疑，那麼人應當如何證明自己比機器人更有價值？在此，我們可以清晰地看到求知對人的自我認知和自我價值的顛覆，與它所引發的「何為自我」一問。最終，知識將重鑄人的自我認知。

## 2.2 自然與知識

自然與知識之間有着密不可分的聯繫，它涵蓋了求知的過程、方向與終點。自然同時開啓了理論知識研究的道路，而理論衍生的實用知識則反過來塑造自然，形成一個閉環。

從理論知識的角度出發，自然的現象是知識追求的基礎和印證，而自然的秩序則指明了現代科學中尋求知識的方向。早在亞里士多德時期，觀察自然的經驗已經是獲取知識不可或缺的一部分，無論正確與否，這些經驗都是他構築真理的基石；（Lindberg 18–21）而從牛頓的角度來看，縱使他應當脫離經驗，通過純數學去推演普適的理論，但他同樣需要注重自然觀察與經驗的物理學——他的理論正是因為能夠解釋行星運動的現象，才證明了自身的正確性。（Cohen 60–61）可

見從表面而言，自然現象既是求知的根本，也是理論的佐證。此外，自然背後的秩序亦幫助科學研究在無限的知識中做出了取捨：由有限的元素構成的自然界中存在簡單重複的規律，選擇它們進行研究能幫助科學家總結出一個相對完善的科學系統。（Poincaré 159–162）倘若不存在這些簡潔但相互聯繫的秩序，科學知識本身就無法存在，可以說正是自然秩序下的選擇使得求知的過程得以延續。

從實用知識的層面來看，尋求知識使得人類得以享受自然帶來的利益，又為了自身的利益而利用知識破壞自然，最後因為獲得新的知識而選擇保護自然。最能直接體現這一點的就是除草劑的濫用帶來的一系列後果：求知帶來科技的發展，使人們得以研發除草劑來去除所謂「雜草」以促進農業生產；然而，對利益的渴求和對除草劑作用的過分自信帶來的濫用行為亦直接地打擊了周邊的生態系統，並間接地影響了農業和旅遊業；最終人類通過這種自然的反噬意識到了保護自然的重要性，開始嘗試尋找或改良出危害較小的技術以改善生存環境。（Carson 141–156）可見知識亦賦予人類干涉自然的能力，能夠對其造成正面或負面的影響，但這些影響最後依然會反饋到人類自身。

### 2.3 自我與自然

圍繞自我與自然的討論，往往會提及中國的「天人合一」思想。不同於西方線性的世界觀，認為萬物皆有因果，中國古代科學觀念認為自然是一個有機體，事物之間存在着相互的聯繫，彼此相輔相成，構築成「宇宙」這一有機體，而人類作為自然的一部分，依賴着自然的同時，亦會與自然產生各種奇妙的共鳴。（Needham 212–216）對於整個社會的價值觀而言，在人類因為破壞自然而遭反噬的時候，這種共生思想帶來的啟發——例如相生相剋在某種程度上呼應生態系統的組成——一定程度上回應了「人如何看待自己與自然之間的關係？」的問題：人與自然是相互影響的，其中本不存在一方壓倒另一方的爭鬥。

其次從自我認知的角度分析，誠然人誕生於自然，認識自我的過程必然無法脫離對自然的認知；但將個體的一切思考都代入自然現象，或將使人陷入原始思想中的「迷信」。在迷信者眼中，兩件原本互不相關的事情，會僅僅因為它們同時發生而被視為「二者具有因果關係」，他們誤以為自然現象發生的一切都是可信的，沒有任何不可能或荒誕性。（Needham 214）迷信所導致的這種缺乏秩序或邏輯的理解，會使人陷入隨波逐流的狀態，因而無法引發自我認知的革新。綜上可知，自我與自然之間的關聯，應當是基於一種秩序之上——對於西方而言是科學主導的因果，對於中國而言是陰陽類別的劃分——無論是否有實證來鑒定它們的正確性，這些理解方式本身是合理的。

### 3. 結語：個體的思考與三者間的平衡

綜上所述，求知、自我與自然相互扮演着複雜的角色，相互塑造、牽制、延續、發展，而「秩序」與「平衡」始終貫穿其間，可以說它們本身也是一團有機體。然而就如對有機體的研究一般，人類很難在三者中找到清晰的平衡點來達到最好的效果，因為「自我」本身就是一個難以客觀具體化的概念。但至少可以肯定的是，三者都不應當被當作「唯一」來推崇，應當彼此兼顧，這也將幫助人類避免不斷因為極端和濫用重蹈覆轍的境況。

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## 老師短評

本篇文章對人類在歷史上「追求知識」、「認識自己」和「與自然互動」這三個恆久的目標嘗試作出分析。作者能夠將三者之間錯綜複雜的關係梳理清楚，簡單描述了人類在這些問題上的起起伏伏及之間的「秩序」與「平衡」。作者並能對中國古代科學作出較為客觀公允的評論，指出其作為另外一種探索自然方法的可能性及不確定性。是一篇能反映出作者對「與自然對話」每一課有深刻反思的文章。（江啟明）





# Complexity and the Physical Aspect of Life

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Life on earth is diverse, from simple, unicellular microorganisms, to complex lifeforms where trillions of cells work together in harmony. In the study of life, despite prodigious progress in science, we still have a few fundamental questions left unanswered: Are all life phenomena explainable by physical laws? How shall we approach the nature of life? An essential way to explore them would be through looking at the complexity of life.

We ought to begin by looking at how the processes of life are generated, beginning from the simplest building blocks—atoms. Atoms are undoubtedly inanimate, and with only 118 discovered elements, many of which not participating in normal physiology or even existing naturally (Holden *et al.*), it does not seem that much would be possible with atoms alone. However, atoms can be arranged into molecules, and while the molecules of life are vast in number, we would not say they are alive, either. Once they are assembled into a cell, we may then begin to start calling it alive. For simpler organisms, such as bacteria, the structure of life stops here, but for multicellular organisms, like most animals or plants, the complexity continues to rise. Each cell in these organisms has its distinctive role, and they could form into tissues and organs, which in turn comprise the entire organism (“Organization of Life”).

Over the entire process, what is most important is how, beginning from the atomic level, increasingly more complex structures are formed. Along each step, new properties that its constituents do not originally have are gained; already in the level of molecules, there is far more diverse organization than that of atoms. It is through this phenomenon, known as emergence, that living organisms are able to gain complexity (“Emergence”).

The concept of hylomorphism, or the duality of matter and property (Ainsworth) may help us understand this phenomenon better. In Aristotle’s worldview, he had drawn a distinction between properties and their “subject”, that is the object to which the properties are attributed (Lindberg 19). While Aristotle’s thought as a whole may not be compatible with modern-day science, him having rejected the idea of atoms (Berryman), we may nevertheless apply only the essence of this concept, that properties are distinctive from matter. When viewed from this perspective, a whole living being would thus not only consist of matter, but also its various properties—most obviously, that of being alive. While life may have originated from matter and is as such inseparable from it (Lindberg 20), emergence allows new properties to be attributed to life, rendering it more than simply matter alone.

It is safe to say that a living being is more than the sum of its parts, but then where does the excess come from? The modern scientific thought is that they are a result of physical laws (Watson 139). It does make sense that complex structures can arise from humble beginnings; in cellular automata, such as Conway’s Game of Life, simple rules<sup>1</sup> already allow for the creation

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1 Conway’s Game of Life is played on a grid, with each cell being considered as either “living” or “dead”. Each turn, if a “living” cell has fewer than two or more than three “living” cells around it, it becomes “dead”, while a “dead” cell with exactly three “living” cells becomes “living” (“Where Does Complexity”).

of complex structures. With a more expansive ruleset, such as that of natural scientific principles, the effect would be even more apparent (“Where Does Complexity”). Indeed, through the discovery of DNA’s structure and how it replicated, scientists including James Watson were able to demonstrate from a fundamental level that life did not emerge from some mysterious “vital force”<sup>2</sup> or undiscovered laws of nature, but existing ones of physics and chemistry, and it was only a matter of how these laws are organized (Watson 139).

In addition, it is possible for complexity to have arisen naturally in living beings. Darwinian evolution has conventionally been considered to be one of the primary driving forces towards complexity; Darwin himself had conjectured that natural selection could lead to a divergence in character (Darwin 94), a process that given sufficient time could accumulate to great amounts of complexity, and this has since been proven by evidence from diverse fields of science (“II. Evolution of Complexity”). Recent research has however shown that even without the involvement of natural selection, complexity can still be spontaneously generated through the process of random mutation, showing that there is a natural tendency towards complexity in life (Zimmer).

Given the above, it makes perfect sense that the complexity of life could have arisen from physical phenomena, and indeed advancements in biological and medical science have led to numerous discoveries allowing us to explain the workings of life from a deep, molecular level, with one jarring exception—consciousness.

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2 Incidentally, if such a force did exist and was tangible enough to be readily measurable, then the act of defining life would be much simpler, at least if only considering life on Earth—whether or not this “vital force” also exists in alien life would however likely be a point of serious debate.

Consciousness remains a major scientific mystery as to how exactly it is generated (Kandel 181). We cannot deny the fact that the physical body has some involvement in the generation of consciousness; as an example, physical factors such as illness, trauma or drugs can interfere with the brain and in turn consciousness. The question that remains would then be how consciousness originates and interplays with the physical body, given that all current purely physical explanations have fallen short in explaining it, especially regarding the “hard problem” of consciousness: how subjective experience is generated (184).

Though the consensus is that the physical basis of consciousness lies in the brain, there are divergent views on whether or not it can ever be studied in a rigorous, scientific manner. On one extreme, some scientists contend that fundamental limits to human cognition render the study of consciousness impossible, while on the other, some deny that there is a problem, stating that there is a readily available answer to the nature of consciousness under our current knowledge (182). But between the both is the arguably more realistic and constructive view that consciousness is understandable, but not with existing methods and information; before it is to be completely explainable at all, there may need to be a paradigm shift in how we approach it (184–185). Such a shift could come in various ways.

To start with, we could devise new methodologies that can help us to tackle the issue of subjective experience (184–185). With this view, we can suppose that consciousness, like life, originated from some form of emergence as well, being also a highly complex process that is more than the sum of its parts. This makes it much harder to understand than other properties of the brain (182), but through the formulation of basic rules on

how consciousness arises, starting from the most elementary components of brain function and consciousness (184–185), we may eventually be able to create a complete picture of consciousness, a process mirroring that of physics and chemistry explaining other life functions.

A different pathway entails pushing the boundaries of science with radical new discoveries. The quantum mind is one such theory, which attempts to link consciousness with the physical world through the understanding of quantum phenomena (Atmanspacher). Though difficult to prove and not necessarily true, it does demonstrate how new insight in physical sciences can potentially help us to find a solution.

Specific life processes aside, we still have a generally good grasp of how life works—or do we? Currently, we still do not have a consensus on the definition of life. A proper answer to this question has tantalized scientists for millennia, even though we may be able to intuitively distinguish between the living and the non-living (Gabbatiss).

The modern scientific way to define life would be to draft a list of properties using various life processes, which if an entity were to meet all of them, would reasonably be considered as a living being. A more specific and most commonly used definition involves the universal characteristics of life, including a complex organization, metabolism, excretion, homeostasis, response to stimuli, reproduction, and physical growth (Cleland and Chyba). A broader definition, in contrast, strips down to only select core characteristics, an example being a “material system that undergoes reproduction, mutation, and natural selection” (McCay).

For the most part, these definitions appear to make sense. If we subject them to intense scrutiny, however, we may see cases where they begin to

fall apart. Specific definitions may not be able to reliably classify entities missing some properties; as an example, a man in a vegetative state<sup>3</sup> is no longer able to respond to external stimuli, at least not in a meaningful way, but we would not usually conclude that the man is dead<sup>4</sup>, and thus terminate life support. Broad definitions, being more inclusive, are less likely to encounter this problem, but this same property also causes them to include more controversial or even non-cases. Viruses are also capable of reproduction, albeit not independently, as well as mutation and natural selection. However, since they have no metabolism to speak of, whether or not they are actually living is still under debate (“Are Viruses Alive?”). Similar borderline cases have given life a rather fuzzy quality, unlike the clear-cut one that we are more intuitively familiar with (Cleland and Chyba).

In the end, the act of semantically defining life itself has its limitations. First, our definitions only reflect our understanding of language, and not necessarily the true nature of the world (Cleland and Chyba). Second, using these definitions inevitably leads to us evaluating each part of life individually, blinding us to the whole picture of life (Brown). Finally, we currently have only one known example of life, that is life on Earth, and our definitions are naturally based on it; thus, we may not have a fundamental understanding on what life actually is (McKay). Given the above, would attempting to define life become an essentially futile exercise? The answer would be no; though flawed, such an act would remain situationally useful, nonetheless. A well-structured definition could be the first step for us to

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3 No human beings were physically harmed in the making of this article.

4 Some may consider this fate as being *worse* than death; the analysis of this proposition is beyond the scope of this article.

understand life from a narrow, microscopic scale. For this purpose, the specific definitions, most notably the universal characteristics of life, would prevail as they allow individual potential lifeforms to be roughly and practically evaluated, without needing to delve deeply into detail<sup>5</sup>. This is especially important in the search for extraterrestrial life, in which a concrete definition plays an influential role (Cleland and Chyba); despite its restrictions, a sufficiently accurate definition, based on readily observable characteristics, could nevertheless bring us closer to the discovery of alien life<sup>6</sup>.

Still, for us to truly comprehend the complete scale and nature of life, we need more than just semantic definitions; we would also benefit from introducing alternative perspectives, just as we might in the study of consciousness. One such approach is by applying general systems theory, understanding how life functions from a macroscopic view as a complete system; a system in this case can mean any pattern of relationship, from the microscopic world of atoms, to the macroscopic realm of ecology. Through this perspective, instead of breaking down life and studying the resultant parts, we may study life phenomena in terms of dynamic relationships and define life through these relationships. We would discover common patterns present across all living systems, and inevitably some of them, such as complex organization, response to stimuli and adaptability, which echo the previous attempts at defining

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5 In here we would need to give special consideration to cases which fail to meet all the criteria but would still be considered alive under our common-sense understanding, such as the aforementioned case of the vegetative man. Relaxing these definitions to count entities meeting *most* criteria would help with these cases, but doing so would also run the risk of including controversial or non-cases, similarly to the broad definitions.

6 Inevitably, an Earth-centric definition means that the life we find under the definition would display characteristics similar to life on Earth.

life (Brown); a broad systemic perspective treats them as emergent properties of a whole system, as opposed to individual defining points of life.

Obviously, viewing life as a complex system makes the act of analyzing it much complex in turn. However, it is also essential in our continued exploration of life in several ways. By making the relationships of life the subject of study, we will be more able to account for the emergent complexity of life, which previous approaches that analyze life independently by each component are weak in (Brown). It also highlights the interrelatedness of life, a view especially important in ecology; given that there is a dense web of life on Earth with intimate and often essential relationships between different organisms, any effects on only one part will certainly reverberate across the entire ecosystem (Carson 141–142), an example being that the destruction of sagebrush has led to cascading effects with detrimental effects beyond the original target area of the upland plains (142–145). Through this approach, we can overcome the shortcomings of our existing definitions, and in turn construct a more detailed picture of life.

In conclusion, knowledge on the complexity of life is essential in answering some of the fundamental questions of life. Life is an emergent system, and it is possible through the laws of physics and chemistry that the complex processes of life emerge, although the issue of consciousness will certainly prove a tricky matter to solve, at least without any major breakthroughs. In addition, in the exploration of the nature of life, the act of semantically defining it is innately deficient; though practical, it yields a microscopic picture of life only. In any case, new perspectives or directions will certainly be helpful towards obtaining an answer. For consciousness, new methodologies or knowledge can help us unravel the



complexity of consciousness; as for the nature of life, we may complement our existing definitions with a macroscopic, systematic perspective that takes into account the fundamental complexity of life, ultimately leading to a complete picture of life.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

The nature of life and the nature of consciousness are two prominent questions of modern science, yet little progress has been made in explaining

the concepts in scientific terms. As a first step, it seems important to analyze the concepts and the possible methodologies to be employed in the study of the subject. Eldric (TSOI Pui Lam) tackles the problem in a systematic manner. Forming a hierarchy according to complexity, the concept of life is reviewed from the perspectives of a single atom, molecules, unicellular and then multicellular organisms. Instead of using a traditional definition in terms of life characteristics, modern perspectives such as emergent properties are discussed. It certainly is an inspiring essay and it is a delight to read. (LAI Chi Wai Kevin)

# **Two Wings of Scientific Development: Written Language and Numeral System**

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## **1. Introduction**

Numerous people say that humans' biological traits are way superior to those of other species. They also argue that such biological extraordinariness led humans to current scientific achievement. I partly admit that the human body has some specificities over other species. However, humans often cannot do what other species can do: humans cannot fly like birds, cannot use supersonic waves like bats, cannot swim as deftly as seals, and cannot run as quickly as cheetahs. In that sense, I do not think that the human body is absolutely better than other animals, and I do not believe that humans' biological properties are the factors of scientific advancement. I would like to claim that not the human body itself but two special tools led humans to great scientific achievement; those tools are letters (e.g. a, b, c, d...) and numbers (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4...). Letters brought written language into existence, and numbers gave rise to the numeral system. Therefore, we can speak more generally that written language and the numeral system are the crucial factors that helped humans to make outstanding scientific progress.

## **2. The Contribution of Written Language to Scientific Development**

### **2.1 Why is Written Language Important?**

The significance of written language is that it is much more powerful than oral language. Spoken words vanish as soon as they are uttered, but written words last permanently from the moment they are written. Written language is not even limited by space since the written material can reach a thousand miles away from where it is produced. The use of written language is a pivotal factor that distinguishes humans from any other animals.

The scientific study starts with observing the natural phenomena. Information and data obtained from the observations are the basis of theories and further discoveries, so it is necessary to store and accumulate the information. For example, storing information about newly observed flowers and trees can contribute to the development of botany. Unfortunately, the human brain has a limitation in storing the information. The brain cannot memorize all myriad of facts, and it even forgets memorized information as time passes. Most of all, the information goes away as the owner of the brain dies. That is the reason we need a written language. When botanists record characteristics of a flower on papers instead of mere memorizing, they store more detailed information and securely maintain it for a long time. Specific ways in which written language contributed to scientific progress follows.

### **2.2 “The Selection of Facts,” Aided by Written Language**

Written materials are closely related to the method by which scientists study nature. Henri Poincaré says in his essay that scientists must select

facts to study among numerous given facts (159). He adds that those selected facts have to be of high hierarchy, possessing high significance and high probability of recurring (160–161). In botany, the universal fact such as photosynthesis would be of higher hierarchy than unique traits of individual plants. In the process of the fact selection, written language plays an integral role because many facts are known to people in the form of written records. Imagine there is no written material existing in the world: no books, no encyclopedia, and no dissertations. Where are scientists going to select facts from? How can they know which facts are recurring and which are not? Nothing else but only the knowledge in their brain can help them, still way less helpful than written materials.

### **2.3 Influence among Scholars, Aided by Written Language**

There is another function of written language: delivery of ideas and theories from generation to generation, from place to place. Via written materials, scientists can refer to ideas of other scientists who lived in a different time and different place. For example, Newton could take a look at Galileo's ideas by reading *Two New Sciences*, even though the two scientists lived in different eras (Cohen 56). Some make great achievements based on inspiration or learning from other scholars' books. Charles Darwin learned "the struggle for life" by reading *Principle of Population* written by Malthus, and Darwin came up with the theory of evolution by applying the concept of "the struggle for life" into nature. James Watson and Francis Crick read *What Is Life?* written by Schrodinger, and these two scientists were inspired by Schrodinger's idea of "hereditary code-script" (Watson 115). Such inspiration guided them to delve into genes, and they eventually discovered the double helix structure of DNA. If there were no written

language, such delivery of idea would have been impossible, and there would have been no entailing scientific achievement.

### **3. The Contribution of Numeral System to Scientific Development**

#### **3.1 Why is Numeral System Important?**

With the help of written language, humans were enabled to record and deliver information about the scientific world. However, written language cannot do everything; it can describe qualitative aspects of nature, but it can hardly describe quantitative aspects of nature. With written language only, botanists can record the shape and color of a plant in detail, but they cannot accurately record the height or width of the plant. That is the reason we need numbers. The existence of number allows humans to count, measure, calculate, compare, and then record almost every quantifiable fact of the natural phenomena.

#### **3.2 Quantitative Approach to Nature, Made Possible by Numeral System**

With the assistance of the numeral system, scientists can study nature quantitatively. A quantitative approach to a certain subject often leads to a significant discovery. Gregor Mendel is a representative person who studied natural phenomena in such a way. Instead of simply thinking that crossbreeding of red and white flowers resulted in some red and some white offspring, Mendel actually counted them, grasping that the ratios of red to white descendant might be important. (Watson 103). After taking a painstaking effort, he found out that the ratio of red to white progeny is



approximately 3 to 1. With this result, Mendel concluded that the color of flowers is decided by a pair of factors. He also stated that each individual obtains two factors, one from each parent. Mendel's such conclusion was correct, and the "factor" he proposed is now called "gene." Although Mendel could not get much attention at his time (Watson 103–104), his work was rediscovered in the 20th century and has laid the foundation of genetics. We must note that Mendel's work was made possible by the numeral system. With the help of numbers, Mendel was able to count each type of flowers, record the result, and calculate the ratio of red to white offspring.

### **3.3 Evolution of the Numeral System**

One great advantage of the numeral system is that it constantly evolves. Such evolution plays a crucial role in scientific advancement since it allows humans to more accurately do calculation, measurement or experiments. When the number was first used, only natural numbers existed. The natural number itself has a lot of limitations; for example, we cannot express the mean of 1 and 2. Humans thus invented decimal. Using decimal, we can express the mean of 1 and 2 as "1.5". With the emergence of a new type of number such as irrational number, humans were enabled to express many kinds of numeral values. For instance, we can express the length of a side of a square whose area is 3 as " $\sqrt{3}$ ". When a measured quantity is very small, we can use the unit prefix (e.g. milli, micro, nano) for higher accuracy. Libet Experiment is an example in which the unit prefix is involved. In the experiment, Benjamin Libet found out that the readiness potential (a little blip in the electrical record from the brain) appears 350 milliseconds before a person feels the urge to do an action (Kandel 191–192). When physicists describe the size of an atom which is an extremely small value, they also

use unit prefixes. Due to the evolution of the numeral system, humans can do a lot of things that cannot be done solely with natural numbers.

#### **4. Written Language and Numeral System Complementing Each Other**

The written language and the numeral system are complementary. The former is in charge of qualitative aspects, and the latter is in charge of quantitative aspect. Let me give an example. With the written language we can describe behaviors and appearances of animals, while with the numeral system we can record the length, height, and weight of the animals. In the studies of science, neither qualitative approach nor quantitative approach must be neglected; scientists must employ both approaches and balance those two.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Humans never have extraordinary biological traits over other organisms. However, humans can do one thing: they can write. They can either write down facts and ideas via written language or record quantified data by using numbers. Such ability is what made all the differences. Written language and numeral system powerfully supported humans' scientific advancement, perhaps more powerfully than any other factors that human beings possess. In fact, these two factors contributed not only to the development of natural science but also to the advancement of other academic disciplines such as sociology, linguistics, and economics. In that sense, I want to make a modification to a widely accepted belief that the

discovery of fire is the greatest event in human history. I would like to argue that the invention of the written language and numeral system has equivalent, perhaps greater, significance compared to the discovery of fire. Fire brightened the world so that people can observe the natural phenomena, while written language and numeral system enlightened the humankind so that humans can study, comprehend, analyze, and generalize those natural phenomena in systematic ways.

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### **Teacher's comment:**

When dwelling into the essential factors of scientific development, many would immediately equate them to the qualities possessed by scientists, for instance, intuition, curiosity and collaboration. Unlike his fellow classmates, Tae Won attempted to address two fundamental causes of the success, inventions of the written language and numeral system. Compared to oral language, written records transcends time and space. One can retrieve writings from the distant past, across continents and beyond disciplines. One can get inspirations from the past observations and established theories. One can create new scientific discoveries standing on the shoulder of giants. Not only is the qualitative record important, a quantitative account gives science unprecedented accuracy and predictive power. It allows us to fuel the planes, probe into the brains and dissect the family trees! Written language and numeral system, as Tae Won pictured, are two wings of scientific development, propelling us to go on and on. Tae Won's essay certainly provided us a starting point to further ponder on the essence of science, and even mankind. (NG Ka Leung Andy)

# Human Getting Disconnected with Nature— A Distortion in Aesthetic Judgment

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## 1. Introduction

“When I see birches bend to left and right...  
I like to think some boy’s been swinging them.”

—Robert Frost

Just appreciate this lovely excerpt for a moment. In contrast to the “boy-and-nature” picture that might have come to your mind, this excerpt is the first quotation from the book *Last Child in The Wood* by Richard Louv, where children are gone, leaving birches swinging alone in the wind. Automatically, you might imagine the kids playing video games or confined to high piles of books inside a house.

Reflecting on your own experience, you might also feel alienated from nature from time to time. This is not uncommon across generations. Technology has rapidly been taking up more time in our daily life<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 2018 Digital Future Report shows that the average hour spent online for Americans has grown from 9.4 hours per week to 22.5 hours since 2000. (Cole *et al.*)

Meanwhile, urbanization has not shown a sign to slow down, consistently bringing throngs of people to the “concrete forest”<sup>2</sup>. A complex combination of various factors has given rise to the “disconnectedness” that is troubling our relationship with nature. In this essay, I will give a short analysis of the consequences of and recommended solutions to the disconnected relation, with a focus on the role that “aesthetics” plays in both parts.

## 2. Consequences of Disconnectedness

### 2.1 To Human

Biophilia, a term coined and popularized by Edward O. Wilson, denotes a hypothesized “innate tendency to focus on life and life-like processes” (Kellert and Wilson 20). This hypothesis describes human’s connection with nature as a “biological need”. Are we really dependent on nature? If so, in what ways? Follow-up researches reveal the positive correlation between exposure to nature and health—both physical and mental health. For example, green exercise—activity in the presence of nature—is shown in one study not only to upgrade health condition but also to improve self-esteem and mood (Barton and Pretty 3947). The “Helsinki Alert of Biodiversity and Health” report further confirmed that lack of exposure to nature is accountable for some physical illnesses and mental disorders (von Hertzen *et al.* 218). The fact that the influence could be indirect and chronic always leads people to overlook the importance of nature.

### 2.2 To Nature

Disconnectedness is a more serious and urgent problem in a broader

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2 The World Bank shows that urban population constitutes 55% of the total world population in 2017. The number was 33% in 1960. (World Bank)

sense that it can possibly lower individual's ability to appreciate beauty, thus weakening people's awareness of environmental protection, and eventually hurting the sustainability of nature.

To begin with, aesthetic judgment refers to “sensory contemplation or appreciation of an object” (“Aesthetics”). It seems logical to propose that our aesthetic perception of nature is to some degree distorted because of inadequate *contemplation* on sensations when interacting with nature. We do inevitably “see” nature when we go out and “hear” nature when a bird comes by. But we're detached from nature in a sense that we seldom *contemplate* on our “private and unique sensational experiences”. To take a further look at this argument, I believe Kandel would say that the key issue is the loss of *consciousness*, which is a broader concept including contemplation, when confronting nature. According to his definition of consciousness, simply experiencing nature and taking the pleasure out of it is not “conscious”. To contemplate consciously, we need to “attend to and reflect upon [the] experiences” (Kandel 182). This could mean closely observing a plant and being amazed by how beautiful the pattern looks, attending to birdsongs and distinguishing the species and many other activities that truly get oneself immersed in nature. With more and more households spending less time in nature<sup>3</sup>, the time spared for contemplation is even less. Thus, aesthetic judgment is more likely to be made recklessly. It is worth noting that because subjectivity is naturally present in “consciousness”, even the aesthetic judgments made *consciously* are not necessarily “the best”. Everyone has personal aesthetic taste, and it is not feasible yet to study the generating process on a neural level to figure out “the best one”. But still, just as shown in the experiment which concludes

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3 In a research done by *The Nature of Americans*, over 60% of adults in the U.S.A. report spending five hours or less outside in nature each week. (Kellert and Case & Associates)

that people interpret meanings of facial expressions similarly, we can't deny the possibility that we might agree on some general form of "beauty" universally (Kandel 189). There is just no scientific methodology for the proof yet. Despite the challenges posed by subjectivity, the importance of contemplation on the aesthetic judgment cannot be undermined, and the fact that disconnectedness will negatively affect aesthetic value held by the public should be given much concern.

To link disconnectedness with condition of nature, we need to understand the consequences that one's aesthetic appreciation can bring to the environment through actions. One good example is given by Carson—the "roadside crisis" in Maine. Upon applying chemical sprays, "a sere expanse of brown, withered vegetation" replaces "the beauty of fern and wildflower, of native shrubs adorned with blossom or berry" (Carson 148). People who valued the beauty of nature, like the conservationists, acted against plans for spraying chemicals. Their acuminous eyes that appreciated natural beauty offered them insights to see values beyond just aesthetics. Aesthetic value, seemingly superficial, indeed lays a foundation for awareness of other values of nature. In the roadside crisis example, those who scoffed at the idea to protect wildflower left out the economic value brought by beautiful roadsides. Additionally, they obviously ignored the significance of "harmony" in nature—harmony that not only pleases our eyes, but more importantly indicates biological balance among species. Aesthetic consideration prompts people to observe, to feel with heart and to *foresee* beyond just seeing. In reverse, if one does not care about the way nature looks, how conscious would he or she be when it comes to environmental protection? It will make little difference in their opinions whether to protect or not. On a societal scale, collective ignorance inexorably leads to collective indifference (Pyle 210). With fewer and fewer



people having the aesthetic taste of nature, the fact might be true that the voice to protest against environmental destruction in society will diminish. By then, few will stand up and step in for the better of this planet.

In retrospection, it is astounding that all the consequences discussed above have something to do with “disconnectedness”. Although disconnectedness is not the only culprit, it does harm nature by distorting people’s aesthetic judgment in the first place.

### **3. Recommended Solutions**

#### **3.1 Physical Connection**

To rebuild connection, elevating people’s aesthetic taste is at stake. The very first step needs to be considered is to physically bring people to nature, which requires practical actions taken by different sections of society. Government, for one thing, needs to carefully design the arrangement for landscaping to add biodiversity in a city. Besides, Louv in his book strongly encourages parents to take an active role in introducing nature to children through activities such as having a family day hiking and camping in the nearby woods. Since long-time exposure to nature will foster a sense of preference (“Mere-expose Effect”), this preference can further stimulate people to activate their sensations to appreciate the beautiful and harmonious elements.

#### **3.2 Philosophical Connection—In Search of Beauty In Science**

Physical contact has its advantages as well as limitations. When it comes to the hurdles created by technology, for example, they exist more on a philosophical level rather than a physical level. It is not merely because that people have limited access to nature, but more of the case that they don’t

take as much pleasure from nature as from chatting online or playing video games. To find one possible solution for this particular problem, I recall what Poincaré talked about *scientists*—they “take pleasure in studying nature” (163). The pleasure comes from the beauty and the simplicity of the facts they attain, consisting of parts organized by “harmonious order” and “pure intelligence”. Based on these arguments, I suggest a more science-oriented style of education that actively motivates students to wield aesthetic judgment in pursuit of pure knowledge. Consequently, students’ intrinsic curiosity will drive them to reconnect with nature by looking for the simple and the beautiful facts hidden behind natural phenomenon. This process requires an intensive usage of sensations and consciousness, resulting in establishing a tighter and more long-lasting bond with nature.

#### 4. Conclusion

Human have been disconnecting themselves with nature when confronting issues brought by technology, urbanization and other factors. Besides impairment to human health, disconnectedness can bring significant harm to nature by distorting human’s aesthetic judgment. To reconnect human with nature, it is crucial to cultivate a proper aesthetic taste of nature by approaches both on a physical and philosophical level. As a consequence, if you recall the excerpt in the introduction, now you must be positive that the naturally-pleasing appearance of the birches itself can bring the kids outside to play around spontaneously.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

WU’s work spans multiple disciplines, raising salient questions about the purpose of knowledge of nature. It is a timely philosophical reflection as there is more evidence that the harm human beings have imposed onto nature is irreversible. To make the case, WU has done much research and critically engaged with credible sources. It presents a well-informed and specific position on the relation of humanity in nature and humanity as nature. The way she adapts ideas of scientists to a broader humanistic

realm of the meaning of aesthetic experience highlights the importance of complex mentalization in life-long intellectual endeavors. Her effort to perceive beyond intended meanings of the texts and extend them into an area of inquiry that envisions less recognized areas of intellectual interest is much appreciated. (YEUNG Yang)



# Artistic Side of Science

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The first American woman to work as a professional astronomer, Maria Mitchell once said, “We especially need imagination in science. It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but it is somewhat beauty and poetry.” After reading different texts in this course, I agree with her statement. In the following paragraphs, I will explain my stance from two directions, namely, the significance of imagination in science and why science is not all mathematics nor all logic; then I will illustrate what “beauty” and “poetry” refer to, with reference to the texts.

Before our discussion, a definition for “science” is required to avoid misunderstanding. “Science is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence.” (Science Council). However, our discussion will not cover the “social world” from the above definition by the Science Council.

First of all, imagination is critical for doing science, especially at the frontier of this field. Einstein once said “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.” It wasn’t

without reason for Einstein to assert that imagination is important, from the success of Newton and Watson, we can understand the significance of imagination in science.

In the seventeenth century, there were a lot of remarkable physicists and mathematicians, the reason Newton outshined the others and demonstrated the System of the World that Galileo couldn't (Cohen 61), was imagination. Although Galileo had once imagined a ball rolling along a plane and stated that the ball would move forever if the plane were of infinite extent (58), he didn't continue with his imagination, as he was too "down to Earth" (59). However, as a mathematician, Newton dared to think of the concept of "forever", which only exists in imagination (60). This allowed Newton to generalize the law of inertia, which Galileo cannot because he focused on experience, while pure inertial motion does not exist in reality (60). Newton had revolutionized science by bringing in mathematics, which increased the predictability of science (62). However, only with imagination can mathematics unleash its potential.

In modern days, inspired by Schrödinger's book *What Is Life?*, many scientists went to investigate "the secret of life"; James Watson was one of them (Watson 115). In the field of finding the structure of DNA, only four scientists tried to seek the 3-D structure of DNA, who were Watson, Crick, Franklin, and Pauling (133). Watson's vision on DNA had no doubt contributed to his success, but there was another major factor that allowed him to get the Nobel Prize, which was his imagination. After comprehending different experiment data, Watson started building his two-chained DNA model with cardboards (130–131). Watson was building a model of DNA which had unknown structure at that time, it required an enormous amount of imagination and brain work to compare with the experiment data. At



last, when other chemists were stuck on doing chemical analysis on DNA (133), Watson and Crick had already concluded that DNA is a double helix. And Watson's "imagination" was found to be true by the Meselson-Stahl experiment (137–138).

The reason for Newton's and Watson's success echoes with what Einstein said. A quote from Cohen can conclude why imagination is critical for science, "science advances by heroic exercises of the imagination, rather than by patient collecting and sorting of myriads of individual facts." (62).

After the rationalization and mathematization of human's understanding of nature, it was natural to think that science is all about mathematics and logic. However, I do not agree, because the most important part of science, making inquiries or hypothesis, requires the fusion of imagination and logic; a hypothesis is scientific only if it is testable, an inquiry is groundbreaking only if it is insightful. While logic and mathematics are the tools for proving the hypothesis and for making predictions, the fusion of different ingredients beside logic and mathematics in science can be shown by using Watson and Darwin as examples.

Watson and Crick developed the 3-D model of DNA with experiment data, e.g. DNA density-measurement and X-ray photos of DNA (Watson 129–130), past literature, e.g., Chargaff's research (127), and their professional intuitions as a biologist and a physicist (130–131) respectively. Even though they have not proved it with an experiment, they believed it to be right. Watson said, "Anything that simple, that elegant just had to be right." (131) It reflected the combination of mathematics, logic, imagination and beliefs in science. The Meselson-Stahl experiment that proved Watson's and Crick's idea was also another example of blending imagination and logic. The two bright young men thought of a feasible

experiment to show DNA replication and it was being described as “the most beautiful experiment in biology” (137). Without creativity, there will not be new experiments; without logic, the experiment will not work.

From Darwin’s natural selection, it is clearer that science is not all mathematics and logic. Darwin had proposed a lot of new ideas in biology, e.g. species that are more numerous have a higher chance to prolong, species that have closer characteristics will have more severe competition with each other (84), nature preserves favorable variations and rejects injurious variations (74), etc. Although his ideas didn’t have mathematical proof and there were no data or experiment that can support his point of view, as natural selection requires a thousand generations for species to diverge (Darwin 89), his ideas are persuasive even till today because it is logical and he gave plenty of examples (76, 77, 85). But it wasn’t all logic that helped him think of natural selection and the origin of species, it requires a huge amount of imagination to think of and picture such large-scale event, with the time scale of few thousand generations (88–89). It also requires different knowledge, like geology (83) and history, for Darwin to draw such conclusions.

In spite of the fact that mathematics and logic are important in science, from the famous scientists above, we can see that science is composed of different ingredients, including imagination, beliefs, and cross-disciplinary knowledge. The beliefs mentioned above are actually related to the beauty and poetry that Mitchell was talking about. In the following, the point of view of Poincaré will be used to illustrate why Watson was convinced his model was right (Watson 131) and what “beauty” refers to.

In my opinion, “beauty” refers to simplicity. According to Poincaré, scientists take pleasure when studying nature because it is beautiful (163), and scientists have the preference to select simple facts as simplicity is

beautiful (164). Watson's model of DNA was simple and recurring (Watson 131), everything seemed to be settled in the right place, like a finished puzzle, so Watson was confident about his model because it is beautiful, it fits the beauty that all scientists are pursuing. In Mathematics, simplicity is also beauty. From Euclid's *Element*, many propositions were very obvious, one of them was even being viewed as not smarter than an ass (Dunham 269): the proof of the sum of the length of two sides of a triangle must be larger than the length of the remaining side (Euclid 287). However, Euclid did not add those propositions as postulates, because it would make his postulates less simple which violates an aesthetic principle (Dunham 264).

On the other hand, I think "poetry" refers to the sense of harmony. As Poincaré pointed out that the sense of harmony makes scientists select facts that are best suited to contribute to harmony (164). He also compared scientists with artists, artists also choose specific features that could complete the portrait and give the artwork life (164). This is analogous to "poetry", poetry is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language ("Poetry"). Poets choose words that fit the rhythm and that rhyme, just as scientists choose facts that fit the harmony of nature. Take Euclid's *Element* as an example, Euclid used 23 definitions, 5 postulates and 5 common notions (Euclid 273–275) to create a total of 465 propositions. As mentioned above, there are some "very obvious" propositions which could be put into the postulates or common notions, while Euclid didn't. Euclid chose his axioms carefully so that no more can be added, no less can be removed, to make his work elegant. Euclid was writing a poem with Mathematics as the language.

To conclude, science requires imagination, it is not all mathematics and logic, but somewhat beauty and poetry. It coincides with my experience in studying physics, as I gradually understand what all famous physicists

have in common; they all have a superior sense of mathematics and precise intuition, which helped them bring breakthroughs in science by making audacious postulates.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

Many people believe that science is the marriage between logic and mathematics only. Sheung Chit argues that logic and mathematics are merely the tools for proving the hypothesis and making prediction. There are other essence in science too. To uncover the complexity of science, Sheung Chit studies the alliances across imagination, cross-disciplinary knowledge and beliefs conscientiously. His paper helps explore an alternative view in interpreting the nature of science. (YIP Lo Ming Amber)



# 論真實

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## 一、引言

我親愛的讀者，當你看到這段文字時，很明顯「你（讀者）正在看這篇文章」是真實的，而「你（讀者）沒有看這篇文章」則是虛假的。可是，甚麼是真實（real）呢？本文將探討真實的性質，當中先論述《與自然對話》一科有關真實的理論，繼而分析其理論的合理性。科目中有兩篇文章講述真實，以下分而述之。

## 二、二哲的真實

第一篇文本是《理想國》，柏拉圖（Plato）認為真實存在於理型世界。《理想國》的「洞穴說」比喻理型（form）為太陽，而現實為洞穴及影子，後者只是前者的模仿和投影，只有理型才是真實的存在。具體而言，木匠製造「椅」之前會先有「椅」的概念，這是完美、不變而不朽的，然後才對此在現實中摹仿，成為一張現實中的椅，這是對理型的複製品，是受限制、變化而短暫的。因此柏拉圖認為現實作為理型世界的模仿並不是真實，而受摹仿的理型世界才是真實。

第二篇文本是《西方科學的起源》，當中亞理士多德（Aristotle）認為真實是存在於現實世界。林伯格（Lindberg）在《西方科學的起源》指出，亞理士多德認為事物的本質是確切存在於其本身，那些本質是不能獨立於物質。亞理士多德否定柏拉圖完美的理型，他認為真實從不能抽離物質。例如人類先看見不同的椅子，然後觀察、歸納「椅」的共通本質。物質是獨立存在的，其屬性是建基於此並不能獨立存在的。因此，物質及現實世界就是真實。

在此小結，兩位哲學家都同意真實是客觀的存在。首先，他們都認為真實即是存在（exist），不論是存在於理型世界或物質世界。其次，這種的存在是客觀的（objective）。客觀是指獨立於人類意識之外並對所有人皆是同等的存在。亞理士多德的真實不局限於個人的思想；柏拉圖的理型雖然存在於人的思想中，但不局限於一人，例如所有人都會擁有相同的「椅」的概念，但並不是個人獨有，所以是普遍的存在。

### 三、了解的方式：知覺與意識

接下來，本文會考證兩位哲人的真實的理論。誠然，證明是非常困難，因為大部分知識的前題隱含及假設「客觀存在」，特別是科學，故此「客觀存在」一旦成為待證明命題時是不能使用的。實際上，真實作為一種判斷是牽涉主體（subject）的存在，而笛卡兒（Descartes）的「我思故我在」給予相應的基礎，確保正在思考的我必然存在，至少「我」作為判斷和理解的主體是存在的。本文會從基本的概念出發，以人類判斷客觀存在的過程進行推導。

人類理解的方式包括知覺（perception）和意識（consciousness）。首先釐清知覺和意識的分別。知覺是指身體及其感官接受及提供資訊的部分，意識是指自我知覺，即察覺自我正在感知或選擇性注意。



舉例而言，人看到一顆蘋果是知覺的部分，而判斷該蘋果是否可供食用是意識問題。再舉一例，動物的意識被認為是薄弱的，因為他們沒有自我或更高階的概念，相反，動物的知覺可能更為強大，例如狗的嗅覺比人類更為靈敏。

人的知覺是具主體性。知覺是指對外部世界的認識、反應。人類是以自身為主體以感知事物，意思是以自己的感官去感知外界，這些感官經驗構成人的感知。例如以眼睛接收可見光譜，從而分辨顏色。反而言之，沒有感官便沒有反饋，最終只會甚麼都感知不了。因此，自己的感官令感知成為可能。

同時，這成為感知的限制，因為人類只擁有自己身體得到的感官經驗，而該經驗局限於自己，意思是個體只能以自我作為主體進行感知。確切而言，人類對外界的理解只能從自身出發，人是不能以他人的感官進行感知，反之亦然。將此推而廣之，便得出個體是不能了解他人的感官經驗的結論。舉例而言，就個人所看見的紅色和他人所看見的紅色，個人是永遠不能確認感觀經驗是否相同。

有人會反駁若果使用儀器觀測，確保是相同的光線，則二人會感知出相同的結果。事實上，若一人為色盲而另一人不是，則產生相異的感官經驗。舉一具體例子，若該色盲患者為紅色盲，他分辨綠色的能力與普通人無異。然而，他的感官經驗對普通人而言卻不是綠色，而是土黃色。由此可見，即使在相同的外在刺激下，同時個體的行為沒有表現出差異，也不代表個體之間的感知是一致的。

因此，亞理士多德所述的真實是不能判斷的。即使物質是客觀存在，人的知覺也不能確認。人類不能確認自己是否擁有和他人一致的感官經驗，因此不能斷言。

人的意識是具主觀性（subjective）。坎德爾在《追尋記憶的痕跡》指出意識有兩大特徵，分別是「統一性和主觀性」（Kandel 183）。後者是指意識對個人是專有而獨一無二的體驗，能直接感受

到，同時所有個人的思想、感受都是自己獨有。反過來說，人類是不能直接感受到他人的感受，所以個人是永遠不能確認意識活動是否相同。

因此，柏拉圖的真實是不能判斷的，即使意念是客觀存在，人的意識也不能確認。人類不能確認自己是否擁有和他人一致的概念，因此不能斷言。

#### 四、不可避免的主觀

總而言之，對人而言客觀的存在是不能判定的。意思是個體既不能否定、也不能肯定共通的概念，就是不能判明的狀況。綜合知覺的主體性和意識的主觀性，可知人類是不能共享感官經驗和意識活動，其一切理解必然主觀。因此，人類所宣稱的真實只是對個人而言的主觀存在，而非對任何人的客觀存在。在這情況下，主觀的理解是不能達到客觀的程度，即使二哲所述的真實是客觀存在，人類都不能對此作出判斷。

有人會反駁其他的個體同樣能觀測和分析，結合多人的結果便能歸納出真實。這問題有三：一、歸納法並不確保結論必然為真。舉例而言，不論看到多少的白天鵝，這些有限的觀察並不能推論其他地方或未來只有白天鵝存在。更甚，休謨（Hume）指出人類只不過是將兩者過去一同出現的事物加以連繫，不能實際確認其因果關係。二、他人的表達會是聲音或文字，終究不離感知的窠臼。三、個體是不能確認其他個體的存在，要確認他人的存在同樣會使用上述的結果，因為他人同時是外界的一部分。

#### 五、結語

有趣的是，有人會論證：若本文為真確論證，則代表前題皆真，

那至少會有一個命題是客觀存在，即「知覺的主體性和意識的主觀性」為真，間接推翻本文的結論。誠然，筆者同樣不能斷言所有人都是符合該命題，筆者只是選用本人擁有的最基本概念。

總結上文，人類只能判斷主觀的存在而不能判定客觀的存在。此結論是對筆者而言的真實，也是我主觀判斷的存在。讀者會分為兩類：一類是認同本文結論，則結論對你我皆真；反之，一類是不認同本文結論，這種反對的觀點會構成對讀者主觀的存在。因此，不論讀者認同與否，本文結論必然為真。

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## 老師短評

有指在現實世界中，「真實」是不存在的。貞毅提出柏拉圖和亞理士多德對真實的論述，透過理解人類的知覺與意識，抽絲剝繭地分析甚麼是「真實」、「真實」是否「客觀的存在」、人類如何考證「真實」是否「客觀的存在」等問題，幫助讀者重新審視對「真實是客觀的存在」這習以為常的觀感。最終，人類是否真的能判定「真實是客觀的存在」呢？（葉鷺鳴）

# **Humanity as the Limits of Modern Science**

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## **1. Introduction**

In this 21st century information age, boundaries of science are expanding with increasing cross-disciplinary research. With the technological advances such as space technology, artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, most people would agree that modern science is powerful in explaining nature and facilitating human lives. While applied science is interwoven deeply with our everyday lives, it is a must to look into the limits of modern science. To put it in an extreme way, imagine someday scientists have answered all the big questions, would modern science eventually perfect human lives? If not, what is science incapable of even when it has done its best? This essay will discuss the limitations of modern science from the perspective of humanity.

## **2. Comparing Human Nature and the Nature of Modern Science**

It has been controversial that whether social science, which applies scientific methods in understanding society, is real science or not. The

infeasibility of controlled experiments and the exceptional cases in social theories make its predictability and reliability, required in natural science, doubtful (Gutting). Although social science is not our focus, the debate points to the fundamental differences between human nature and the nature of modern science.

One of the key distinctions is human subjectivity and scientific objectivity. As Kandel describes, “[e]ach of us experiences a world of private and unique sensations that is much more real to us than the experiences of others” (185). Owing to subjectivity, we possess our own emotions, desires, habits and faiths. Practically, it is the reason we pursue different careers and lifestyles, which contributes to the diversity of society. However, since modern science aims at establishing an objective worldview, it does not deal with individuality. Using Kandel’s example, whereas people have non-identical perception of the color blue, scientists would only be interested in its objective facts such as its physical and chemical origin and human neural basis of it (185). Individual perception of blue that does not lead to universal principles are out of the scope of science.

Besides, human thinking as a complex whole is contrary to reductionism in modern scientific investigation. Human thoughts and behaviours are influenced by numerous factors such as personalities, personal relationships, self-experiences, cultures and traditions. The same sentence spoken by different people or in different contexts would contain different meanings. Similarly, one’s single thought is inseparable from oneself and its social context. In contrast, modern science asserts reductionism which analyses “a complex phenomenon in terms of its simple or fundamental constituents” (“Reductionism”). Scientists reduce matters into atomic component to study their properties and interaction. If applying reductionist approach

to subjectivity, instead of considering the whole, it will inevitably reduce human thoughts into a simplified but inaccurate models.

Human values given rise by subjectivity are considered as the core of human beings. Since human beings would distinguish good from bad, they develop moral values, though not universal, like peace, honesty and fairness. All kinds of social order including political, legal, economic, educational system, etc., are established and changed over time due to their value judgements. On the contrary, in depicting the nature of science, Sivin mentions science is value-free in the narrow and abstract realm (228). None of the scientific laws would be affected by human thoughts. But Sivin also points out human values determine how these laws and hypotheses are utilized (228). This exactly shows that, on one hand, science is not able to answer moral questions as it is value-free. On the other hand, moral issues must be answered as they affect scientific development, although not science itself. Therefore, in order to tackle ethics, human beings need more than science.

### **3. Application of Science in Human Society**

From the contrast between human nature and the nature of modern science above, we can conclude that science reaches its limit when encountering human subjectivity. While this seems not hard to recognize, in reality, science is often used beyond this limit. Appropriate application of scientific knowledge in handling social issues can be useful. For example, biological research on drug addiction provides a convincing reference for setting up penalty laws and promoting public education. When and how science should be applied is debatable. Nonetheless, we should be

aware that using the tools of science to address non-scientific problems is sometimes improper and risky.

Statistics, “the practice or science of collecting and analyzing numerical data in large quantities”, is applied in non-scientific fields (“Statistics”). In Hong Kong, the government has set up Census and Statistics Department to collect data on various subjects. It is perceived as a method to make citizen-centric and effective policy. However, the accuracy of data is disputable. As mentioned, every human thought involves numerous factors ranging from individuality to society while statistics is not able to take all of them into account. By the simplified and inaccurate data, there is no way for decision makers to interpret the complex reality accurately. In addition, since only limited factors can be examined, it is already assumed which factors are crucial and which should be neglected prior to the data collection. Nonetheless, unlike scientific assumptions that can be falsified by experiments, subjective assumptions in statistics cannot be proved wrong concretely in spite of its great influence on reliability. The researchers can even manipulate the results through their choices of assumptions.

Besides, policy making through quantitative methods is likely to fall into generalisation. As previously said, every human being has a unique mind. A hundred people would have a hundred, if not more, non-identical thoughts on a provided question. Statistics categorises their opinions into several groups such as five levels of agreement. It generalises relatively similar opinions and dismisses the small differences in between. More importantly, generalising the results from a sample to a population leads to the problem of induction which can only prove a statement strong or weak but not right or wrong. Even though statistics is an important scientific tool, it is only used to support findings rather than infer a new claim. Yet, not



realising its limitations, some decision makers heavily rely on statistics to make inferences that easily go wrong which might bring negative impact.

On top of scientific methods, borrowing the notion of universalness in science to human society is another problem. Science is universal. Every matter in nature is perfectly regulated by principles and mechanisms. As mentioned, modern science aims at establishing an objective world while human beings are subjective. It is understandable that, if a government applies such a notion to social issues, individuality must be dismissed. For instance, Hong Kong education judges all students by standardised exams in spite of student diversity. Most schools expect all students to pursue the same objective goal and provide less supports to non-academic development. The government policies applied universally to its target audience easily comes into unnecessary conflict with human subjectivity.

Raising another example, although Darwin carefully avoids mentioning human evolution in *Origin of Species*, eugenics is proposed according to his theory of natural selection (Watson 110). Eugenics is defined as “improving a population by controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable heritable characteristics” (“Eugenics”). It implies, if it is practiced, a universal standard of desirable and undesirable human characteristics must be reinforced. In the sterilization and mass murder of Nazi Eugenics, the government considered characteristics like physical disability, homosexuality and some races like Jews undesirable. Yet, many disagree with the standard and even the appropriation of Eugenics. The way it asserts inferiority of certain kinds of people amounts to discrimination against human diversity. From history, we can see the bias caused by strict regulation of society under subjective principles and mechanisms. The notion of science in society can harm diversity in humanity.

## 4. Conclusion

Whereas natural scientists perceive science as their goals, it is seen as a tool to improve human lives by many others. To avoid overuse and dangerous consequences, it is necessary to figure out the limits of science which include not only humanity. Due to the fundamental differences between human nature and nature of science, modern science is not able to answer human questions raised by subjectivity. Based on this affirmation, social policies made according to scientific methods and notion are likely to neglect and even damage human subjectivity and diversity. Although the limits of modern science are not clearly defined yet, decision makers must be alert and careful when they use science to solve problems involving humanity.

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### **Teacher's comment:**

Sciences and humanities are two important cultures in human history. Through the speculation of their relationships in the context of social science, Miss Tsang reflected on the essential characteristics of human nature and the nature of modern science, such as subjectivity and objectivity, individuality and universality. She argued that modern science is unable to answer ethical questions because of its nature and characteristics. Scientific advancement may bring some of us good living conditions; it definitely has caused lots of ethical issues for societies and problems in the world in the 21st Century. With a clear flow of argumentation and analysis from multiple dimensions, Miss Tsang's paper is a good read to foster critical reflection on modern science, a seemingly all-powerful product of human minds. We shall all keep an eye on its limit and be aware of its application. (LI Ming)



# Two Olive Branches: Science and Religion

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## 1. Introduction

“In Dialogue with Nature” provides us with insights into what science is along its history of development. Pre-existing as Natural Philosophy, it could be divided into two eras, of which “modern science” is hereby discussed. Modern science is “the pursuit and application of the knowledge of the natural and social world following a systemic methodology based on evidence” (Science Council). Methodology includes experiment, induction, repetition, critical analysis and verification, which are all basis for an evident conclusion.

While the course does not emphasise much religion, it appeals to the general understanding that religion is “the belief in and worship of a god or gods, or any such system of belief and worship” (“Religion”). Most, if not all, religions have three central properties: they are social systems, involve population mobilisation in carrying out routine-based activities, and endorse the supernatural and designate it as holy or sacred (Dietrich).

The perk of modern science is attained by the publication of *Principia* by Newton regarding revolutionary physics discoveries at the time (Cohen 53). Since then, more and more people side with science.

A sense of antagonism gradually divides the two areas: juxtaposing scientific investigations as truth and religious rituals as superstitions. While it remains as a timeless debate on what is truth, I believe that science is not a new religion of the 20th century, and it never will be due to the fundamental differences between their meanings to humanity and formats of pursuit. Nevertheless, science and religion are a lot less contradictory than one might perceive. They both offer individuals a way to understand the world and the motivation to enquire deeper. It is a matter of how we would like to be related to the nature—more of a specimen-investigator relationship or a spiritual sympathy, or even, a mix of both.

## **2. Differences between Science and Religion**

### **2.1 Values to Humanity**

One layer of the meaning of science to mankind is to bring conveniences to our daily lives, as in the application value of science. This value is amplified should the scientific principles behind be not limited to a particular or immediate application, but could re-appear in another production or back up the construction of another innovation (Poincaré 160). The universality of scientific application could be easily proved by extensive presence of electronic appliances. Once artificial intelligence is invented, scientists together with businessmen have been relentlessly creating new products that become Siri and robots today. In this highly commercialised world, the degree of practicality is even deemed as the sole value.

Nevertheless, science started off as an intellectual pursuit in the time of Aristotle. This intellectual value is fused by humans' inherent inquisitiveness. Historical figures strived to come up with logical deductions

about the whys of the whats, as ancient as how Aristotle tried to simplify the eternal universe by dividing it into five elements (Lindberg 25). Till now, many scientists are still endeavouring in the ever-going discoveries of nature, satisfied with the pleasure derived from every piece of new knowledge (Poincaré 163). Science exists beyond as merely a value, but also an intellectual beauty. Science is a tool for understanding Cosmos, the Earth and people.

While religion does not give rise to everyday physical components nor concrete explanations to every phenomenon, its value lies with appreciating the beauty of the world and savouring our surroundings, instead of getting to the root of why it exists this way. Although a theory of origin may be provided in a religion, it acts as shaping the almightiness of the supernatural power, thus placing the power as the core of belief and fundamentals of the religious messages.

The quotes by the Almighty deliver reassurance and even catharsis to the followers. One predominant characteristic is the call for valuing immaterial mind and devaluing earthly possessions. For instance, *Bible* wrote, “[y]our beauty should not come from outward adornment . . . , it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.” (*Bible*, 1 Pet. 3:3–4) The value of religion is about the spirituality that leads to purposeful lives. It gives followers a set of prototypes about the attitudes, mentalities and way of living. Unlike science which takes advantage of the curiosity of mind for discoveries, religion aims to express and strengthen the goodwill of mind for better deeds. In other words, science is more result-oriented, whereas religion outweighs the processes leading to each and every good striving.

## 2.2 Formats for Pursuit

Pursuing science and immersing in religion are two entirely different mechanisms. Modern sciences are always based on evidences, so the methodology inevitably involves a lot of experimentations or calculations. Meanwhile, people do not stand religion because of concrete proof, but faith and somehow their superegos.

Aristotle, the pioneer in Western science, developed an outline for the steps in investigation. Experiments were not included in the proposed inductive form as he disapproved of the confinement of a simulated setting (Lindberg 21). Putting the necessity of repeated experiments in modern sciences aside, the outline laid out a foundation for the format of pursuit and has been abided till now. The pathway, which starts at observation and succeeds with logical deduction, may be branched and directed back to the starting point once the trials fail to prove the hypothesis. This is what science is about: out of the vastness of possibilities, there is only one answer. The answer ought to be a “deductive demonstration” to be acknowledged, meaning that all conclusions should be valid if the premises are true (21). Therefore, mathematics and statistics are so important in conveying the accuracy of the law and to allow its application in literally all scenarios. They provide uniformity to the “correctness” of the premises, thus ensuring the legitimacy of the outcome deductively.

One factor leading to a wide variety of religions is the lack of agreeable evidence to prove the validity of their core. The godless Buddhism advocates impermanence; Hinduism worships multiple gods, and biblical illustrations appear in three monotheistic religions (Laderman). The triggering of faith is unique for each follower, be it family background, regional culture or merely a sudden enlightenment. The complexity behind devoting to



a religion could be experienced with the simultaneous involvement with Freud's psychic theory. Superego is expressed in the believers who truly want spiritual cleansing, as they believe they could be better off than the present or feel obliged to commit religiously to erase all sins and selfishness. The fear for death and afterlife relating to id and identification of the religion as personal trait is a manifestation of ego (Kandel 179). It is a practical reason to grow a faith for the comfort at heart.

Consolidation of the faith of followers and construction of a religious community require routine-based actions. Catholicism and Christianity have praying and Sunday masses; Buddhism has meditation and mantra-chanting, just to list a few. Psychologically speaking, chanting or any form of repetition induces a sense of belonging and reassurance. The purpose of the rituals is to first develop a habit in and a comfort zone among individuals, then to internalise in them the meanings behind these activities. When the rituals become a form of worshipping, carrying out the physicality would enrich the mental aspect as well a sense of sacredness. This appeals to the emotions rather than the logics.

### **2.3 Are They Both Beliefs?—Falsifiability**

Belief is considering something true even though we could not provide 100% accurate proof (*Religion and Belief*). Based on the nature of science about knowledge being tentative and subject to change, some argue that the testability of science makes it no different than a faith. Darwin wrongly proposed “pangenesis” in relation with his renowned theory of evolution, coinciding with inheritance of acquired characteristics (Watson 100). A lack of intactness is inevitable, and one can yet know the full picture of the scientific mechanism of the world. People advocate modern science not

based on absolute grounds of proving, just like religious believers. Thus, the two disciplines are intrinsically in the same catalogue—they are both beliefs.

Testability of modern science allows the input of mathematics to refine or re-establish the formerly faulted principles, which is deemed as the beauty of science. Nonetheless, having falsifiability as the precursor for possible testability distinguishes it from religion, which is unfalsifiable in the first place. For science, people could always assume it is false and hence, test all over again. For religion, one doubt exists and the core shatters.

Ironically, being used to back up science, falsifiability suggests that no theories are completely true, but can be accepted as truth upon evident support (Shuttleworth and Wilson). Speaking of Charles Darwin, at least his problematic theory could be overthrown by the experiment of tail-cut mice and contribution could be commemorated thanks to advancements in genetics, the sorting of fossil records and analysis of homologous structures. The origin of all species might indeed be a common ancestor (Darwin 88).

Scientists are not omniscient enough to solve all puzzles about the world we live in, but there are always new disprovable hypotheses that may or may not fill up the imaginative gap. For religion, the imaginative space is fully occupied with a static set of rules and ideologies. They are unfalsifiable. People follow with minimal scepticism; some may elaborate further on the given knowledge. Religious knowledge is more certain, and perhaps truer, in a sense that it is unbreakable, while scientists are encouraged to doubt the scientific truth, the truth that is more down-to-earth with reality. At this moment, people may deem a principle as the only true cause. As legit champion of science, however, there is always room for uncertainties and overthinking, even for the most well-established theories. This is one big difference splitting science from belief.

### 3. Conclusion: Science, Religion and the World

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree,” Einstein once said. Despite the very different values offered to humans and the methods utilised in religion and science, they tell us something about the world, each from the end of a delicately refined angle of microscope. Focusing on the same tree, science tells us the invisible process of photosynthesis, whereas religion refers to it as the gift of God. There are no right or wrong thoughts, just ideas from specific mindsets about individuals’ relationship to the trunk, to nature.

“All these aspirations are directed towards ennobling man’s life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.” He continued. Freedom is the liberation of souls from physicality, achieved through pure science or sheer religion or many other endless possibilities. A science teacher that teaches evolution could bear a religious belief. He/she could appreciate the falsifiable nature of science and find spiritual comfort through the definiteness in faith. After all, they are equal products of the mankind’s urge to understand our habitat and the vast universe, the unknowns. The diverged aspects do not necessarily make them dichotomies. Mutually exclusiveness may just be an absolute concept in probability, waiting to be challenged or perfected. Who knows?

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

In this article, Wing Yan had carried out a well-balanced analysis on the differences between science and religion. She was able to pin down some essential characteristics of both and guided us through the comparison smoothly and enjoyably. While some may equate science with a new religion and some others may put the two in an opposition, through her arguments, Wing Yan put forward a balanced yet convincing response: “it is a matter of how we would like to be related to the nature—more of

a specimen-investigator relationship or a spiritual sympathy, or even, a mix of both.”(WU Jun Vivian)

# 自由與科學的「枷鎖」 ——相刃抑或相成？

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## 1. 前言

柏拉圖的洞穴比喻為尋真過程的寫照。洞穴的囚犯生來只能看見影子，當重獲自由並走出洞穴方發現世界的真實面貌（Plato, *Republic* 6）。擺脫枷鎖不僅代表自由，更比喻尋真過程，故知識和自由密不可分，透過尋真方能獲得自由。然而，科學研究成果卻表明人類有不少天生的規限，且研究越深入，人類發現的枷鎖就越多，與柏拉圖的論說相違。本文將探討人類是否果真生而自由、科學與自由是否對立，並提出人應如何在科學或尋真與自由間取得平衡。

## 2. 科學揭示的規限

### 2.1 天地

最初，人類傾向以神話解釋外在世界的現象。如希臘神話中宙斯是掌管天氣之神，波塞頓則可控制地震（皮埃爾·格里馬爾 1），意味世界各現象皆為神掌管，神有控制此等現象之自由。其後亞里士多

德指月上世界滿佈「以太」(“aether”) (Lindberg 26)，天體運行是因星體要追求「原動者」(“Prime Mover”) (33)。亞里士多德雖較理性，嘗以「物質」作分析，但「原動者」是「生存的神」(“a living deity”) (33)，概念仍與神有關，故亞里士多德仍承認外在世界本身——或死物——有些許自由。

牛頓物理學發現收窄「神可隨意干涉自然現象」之說的可信空間，證明死物無自由。牛頓以數學計算發現天體運行有規律，行星圍繞恒星運轉的動力為慣性運動 (inertial motion) 和萬有引力的結合 (Cohen 60–61)，證明行星運轉由單調的物理定律規限。牛頓的研究使人類明白自然現象可以數學和物理解釋，對神隨意干預世界的幻想破滅，人不能以求神改變規律，證明外在世界現象中不存在自由。

## 2.2 生物

科學研究使人發現生物亦無主宰權。前人常以為生物構造異於死物，更有指只有物理和化學方為真正的科學 (Watson 115)，因生命由神賦予，不能以科學理論解釋。《會飲篇》有言性別的出現是因神將本為球體之人劈成兩半，始有男女之分 (Plato, *Symposium* 21)；《聖經》又云人類由神創造 (〈創世紀〉1:27)。此等論述認為生物乃由神按其意願創造或控制，生物或許只要尊崇神、得神歡心便可達成心願，故有一定的自由。

近代生物研究證明此等理論屬無稽之談。達爾文認為不同物種會互相競爭，具優勢的物種有較大存活機會 (Darwin 74, 76–77)，足見任何生物皆有機會被淘汰，無生存上的自由。研究表明生物的天生特徵由基因等定律控制 (Watson 107–109)，如先天疾病是因顯性基因而生 (104)；薛丁格 (Schrödinger) 提出生命可從「儲存或傳遞生物信息 (biological information)」方向解釋 (轉引自 Watson 115)；華生 (Watson) 又發現 DNA 的雙螺旋形結構，人類基因組成與其他化學



作用無甚分別（133）。故生物之肉體由科學定律規限，生物不可主宰生命，基因遺傳更能成為生物的枷鎖，生物可能從父母身上取得遺傳病基因而無自由選擇，此乃生物——尤其於生理層面上並無自由之力證。

### 2.3 人類意識

柏拉圖和基督教均認為人類能思考是因有不朽的靈魂，而靈魂非由物質構成（Kandel 181），故人有自由意志，意識並不受外在物質規限。二十世紀末仍有科學家認為人類意識不可循物理方向研究，因生物有思考和感覺，難以想像死板的物理定律能解釋之（181）。換言之前人相信人類意識有自由，甚至認為意識與物理、化學脫鉤。

現今科學家則大致認同意識源於物質大腦，否定靈魂存在，再次將人類對自由的幻想收窄。丹尼特（Daniel Dennett）認為意識是大腦高級區域計算結果的組合（轉引自 Watson 182），希爾勒（John Searle）則認為意識是一系列生物過程（biological processes）（轉引自 Watson 182），將意識與科學連結。其後科學家透過實驗證明意識與物質有關。

最重要的實驗當屬腦電波實驗，直接牽涉自由意志存在與否的問題。實驗要求實驗者按自身意願移動手指，並發現腦電波的準備電位（readiness potential）於實驗者產生移動手指意慾前200毫秒已出現（192），故人類活動可能只是由物質控制。此實驗結果於一定程度上否定自由意志存在，意識不排除只是人類的幻覺，並無自由。

## 3. 自由與科學——抵觸？並存？

科學研究傾向表明人類生來就被自然科學定律所限制。人類獲得的知識越多，則越能發現自身被很多自然科學枷鎖捆綁。故尋真反使

人察覺自己不自由，與洞穴比喻的主張相反。按科學發展趨勢，人類最後可能發現自己只是一堆原子構成的有機物體，其活動亦只是極複雜的原子活動，「意識」為原子運動進行時產生的假象。然則盧梭所謂「人生而自由」是否不成立？實不然也。科學研究揭示的枷鎖屬與生俱來的自然規限，人類理應永遠無法擺脫。因此，從自然科學角度而言，人類從來都無肉體上的自由，且將來亦應無法爭取之。但人類尚且感受到自己有意識，而一般理解的自由不會因缺乏自然科學層面上的肉體自由而不存在，故身體的規限並非太重要。且科學家亦表明人類雖可能無自由意志，但或許仍有“Free won't”（192），即有拒絕，或曰「選擇不做某事」的自由。

然則人類一般理解的自由為何？本文且以兩大思想家之主張為例。盧梭認為自由必須以尊重公意（general will）為前提，人要犧牲一些天然自由換取更高層次的團體自由，如以盜竊的自由換取財產不被侵犯的自由，此之謂「社會契約」（Rousseau 52, 61, 69），而真正的自由是能遵守並受益於社會契約；米爾（Mill）則認為自由指個性受尊重（97-98），保護小眾個性或利益的方法是允許發聲，故自由是指思想言論自由（103）。雖二人主張相距甚遠，分別重視社會整體和個人，但此兩種自由的實踐皆不因自然科學規限而有阻礙，關鍵在於政治、社會發展等人為因素。

科學和自由看似有抵觸，但此自由只針對自然科學下對人類生理上的束縛而言。自由可指“Free won't”，又可指人類一般理解的諸如言論、宗教等自由。故「人生而自由，卻無處不在枷鎖之中」一句，「枷鎖」可指自然給予的生理上的限制，而「自由」指人類意識上認為自己擁有的自由，故此語得之，自由與科學實際上可並存。

#### 4. 尋真意義安在？

尋真不能使人完全擺脫肉體規限，更使人類發現自己身上有許多

枷鎖，似乎與爭取自由的初衷相違。既然人類可能無自由意志，然則爭取政治自由意義為何？如盧梭所說，人被枷鎖捆綁，但不一定要打破枷鎖，而是要將枷鎖合法化（52）。我們無法打破物理定律對肉體造成的規限，但可將規限「合法化」——接受枷鎖，並發掘新方法克服之。而政治方面，爭取政治自由是人為活動，人有能力打破政治上的規限，雖過程亦是艱巨。故肉體的天生限制並非太重要，人雖不能直接打破枷鎖，卻有其他方法克服限制，而尋真為首要工作。

尋真使人了解自己的限制，同時能獲得如科學技術等新知識。正如人類透過尋真發現自身無法飛行，卻以發明飛機克服規限，變相得到飛行的自由，只是此類自由很可能需依賴工具，非完全無依待，但此亦為自由的一大進步。尋真使人了解規限只是最初步的結果，人類依從規限求變，最後變相獲得自由，很可能才是真正結局，故自由仍能以尋真取得。

爭取政治方面的自由亦需先尋真。尋真使人獲得知識，繼而知道何種政治制度較適合人類，並循此方向爭取自由。雖尋真使人了解自身規限，然自由又與知識和真相密不可分，故人類並非不應繼續尋真。盧梭曾言：「放棄自己的自由，就是放棄自己做人的資格。」（Rousseau 57）不知自己有規限或許不會痛苦，但這變相扼殺自己知情的自由。尋求真相至少能了解自己的處境，允許自己選擇是否求變，擁有嘗試改革的自由。正如今日香港有所謂「港豬」對時事一概不理，只表示自己不懂政治便拒絕發聲。「港豬」雖可忽略社運乃至不公義帶來的痛苦，卻同時遏制自己知情權乃至改革求變的自由，故無尋真精神反會堵塞出路，離自由更遠。

在自然科學層面上，尋真使人更了解自身，有利社會科學發展。如化學家發現原子，打破亞里士多德「四元素」（Lindberg 26–27）和中國「五行學說」（Needham 199–200），破除基督教及《易經》占卜迷信，使教廷不再坐擁至高權力，皇帝為「天子」之說亦不攻自破。故尋真雖揭示自然科學層面的限制，但同時有助人類爭取自由。

## 5. 結論

如盧梭所言，人生來就無處不在枷鎖之中。「枷鎖」可理解為自然科學下生物被物理定律限制而生的規限；而生來的自由則可指人類在自然科學層面上僅餘的“Free won't”，又可指政治自由，雖政治自由可能遭後天剝奪。尋真雖揭示人類滿身枷鎖，卻能助人了解自身限制，克服自然的規限，變相爭取自由。故自由與科學或知識並無衝突，尋真依然為爭取自由過程的必要一環。

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## 老師短評

作者能夠將盧梭的名言放入科學知識的脈絡裏分析，為「與自然對話」和「與人文對話」兩科之間再嘗試作出對話。科學探索到底是否為人類帶來自由還是將人類囚禁了？作者提供的出路是將枷鎖合理化，了解自身物理上的限制，但同時打破了人文思想上的枷鎖，這樣應被定義為自由。相反，不了解物理上的限制，反而才容易導致思想上被囚禁。了解自身不足，往往才是智慧的開端。（江啟明）

# **The Bearer of Morality**

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## **A. Introduction**

Possessing free will in manipulating one's own actions has been an unambiguous belief as if it is an undisputable fact. Our acts certainly are governed by our conscious minds, and are mirrors of our mental decisions, aren't they? The glimpse of a flashing thought that we fail to exert perfect control over our actions seems absurd to the majority. However, certain experiments have provided compelling evidence to justify this radical idea that most of us would be eager to reject. It has therefore become an inexorable controversy that we reflect upon matters of free will, ethics and more.

## **B. Background**

One of the prominent experiments challenging the idea of free will was laid down by Benjamin Libet, in which he asked volunteers to lift a finger whenever they wanted to and recorded the electrical activity in their brains throughout the process. A readiness potential was recorded 200 milliseconds before the person felt the urge to move their finger (Kandel 191). These

electrical signals are indeed signs that certain matter precedes our conscious decision of performing an action, conveying a lack of free will. In other words, a decision has been made even before our conscious decision, and it is neither accessible nor governable by our conscious mind. Even when a choice is made “freely”, it is largely initiated in an unconscious manner.

The significance of the issue lies beyond the presence or absence of free will. The absence of free will place moral responsibility in question. Free will is highly related to moral responsibility, with some philosophers even taking a step forward to define free will as whatever is necessary for moral responsibility to exist (O’Connor and Franklin). To judge whether a person is morally responsible, we assume that they possess certain powers and capacities, and have hence exercised them (Talbert). Therefore, we could not accuse and ask one to bear the responsibility for their actions if they had not voluntarily exercised them, at least not in a conscious status. In the absence of free will, a more severe yet inevitable societal consequence is that every member of the society would be placed in a morally-empty state, such that any form of social contract imposing restrictions on one’s actions becomes void and obsolete. These unfathomable consequences have prompted numerous philosophers to address the controversy.

Personally, I am of the opinion that free will does exist and one does need to bear their moral responsibilities. Further illustrations are made as follows.

### **I. Illusion or Not**

Based on the results of Libet’s experiment, it seems that our actions are predetermined by an unknown factor, and it could be a sheer illusion that our beliefs exert control over our actions. If our conscious mind truly does not



play a part in the initiation of our actions, we could be simply rationalizing what has happened as Kandel has proposed (Kandel 192).

Nonetheless, the illusion is purely a time-based conclusion considering only the chronological order by which different phenomena take place. Indeed, our conscious thought process might not be the very first step in the chain of events leading to our actions. This does not, however, dismiss the existence of free will if we look into the definition of it.

Free will is very commonly defined as the ability to choose to do or not do something (O'Connor and Franklin). To assess whether free will is present, we must consider the events as a whole and evaluate whether a choice-making process is involved instead of overly focusing on a particular frame. Kandel has drawn a similar conclusion that we cannot infer the sum total of neural activity merely by looking at a few neural circuits (192). Our conscious thought process not being the initiating factor does not necessarily mean we have lost control over our actions.

As Libet has proposed, while the initiation of a voluntary action might occur in an unconscious part of the brain, consciousness is recruited to approve or veto the action itself (Kandel 192). This is echoed by psychologists Richard Gregory and Vilayanur Ramachandran's statement that our mind does have free won't even if it may not have free will (Kandel 192). In this sense, our ability to choose whether to perform an action or not is still intimately involved. Our conscious mind gates our action-making process and plays a pivotal role in determining whether the action eventually will be performed or not regardless of the initiating factor. Since there is choice in the course of operation, there must be free will as well.

Some would argue that our consciousness is only recruited to evaluate the decision after it has been initiated subconsciously. In essence, we only

have veto power against anything that has been proposed by our unconscious mind, but do not have the power to initiate something spontaneously. Therefore, we, at best, have free won't but not free will. Nonetheless, most humans are able to respond adequately to different circumstances and it is thus safe to assume that our subconscious mind does not limit ourselves to a narrow range of actions. It can thus be concluded that by having free won't, we still have nearly full access to the spectrum of reasonable decisions that we really need. In a sense, the degree of free will we earn by having free won't is more than sufficient for our daily operations. Having free won't is therefore not significantly different from having free will.

## **II. Nature of the Signal**

If we conclude that free will does not exist merely because there is a preceding brain activity, then this particular brain activity must embody the true will, the owner of which remains unknown. Yet, several problems are then identified.

In terms of the expression of free will, the readiness potential is too unsophisticated to be a candidate factor representing our free will. It is obvious that the electrical potential, with its limited variation in magnitude and frequency, can never translate or represent the whole spectrum of actions that free will can command. Human actions are not binary—they vary not only in the sense of doing or not doing. They vary in degree and their consequences as well. A light pat on one's shoulder could be interpreted as an accolade, but the same action exerted with a larger force could become a violent act. The variations in one's motives are even more complicated, often involving considerations of the circumstances and moral judgement. These should not be what a single electrical potential can convey. Therefore,

the readiness potential is at the maximum part of our free will but not the whole of it. The conscious thought process immediately following the readiness potential allows room for much more intricate mental decisions such that it likely constitutes a major part of our free will.

Functionally speaking, the accuracy of Libet's prediction of actions through the presence of readiness potential only yields an accuracy of roughly 60% (Fischborn 499). If the readiness potential comprises the free will, the resulting action should always readily conform to the electrochemical signal. Yet, it is shown that the presence of the signal can contradict the presence of an action. Based on this statistic, it would be insensible to claim that the readiness potential truly represents the entirety of our free will but we sometimes go against our free will. It is much more reasonable to conclude that the readiness potential would at best constitute part of our free will, but surely not the whole of it. If a readiness potential is recorded but no action is executed, it could be that the action is disapproved by conscious inference such that no action is produced. It is likely that our free will is the sum of the readiness potential and our conscious decision in that case.

Tackling the root, who is the owner of this overpowering true will? While much of Aristotle's metaphysics is becoming less relevant in modern days, some of his ideas do provide insights for us to resolve the problem at hand. Aristotle believes that a property must be a property of something, such that a subject is present to claim the property (Lindberg 19). In this case, if free will is said to be absent because human will is preceded by a readiness potential, this overpowering free will represented by the readiness potential must also be a free will of someone or something. Since it is coming out of our unconscious mind, which is still part of us, theoretically we could still claim the ownership of this true free will (and therefore, we

*have* free will). If we do not consider it to be our free will, an ultimate owner is left unfounded. A free will that is deprived of its owner appears largely insensible.

### III. Consciousness and Unconsciousness

Putting aside the notion that our consciousness does get involved in the decision-making process, even if free will truly stems from unconscious brain activity and decisions are made unconsciously, it must be noted that our unconsciousness is not completely out of our reach and uncontrollable as illustrated below. Therefore, this should not be a complete excuse of performing morally wrong actions.

Freudian theories are often discredited for their extreme takes on sexuality and childhood development, nonetheless the core theories of the three psychic agencies still hold their ground or even have parallels in contemporary psychology. Freud has argued that the id was the only mental structure present at birth, such that morals (represented by superego) are initially absent (Kandel 179). It can thus only be constructed based on the accumulation of conscious experience, particularly through education, experience with social norms etc.

Poincaré shares a similar viewpoint as well. He believes that fruitful unconscious work must be preceded by preliminary conscious effort. In his analogy, he believes that conscious work liberates some atoms off the wall, allowing them to circulate and collide in unconscious status, ultimately producing fruitful results that would surface in the second period of consciousness. The agitation of the atoms are, according to Poincaré, imparted to them by our will (174–175). In this regard, our conscious will does play a part in setting off determining our unconscious mental processes. Our unconscious ego is therefore not completely baseless but grounded in

and constructed by our conscious thoughts. It is very much still a part of us and the decisions derived from unconsciousness are to some extent still our own decisions.

### **C. Moral Controversies**

Free will is very much related to moral responsibility. Some might even regard the understanding of free will to be derivative from the understanding of moral responsibility (O'Connor and Franklin). As such, if free will exists, so must moral responsibility.

Legal responsibility is very much similar. If free will exists, so must legal responsibility. Modern legal systems are grounded in the notion that free will is ubiquitous, though it is really out of practical value preference rather than metaphysical considerations (Jones 1035). Nonetheless, we have proven through the arguments in this essay that free will very much still exists, though it might present itself in less direct forms (e.g. free won't, unconscious initiation guarded by conscious mind) than we would expect. Therefore, existing legal constraints, which endorse the presence of free will, should still be functional.

While legal systems do not really address metaphysical free will, it is notable that they do adequately address various issues like consciousness, mental states, capacity for rationality in determining whether one should be held responsible (Morse 252). Laws also evaluate not only the moral judgement or motives behind an action, but also its consequences. For example, one can be legally charged with manslaughter if they have accidentally killed somebody with no malicious aforethought. In the history of sleepwalking murders, some defendants were excused, others charged with murder or manslaughter depending on the circumstances (Lyon). This

shows that current legal systems are capable of carefully considering the factors of responsibility regardless of the free will debate.

Legal systems will only be challenged or incompetent if it could be conclusively proven that human beings are entirely unresponsive to and unguided by reasons, and that mental states play absolutely no causal role in determining actions (Morse 253). With the nature of the readiness potentials and how they affect our actions largely remain unknown, Libet's findings alone are far from pointing us to such an aggressive conclusion.

## D. Conclusion

To conclude, most of our decision-making processes still involve our conscious ego even if the decision might originate from unconscious activity. The presence of a preceding factor does not therefore create a universal loophole for us to shed our responsibilities. Considering how the absence of free will entails no positive agenda as to how we should live afterwards, it is perhaps best that we do not turn to this radical view before it is conclusively proven to be the case. Free will is the power and capacity that we possess, and in the exercise of our will we ought to hold ourselves responsible for our own actions.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

It remains an unsettling issue as to what we can conclude from Libet’s experiment and the like. Whether we suppose free will exist or not, apparent contradictions are reached (different ones for the two cases though). Yet Camille (SHU Ying Chi) manages to establish compelling reasons not to reject the notion of free will entirely. Furthermore, an elaborate discussion on moral and legal responsibility is given. The moral discussion surely is thought-provoking and it also enriches the discussion on the notion of free will. (LAI Chi Wai Kevin)



# **Truth, Beauty and the Pursuit of Science**

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## **1. Introduction**

Science is often perceived as impartial, rational, and at times, cold. Beauty, a fundamentally subjective concept, is not something the layman would associate with science. Scientists, however, have long described science as beautiful. Many cite beauty as a guide in their scientific pursuits even. How are science and beauty related? What is the role of beauty in science? Through exploring different notions of beauty as proposed by scientists and philosophers throughout history, this essay hopes to provide answers to these questions and to find a place for beauty in science.

## **2. Beauty as Motivation**

Poincaré argued that beauty is what motivates scientists in their work, “The scientist does not study nature because it is useful to do. He studies it because he takes pleasure in it, and he takes pleasure in it because it is beautiful” (165). What is this beauty that enchants scientists into “long and painful labours” in pursuit of it (166)?

Aesthetics, the study of beauty, has long interested western philosophers. In *Metaphysics*, when talking about mathematics, Aristotle stated that “the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness” (1705). And in *Poetics*, he said, “to be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must . . . present a certain order in its arrangement of parts” (2321). These quotes provide insight into Aristotle’s conception of beauty, as one that is timeless and definite, one that seeks a special order and harmony between parts of a whole. This classical conception of beauty, while diverging from our conventional subjective, intangible notions of beauty, finds a place in the natural sciences.

Poincaré’s “intellectual beauty” shares striking similarities with Aristotle’s views on beauty. Poincaré saw nature as possessing a “more intimate beauty which comes from the harmonious order of its parts”, which only “a pure intelligence can grasp”; a beauty that provides “the sense of harmony of the world” (165–166). What does Poincaré mean by “harmony of the world”, and where does one find it? While Poincaré never gave an explicit answer, he did say a scientist’s aim is to “discover similarities hidden under apparent discrepancies” (165). One would thus assume this intellectual beauty Poincaré speaks of lies in the “similarities”, or the rules underlying nature. In the words of Francis Hutcheson, a philosopher of aesthetics, beauty arises from “uniformity amidst variety” (28). At first glance, nature is diverse and chaotic. Yet, through a scientist’s careful observation, the unifying principles behind nature could be discovered, providing a sense of harmony and order from which beauty arises.

A classic example of nature’s beauty is seen through Newton’s laws of motions. With Newton’s laws and its mathematical derivations, nearly all motions, from the celestial motions of planets to the miniscule motions

of small particles can be described using the same principles, presenting a beautiful, orderly “rule of nature” (Cohen 61). It should be noted, however, that this beauty stems not from the ever-changing<sup>1</sup> scientific theories proposed by scientists, but from the timeless harmony of nature. The beauty of harmony and order rests in nature, and scientific theories are merely the means through which this beauty becomes accessible to scientists. The intellectual beauty seen from Newton’s laws could also be presented by Einstein’s general relativity, perhaps more so even, with its broader applications, explaining phenomena unaccounted for in Newton’s laws.

The above analysis, however, presumes that nature is inherently orderly and thus beautiful. What if there is no order among all the chaos? To prove the existence of such a natural order (or lack thereof) is a philosophical question beyond the scope of this essay. However, I would argue that whether there is an inherent order in nature is irrelevant; so long as scientists believe in such an order, beauty serves as a motivation for scientists, and an ideal to be achieved. “Beautiful” was how Newton described the system of orbiting planets and comets, which, while having vastly different orbits, are governed by the same gravitational laws he proposed (388). It was a beauty so immense to Newton he considered it divine, possible only through the deliberations of God. Nobel prize laureate Steven Weinberg described his expectations for “beautiful answers” when studying “truly fundamental problems”, referencing his work on elementary particles (107). He believes that ultimately, “a few . . . principles of compelling beauty” could be found in nature (107). It is the strong belief in a beautiful, harmonious and orderly

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<sup>1</sup> Newton’s laws were superseded by Einstein’s general theory of relativity.

nature that compelled Poincaré, Newton, Weinberg to dedicate their lives to developing scientific theories, and to uncover the universal, orderly rules governing the seemingly chaotic world of nature; the sense of order and harmony among chaos provides an aesthetic satisfaction that drives these scientists, and countless more in their scientific pursuits.

### 3. Beauty as an Indicator of Truth

In the above section, I have briefly explored the idea of nature having an inherent beauty, embodied in its order and harmony. Many scientists and philosophers, building on similar claims, argue that scientific theories, as conveyors of natural beauty, must possess certain aesthetic values, i.e. be beautiful, to be true<sup>2</sup> (McAllister 174). Poincaré claimed that “care for the beautiful leads us to the same selection as care for the useful,” (166) while Heisenberg argued “if nature leads us to mathematical forms of great simplicity and beauty . . . , we cannot help thinking that they are ‘true’” (68) Thus, beauty here becomes a criterion upon which scientific theories are compared, judged and subsequently chosen.

When evaluating the beauty of scientific theories, aesthetic values like harmony, symmetry, simplicity and unity are often cited by scientists. As such, proponents have given extensive examples of beautiful theories enjoying much empirical success, the most prominent example being Einstein’s general theory of relativity, hailed as “probably the most beautiful of all existing theories” (Chandrasekhar 3). The beauty of his theory lies in the “simplicity of his central idea about the equivalence of gravitation and

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2 “True” here is defined as being empirically adequate.

inertia” (Weinberg 83), and how it unites the geometry of spacetime with matter and motion (Chandrasekhar 5). Apart from possessing these aesthetic properties, Einstein’s theory is also undoubtedly successful empirically. It may well seem as if beauty and truth are linked.

However, the mere existence of one false theory possessing the aforementioned aesthetic values would have falsified the idea of beauty as a predictor for truth. Kepler, in an attempt to introduce beauty into his cosmology, constructed a model of the Solar System by inscribing and circumscribing the five Platonic solids with the orbital spheres of the six known planets at the time (Weinberg 106). The ratio of the radii of the spheres inscribed and circumscribed by the Platonic solids approximately corresponds to the ratio of the planetary orbits’ radii. Revered by the Greeks for their symmetry and beauty, Platonic solids are three dimensional structures with their faces composed entirely by regular, identical polygons (Weisstein). By incorporating them into his theory, Kepler presented a sense of geometrical harmony and symmetry among the planets. With this beautiful model, he explained why there are only six planets, a claim easily disproved with the discovery of Uranus and Neptune. Data gathered after his death also showed larger discrepancies between his model and radii of planetary orbits in reality. While beautiful in a classical sense, Kepler’s model was embarrassingly wrong for such an accomplished physicist like Kepler, effectively proving the beauty of a theory need not indicate its truthfulness.

Another argument against beauty as a truth indicator lies in the fundamental subjectivity of beauty. What one scientist considers beautiful could be ugly in another’s eyes. An example would be Paul Dirac calling quantum electrodynamics “ugly” (291), when Richard Feynman considered

it the “jewel of physics” (Feynman 4). Both physicists are highly regarded, yet their aesthetic feelings on the same theory differ, showing the potential diversity of opinions regarding the beauty of a theory. It is impossible to apply subjective beauty as an indicator for objective truth. The notion of beauty also changes considerably over time. For Aristotle, the harmony of the cosmos lied in how the planets have “the most perfect of motions”, referring to their perfect circular motions described through a series of concentric spheres (Lindberg 32–33). However, as noted above, Newton saw harmony and beauty in the variation of orbits: while the comets have eccentric orbits, the planets have regular orbits, yet both are governed by the same laws (388). The same aesthetic value of harmony has different interpretations through time, illustrating just how malleable the notion of beauty is. This begs the question: is beauty really an intrinsic property of certain true scientific theories, or do scientists retroactively assign beauty to empirically validated theories, creating the illusion of beauty in truth?

#### **4. Conclusion**

Ultimately, beauty in science is probably a romanticized ideal. The fickleness of beauty renders it an inadequate indicator of truth in science. What a beautiful theory embodies, however, is scientists’ firm belief in the beauty of nature, their belief that there is inherently some order hidden behind physical phenomena, waiting to be discovered. Beauty is an “end” to a means, an ideal to strive towards, but not a reliable “means” to truth. The anticipation for a higher beauty in nature motivates countless scientists to work tirelessly in pursuit of beauty and truth, and that in itself, is beautiful.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

Science is often regarded as impartial and rational. However, beauty is a fundamentally subjective concept. Brandon discusses the inseparable relationship between science and beauty based on a number of solid evidences. His arguments are clear, accurate and eloquent. I deeply appreciate his strong, impressive and well organized analysis. (YANG Jie Jasmine)



# 讓孩子「與自然對話」，發掘生命之美

楊鈺玲

逸夫書院 計算機工程學

致吾兒：

展信佳，見字如晤。

春去冬來春又回，當我坐在窗明几淨的書房裏提筆寫下這封信時，窗外春光明媚，一片祥和的光景。你睡在柔軟的小床上，粉嫩的臉頰沐浴在和煦的陽光裏，清澈靈動的雙眸好奇地打量着陌生的世界。

我生性內斂，不擅用華麗的詞藻去書寫細水長流的母愛。這是我第一次扮演母親的角色，第一次承擔起孕育新生命的責任。當我滿懷憧憬地盼望着你的降生時，尚未出世的你卻被檢查出患有唐氏綜合症。那一瞬間我的世界就此崩塌，彷彿遊蕩在黑暗中忐忑的孤魂。我猶疑過、徬徨過，不知道該如何譜寫你的命運。我害怕我的自私會讓你未來的人生變得不幸，可我又怎麼忍心剝奪你的生命，雲淡風輕地抹去你曾在腹中安然生長的痕跡？看着尚在襁褓的你一天天茁壯成長，憐愛的情愫油然而生，恨不得將大千世界一切美好的事物都贈予你。

親愛的孩子，當你從牙牙學語的嬰幼兒時期成長到童年期，你會逐漸對日常生活中的具體事物產生好奇心，並嘗試用感官經驗<sup>1</sup>去探

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1 指借助感官作用，如視覺、聽覺、觸覺等獲取經驗的過程。

尋妙趣橫生的世界。或許你會對生命的起源感到困惑，驚嘆於生命體複雜曼妙的結構。我願與你共讀由沃森（James D. Watson）所著的《DNA：生命的秘密》（*DNA: The Secret of Life*），徜徉在神秘莫測的分子世界裏，揭開生命藍圖的神秘面紗。你不必擔心晦澀的科學知識會令你望而卻步，沃森用生動有趣的文筆記錄了雙螺旋結構學說由猜想到面世的過程，言簡意賅地闡明含氮鹼基互補配對的化學結構。你可以將DNA想像成兩節相互纏繞對稱的長階梯，在肉眼無法看見的細胞內部悄然無息地運作着，維繫身體機能活動，儲存大量遺傳信息（Watson 130–134）。在共同創造出DNA三維模型後，沃森和克里克並未停下尋求科學真知的腳步，試圖尋找雙螺旋結構中遺失的一塊拼圖——DNA自我複製的方式。同一時間，酶學專家科恩伯格經過反覆實驗，發現DNA酶合成機制的奧秘，進一步完善雙螺旋結構學說（Watson 138–140）。

四季更迭，代代衍化的生命形成了龐大而複雜的體系，人類窮極一生也難以讀盡厚重的生命之書。對尚處在具體運思期<sup>2</sup>的你而言，將此文當作幼年的啟蒙讀物未免過於嚴苛。但我並不是苛求你將科學理論知識熟記於心，而是希望你能明白世間萬物都是獨一無二的存在，正是生命的多樣性和獨特性創造了九州四海的生靈。這篇文章能幫助你窺探宏大科學世界的一角，知曉科學變革背後的艱辛與努力。再精密的儀器也會犯錯，一旦DNA攜帶的遺傳信息在自我複製過程中產生錯誤，便會導致個體出現不同的表現型（陳沛隆〈DNA、RNA〉）。遺傳因子的隨機組合造就了個體的差異性，但從本質上而論，每個人都是由細胞、器官、組織、系統一步步演化而成，共同享有生存的權利。這世上有很多人一出世便被遺傳病的枷鎖束縛着，我們應當擺脫

2 皮亞傑提出的認知發展理論中對童年期的描述。

偏見，平等地與他人共處。孩子，終有一天你會察覺到自己的與眾不同，我由衷地希望當這一天來臨時，你能鼓足勇氣坦然接受自己的不完美，樂觀積極地面對人生。我希望你能學會自尊自愛，愛自己身體美麗的缺陷，愛出現在你生命中的每一個人。

當你步入追求自我意識的青春期，認知方式會逐步擺脫具體事物的限制，培養抽象思考和邏輯推理的能力。在刻苦學習之餘，我希望你能抽空閱讀由龐加萊（Henri Poincaré）所著的《科學與方法》（*Science and Method*），以全新的角度定義科學、看待科學領域日新月異的發展進程。人類總是下意識地將科學與枯燥無味的理論公式網綁在一起，卻鮮少有人能洞察到科學知性之美。正如龐加萊在文中寫道：「科學家之所以投身於長期而艱巨的勞動，也許為理智美甚於為人類未來的福利。」（166）<sup>3</sup>科學家在萬千事物繁瑣的變化中一針見血地捕捉到共通點，發現自然界簡單卻具有普及性的法則。他們擁有發現美的眼睛，在廣袤的天地間尋根究底，細緻入微地觀察每一次潮漲潮落、日落月起的規律之美，追求事物背後簡單、崇高的事實。龐加萊將科學的作用類比作機器生產，二者不同之處在於機器生產勞動經濟，而科學生產思維經濟，強調人不能「為科學而科學」，誕下定向思維的產物（161）。

現今社會提倡全人發展的教育方針，旨在培養學生探索自然、尋找事物規律的能力。然而，急於求成的填鴨式教育<sup>4</sup>扭曲了科學的意義，探求真理的腳步自此駐足於片面的數理公式和實驗結論。時下的求學風氣日漸消極，學生對所授知識淺嘗輒止，囫圇吞棗般消化，甚少有人執着於探究公式的推導原理和宇宙萬物存在的意義。孩子，我不願你成為教育制度的犧牲品，我希望你能用自己的雙眼去觀察每

3 本篇所有引文由作者翻譯。

4 填鴨式教育指灌輸式教育，意思是將知識一味地灌輸給學生。

一粒沙、每一塊石子的紋理；用自己的雙腳去丈量大江南北的每一方土地。願你能保持對世間萬物的新鮮感，發現源自事物規律性、超越感官的科學知性美。我不要求你學識淵博，我只希望你能秉持求知若渴的學習態度，從一而終堅持自己的立場。你應當遵循科學「細心觀察，大膽設想，謹慎求證」的法則，在感官經驗和邏輯理性的共同作用下，全面認識事物的本質，暢遊在真理的海洋中。只要你懷抱追求科學理性美的信念，留意生活中發生的每一處微小變化，知其然且知其所以然，終能有所得益，逐步發現科學嚴謹之美、創造之美、規律之美。

白駒過隙，彼時我已年華老去，你會隨四季更迭邁向心智成熟的成年期，學有所成投身社會。當看到的世界愈寬廣，人生閱歷日漸豐富時，你會驚嘆於蔚藍星球背後千瘡百孔的模樣；無奈於人類為經濟收益而變得貪婪自私的醜惡嘴臉。若你難以在自然與人類活動之間找到平衡點，不妨閱讀卡森（Rachel Carson）所著的《寂靜的春天》（*Silent Spring*），看這位海洋生物學家筆下的文字如何書寫生命之網的歷史。當人類依靠人為力量消滅田間的害蟲雜草、大肆噴灑農藥時，短視的利益蒙蔽了他們的雙眼，對潛在的危害視而不見。據世界衛生組織估計，每年約有三百萬例農藥中毒事件（Organic Without Boundaries）。一旦殘留的化學品滲入土壤，有害物質的毒素便會隨着繁複的生物鏈層層積聚，對人體健康構成潛在威脅。在有害污染物造成的眾多傷害裏，人類並不是唯一的受害者，生態環境的平衡同樣會遭到破壞，生存在綠色地衣上的物種數量會日漸減少，生機勃勃的景象不復以往。

世間萬物有靈且美，地球用無私的愛養育了一眾生靈，但人類卻不知感恩，貪婪地索取大自然的饋贈。日復一日，富饒的土地變得貧瘠、水源不再清澈，物種在人類的捕殺下走上滅絕的不歸路。人

類無節制的索取在日積月累間破壞生態平衡，造成不可逆轉的傷害。工廠排放的廢氣污水嚴重影響了周邊地區的環境，霧濛濛的天和污濁的河水也在潛移默化地傷害着人類的健康。為滿足一己之利，在生態環境裏隨意丟棄的垃圾會潛入海底、深入地下，讓無數生靈付出生命的代價。環保一向是受人矚目的議題，不同持份者間引發的爭議與日俱增，人類試圖在生態保護與經濟效益間找尋共存共榮的途徑。我衷心希望人類能意識到環境保護的重要性和緊迫性，不要再讓賴以生存的家園受到傷害。願不遠的將來，我還能與你一齊踏足自然，大口呼吸新鮮空氣，在綠草如茵的曠野上盡情玩樂。

親愛的孩子，對於這片大千世界而言，你不過是萬千星辰中一粒微小的塵埃；但在我的眼中，你卻是獨一無二的存在。我不是一位貪得無厭的母親，我不奢求你擁有平步青雲的成功仕途，一身豐功偉業；我只卑微地祈求你能一生平安健康，成為幸福快樂的人。在你漫長的一生裏，願這三篇文章帶給你的影響能見證你的每一處進步、每一個嶄新的人生階段。我始終相信每一個生命都有存在的價值，每一個生命都不該被輕易地否定。

愛你勝過一切的母親

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## 老師短評

鈺玲藉由給自己未來的孩子推薦三篇經典文本《DNA：生命的秘密》、《科學與方法》、《寂靜的春天》，將心中對生命的反思娓娓道來。她的文字綿密溫柔，立意鏗鏘堅韌，讀來分外動人。(楊潔)

# **Solving the Unsolvable**

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## **I. Introduction**

We don't usually give much thought to our ability to interact with our immediate surroundings. Yet, these conscious interactions are perhaps more fascinating than most of us would expect. While there might seem to be nothing significant about consciousness, the fact that our wide spectrum of sensory experiences are integrated into a single coherent story is not out of sheer randomness. Philosophers and scientists have been looking into the mechanisms that have made the integration of information possible. Nonetheless, this complex problem is still largely grounded in objective reasoning and is regarded as the easy problem of consciousness. The hard problem lies in the subjective component of consciousness.

## **II. Understanding the Hard Problem**

The crux of the hard problem is to explain the subjective experience that accompanies humans interactions with the objective physical world. It is not a first-order question demanding a straightforward answer. Rather,

it is a multi-faceted mystery that is often answered with a system of thoughts like dualism.

At the heart of it, as David Chalmers pointed out, there are two questions that must be addressed (Burkeman). Firstly, why do we possess subjective experience? Secondly, how are subjective experiences generated from a number of physical processes? This essay aims not to ludicrously provide answers to these questions, but to discuss insights that might lead us ever so slightly nearer to the coveted truth.

### **III. The Why Problem**

The “why” problem is perhaps even more confusing than the “how” problem. When asked the “how” question, the obvious direction would be to look into the neural mechanisms or biological correlates of subjectivity, regardless of whether this approach could adequately solve the problem. The “why” question, however, persists even when the physical mechanisms or biological correlates of subjectivity have been revealed. It asks about what causes subjectivity to exist and the significance of its existence.

According to Chalmers, the question is difficult to answer because subjective consciousness serves no functional role in humans (Weisberg). Standard scientific methods rely on reductive explanations and functional analysis acts as a premise. Take genes as an example, they bear the function of passing hereditary information. By conducting experiments and evaluating empirical evidence, Oswald Avery was able to identify DNA as the molecule that exhibits the function of passing hereditary information, and thus DNA is found to be the physical correlate of genes (Watson



118–119). The presence of a function is what the standard scientific methods predicate.

The same does not apply to subjective consciousness. While consciousness does grant our lives meaning, it is not crucial to performing human functions or survival itself. For instance, when a person feels stressed, their cortisol level rises. In face of danger, a person feels threatened and his adrenaline level rises in preparation for the fight-or-flight response. However, it appears that these responses can be mediated without ourselves actually feeling them. We would still be able to respond equally well with increased levels of adrenaline and cortisol to address the stimuli, without ourselves actually feeling the stress or sense of threat. Chalmers asks the intriguing question, “Why aren’t we just brilliant robots?” (Burkeman) From an evolutionary point of view, any traits that does not bring or even undermine survival advantage would likely be eliminated in the course of evolution. If being able to detect stimuli, integrate information and produce responses like robots are more than sufficient for survival, why should the sensations of hotness, pain, colours and more be something that we consciously *feel*?

Below are two possible reasons that have caused the emergence of subjectivity.

Firstly, humans do not always act in accordance with the presented stimuli and our responses to the same stimuli are not always stereotyped like robots’ are. The Freudian structural theory of mind suggests the presence of a superego acting alongside our id. Our ego does not act merely based on the instinctual urges as represented by the id, it is also largely influenced and controlled by our moral agency (Kandel 179). As such,

our actions do not only serve to satisfy our functional needs but also our moral requirements and higher-order thinking. Subjective consciousness grants us much more versatility in our responses to stimuli. For example, a student might feel tired when doing a group project but he figures that it is not so unbearable that he has to give up and hold back the entire group's progress. Firemen rushing into the fire scene feel the scorching heat and threats but understand that it is their job to save the kid that is still stuck in the building. With subjective consciousness, we possess the extra ability to adjust our response according to what we feel. This also allows us to act against our survival instincts and perhaps demonstrate the "humane traits" that we do not see in pure mechanisms.

Secondly, subjectivity could have partly arisen from subconscious mental activity to serve as a protective mechanism for individuals in some cases. Kandel's experiment with facial expressions has proven that people with higher subconscious background anxiety tend to feel anxious even when fearful faces are not shown clearly and consciously seen. (Kandel 190). This shows that our subconscious mental activity does cause differences in how we perceive things when presented with the same stimuli, and subjectivity thus arises. This may be helpful when we have had unpleasant experiences before, which triggered certain subconscious mental activities (e.g. background anxiety, subconscious avoidance of certain things). These subconscious mental activities in turn infuse certain feelings into our consciousness to increase our alertness and better prepare us for initiating a response. It echoes with the Freudian belief that we often repress our feelings and emotions from our awareness and instead present them through subconscious agents (Cherry). Alternatively, our subconsciousness may also infuse positive feelings (e.g. comfortable,

pleasant aroma) into our consciousness such that we would subconsciously look for these positive attributes that aid our survival or success. In Poincaré's narrative about how he discovered mathematical theories, he believed the mathematician's sensibility of mathematical beauty paves their paths to mathematical discoveries (Poincaré 173). This again serves as an example of how unconscious feelings can lead to a difference in our conscious behaviours, thus creating individual differences in how we respond to a particular stimulus, which would sometimes subtly lead us to a more advantageous direction.

#### **IV. The How Problem**

As mentioned above, it might seem obvious that one should turn to neural biology in an attempt to explain how subjective experience arises from physical processes.

This approach is not at all groundless. Decades ago, it would have been impossible for people to imagine that the entirety of human variations can be coded into a biological molecule. It is only until the discovery of DNA's structure by James Watson and Francis Crick that the once magical hereditary process has been made clear. The fascinating hereditary process ultimately has not escaped the boundaries of physics and chemistry. In recent decades, more intangible phenomena have been successfully reduced to results of physical or chemical reactions. For instance, depression has been attributed to a decreased level of serotonin in the brain. Human's amazing record of reducing complex phenomena into culminations of simple laws naturally makes most of us believe that subjective experience is "just another problem". Feelings like sourness, pain or warmth might

eventually be explained by the operation of certain neural circuits yet to be identified.

Nonetheless, this approach has seen two major challenges.

Firstly, some believe that there is still a gap between physical laws and subjective experience. American philosopher Frank Jackson proposed the thought experiment called Mary's room (Alter). Mary is a neuroscientist who somehow has grown up in black-and-white room and has been staying in the room ever since. She studies the science of colour vision such that she has understood all about the physical phenomena that have enabled us to see various colours. Nonetheless, when Mary is released from the room and sees actual colours of red, she would still be able to learn something new—that is the *experience* of seeing the red colour. As such, Jackson concludes that physical knowledge is not knowledge of everything, and subjective experience might be one of the things that physical knowledge fails to capture. How physical phenomena like the firing of neural signals ultimately transcend into intangible subjective feelings still remains largely unknown, and thus dualism becomes a viable explanation. Nonetheless, the argument that there is a soul and body has an insurmountable gap. Just as how the connection between physical phenomena and subjective feelings remains largely unclear in reductionism, the connection between the soul and body remains largely unaddressed in dualism. Moreover, the mind-body theory is largely unfalsifiable, and little evidence has been provided even by its supporters. This makes the theory very much unfound.

Secondly, finding the neural correlates of subjective experiences does not necessarily mean we have solved the puzzle. Cognitive psychologist Donald Hoffman has it best explained. He believes that it is a correlation that we have established between brain activity and subjective experiences

tasting vanilla by testing which part of our brain is activated when subjective experience is elicited (The Institute of Art and Ideas). It is not a theory that we have established. He used the train station analogy to explain his view. Passengers assemble at a train station, and the train soon arrives. Nonetheless, we do not regard the assembly of passengers as the cause of the train's arrival even though it precedes its arrival. It is a correlation that we have established between the assembly of passengers and the train's arrival. Similarly, brain activity preceding subjective experience does not mean brain activity causes subjective experience. It is a train schedule that has coordinated the events at the train station and the hard problem of consciousness lies in finding the train schedule of subjective experience.

## **V. Another Perspective**

The complex arguments as to why and how subjective experience emerges have caused significant disputes among philosophers and scientists. On the other hand, it is also possible that the discrepancies of understanding that different parties have is just a conceptual gap.

Philosophers might tend to understand subjective experience from an introspective, personal approach, whereas scientists tend to approach the issue from third-person objective neurobiology (Weisberg). The difference in approaches leads to an inherent gap in understanding what the final cause of subjective experience. While neurobiologists might be satisfied with the discovery of a neural circuit, philosophers might believe that the explanation is not complete with respect to the train station analogy mentioned above. Even when all neurobiological mechanisms of subjective experience have

been revealed, the conceptual gap still remains. Ultimately, it is like closing the difference between water and H<sub>2</sub>O, which are essentially the same although they might be differently conceptualized. It is therefore possible that upon full discovery of relevant neurobiological mechanisms, there shall be nothing more worth questioning about consciousness.

## VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is undeniable that solving the hard problem shall involve a drastic change in our perspective, whether it is a change in scientific terms or epistemological terms. It is foreseeable, though, that the hard problem shall be resolved one day under the conjoined effort of philosophers and scientists, and that shall mark another triumph in human history.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

As the title suggested, the problems of consciousness are seemingly unsolvable. It is puzzling enough how the notion of consciousness

be conceptualized, let alone addressing the so-called hard problem of consciousness, i.e. how subjectivity arises. Barry (LAU Ka To) shows that it is an intriguing issue by merely asking the right questions. He presented the *why problem* and the *how problem*. By following how the questions are addressed one appreciates the difficulties of the problems. In the end Barry provided yet an alternative, philosophical approach to view the conundrum. It certainly deserves some credit for a proper presentation of the problems. (LAI Chi Wai Kevin)



# The Next Spring

**TSE Howard Hau Fung**  
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“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust” (Episcopal Church 485), people whispered their prayers in memory of their loved ones—finally, as one reaches the end of life, one is addressed namelessly but of an integral part of nature. In death, all life as we know it must meet the same fate.

One renowned American marine biologist, Rachel Louise Carson, before her untimely demise, reminded the world the importance of man’s attitude towards nature and that we wield a fateful power to alter and destroy nature while stating man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself. Her testimonial is evident as human waged war against nature starting from our rapid advancement.

In 19th century, Industrial Revolution marked the surge of improvement in efficiency in human activities. As manufacturing of transportation means and machines enabled exports and imports, saved labors and lowered costs, it implied greater quality of living—at a cost of over deforestation, high usage of fossil fuels and greenhouse gases emissions in large concentration. (Fagbohunka 434, 437). When Radioactive elements were first discovered by Marie Curie in later in the same century, the world celebrated it, rewarding her a Nobel prize. In search of cleaner energy, people made

use of her discovery to contribute to nuclear energy, supplying 10% of world's electricity nowadays (“Nuclear Power”). Only when incidents like Chernobyl disaster in 1986 which occurred due to the hands of untrained personnel, had warned the world of its irreversible effects—contaminating the environment along the food chain, affecting food supply of UK (Food Standards Agency) and Norwegian diets (Strand *et al.* 385–392), some 30 years after the explosion and still counting.

In modern sciences, we are susceptible to Newton way of thinking—readily separating ourselves from the boundaries of the world of physics, towards the world of abstract mathematics (Cohen 59). As we encounter simple facts, we either distinguish them as either a real simplicity or a complicated whole of mangled elements. (Poincaré 161) This habit of extraction of facts from reality draws us away from thinking about its natural occurrences or how its unnatural proportion will bring about consequences if mishandled. It is important to note that many scientists explore knowledge because of altruism and the beauty of science, and by no means of harm (164)—In fact, they are capable of assessing and calculating how their findings can be appropriately used in the future and keep its extent of harm at bay.

At core, it is unfair to blame humans for advancing technologically and practically as it brought about betterment of living, a survivability advantage, progression that appeals to true universality, which coexists with cultures around the globe (Sivin 225). It is lethal however, are humans' lack of provision and haphazard accounts, their haste of improvement without balance and their biased selection of facts, to shun truth from public. Carson herself fell victim (Stoll) of a messenger whose mission was nothing but to inform and forebode the hazards and dangers of our

ways and to suggest alternatives in exercising our knowledge in a more cautious and natural manner.

At this point we may wonder, is nature really that passive and helpless? What humans may not know was their power and capability create nothing but a false sense of controlling the great nature, a deception from reality that they, themselves, is hopelessly dependent on nature.

“Man is a part of nature” as Carson reiterated her “web of life” illustration of human-nature relationship—the intimacy and essentiality between us and the green and the green with animals are not a matter of choice but an existing codependency and correlations. (*Silent Spring* 141).

Physically, we need natural resources to survive, water to keep us hydrated, and food to keep us nourished. Ancient civilizations are seen developing around waterbodies for agriculture (Macklin and Lewin 228, 242) and how Natural Valleys and deserts shield one from invasion (Hart 206). Mentally, we may consider ourselves of sheer material or of both spiritual and material (dualism) (Kandel 182). Nonetheless, nature is found to appeal to both—providing pleasurable stimulation, a tranquility to mind, a source of psychological existence and identity and even a spiritual well-being. (Moghadam 92)

With all things considered, we are by far passively enjoying these necessities as a basis of life, unknowingly, taking them for granted. Consequently, as the notorious cycle continues, humans live for their own good, stripping bares the forests, dyeing the river black, hunting down every peculiar creature they see, blithely unaware that they are tearing down their home, poisoning their mind, gunning down their every livable chance.

The irony is that many historical warfare is often a competition for resources. As Earth’s resources are limited, war seemed like the only option

to guarantee security and safety. Before long, we have already dwindled our own resources, for at the end, the death of future generation marks the defeat of humanity but never the end of nature. To war against nature is to fight a lost battle where the consequences are by default mankind to bear, as written by Carson in *Sea around Us*,

It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life. But the sea, though changed in a sinister way, will continue to exist; the threat is rather to life itself. (xiii)

How then, should humans position themselves in nature? What role should they play?

In Chinese sciences, man is never separated from Nature. Eastern thought system sought to systematize the universe of things and events into a structural pattern which conditioned all mutual influences of its different parts. (Needham 214) This goes hand in hand with Carson's idea of life, where our action is not a one-way mechanical causation, detachable formula or a single target, it should be considered as system in its entirety. To simply put, humans should put themselves in shoes of both user and manager. The former represents their inevitable desire and drive to consume natural resources, the latter holds their needs accountable, to maintain a balance between nature and humans.

Hence, humans are also responsible for one another, keeping each other in check. The underlying moral responsibility is the respect for not only one's own position in the universe but also the ones who come before

and after. It is not rare to encounter active conservations and plantation propaganda in our daily lives and as we consciously understand, they are plausible and beneficial means. Yet, it must be known that the real war is fought daily, a war against oneself, a conflict between superego and id, a challenge pointed to our forgetfulness and momentary ease.

As of November 4, 2019, the United States President Donald Trump signed the nation out of the Paris Agreement on climate change, stating such accord would impose immense pressure on the American economy. “Denial is not a policy” as a protestor written this withdrawal as a one-sided decision from the Trump administration. (Friedman). Indeed, one could only fantasize to live long enough to testify whether humans have any substantial impact on the climate. However, as leaders, they must consider their decision as an indicator to sectors, a nation-wide representation of “user-manager” which will in time manifest, be determined and distributed top-down. In today’s worldview towards nature, truth is increasingly hard to discern as apparently, the authority and the people stand on two contrastive sides on the same issue—humans’ natural responsibility has seemingly reduced to simple matter of belief, a hearsay fantasy, which brings us to a dilemma—This constant “war” within oneself to maintain responsibility, amongst communities to reach consensus and across nations to ensure stability, what does it bring about to the world?

On the sandy shores of Versova in Mumbai, Afraz Shah, an Indian lawyer, took the community’s environment into his own hands, kick-starting the world’s largest beach clean-up in 2015. (Martinko) After some 119 weeks of continuous effort, the once trash-filled Versova beach has

become home to indigenous sea turtles in 2019. (Mazaris *et al.* 1) Despite his consistent work, Shah's operation is still subjected to criticism—disregarding it as “half-solved”. (Chaturvedi)

At the eye of the climate change controversy, Greta Thunberg made her remark in United Nation Climate Action Summit in 2019:

How dare you pretend that this can be solved with just “business as usual” and some technical solutions? With today's emissions levels, that remaining CO2 budget will be entirely gone within less than 8 1/2 years.

There will not be any solutions or plans presented in line with these figures here today, because these numbers are too uncomfortable. And you are still not mature enough to tell it like it is. (“Transcript: Greta Thunberg's Speech”)

There is a reason why Greta's speech resonated with many in the world because they too, feel desperate in face of a generational ordeal. Instead of a politically diplomatic speech, a frank, direct criticism is a better fit for the weight of the world's problem. There is no doubt that the world has grown aware of its issues. As the raft of slogans and protests permeated throughout the international scene, we grow familiar to critiques to the point where we take no underdeveloped ideas. Half-way resolutions are deemed ineffective.

Yet, what use is there for a voice that does not construct? Often times, solutions come from some wishful thinking accompanied with smaller steps. One example is the Seabin Project—an innovative technology that is described as “floating rubbish bin” which collects floating debris, macro and micro plastics or fibres. To this day, the project has captured over 1000 tonnes of waste. (“The Seabin V5”) One of the co-founders of the

Seabin Project, Pete Ceglinski, pointed out two of the greatest challenges are the “throw away” culture and “someone else will deal with it” mentality. Despite the project being technological, the radical solution is rather a cultural one—more education is needed for greater emphasis on plastics. (Creed, “An Interview with”) The aspiration for a cleaner ocean requires more than a project—a societal commitment to user-manager way of life.

Afterall, creativity and its actualization seem to be the only peace maker to the situation. Although reality is perpetuating towards dystopian, it is important to uphold an optimistic outlook where we believe problem can be fixed, actions still matter and worthwhile. Lest we become dismissive to any fruitful combinations that may be numerous or useless at first, yet ultimately, contributes to a harmonious picture in the future. (Poincaré 173).

In the world’s battlefield, each of us gets to answer for generations to come, with what attitude should we adopt towards nature? Which war are we fighting? What dictates our choices? What is worth it and what isn’t?

Yet, nature answers for no one as it only for that the being which it tends. (Darwin 75)

Silent fell as the prayers end. The voiceless blessing carries the weightless ashes amidst the soothing embrace of Mother Nature. It falls gently, paving a new pathway. Even in death, nature is at work, dawning for the new spring of life.

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### **Teacher’s comment:**

Environmental issues, such as pollution, resources depletion and global warming, perpetually determine the future of humanity. This paper is a reflection on the quote of a renowned environmentalist Rachel Louise Carson, “Man’s attitude toward nature is today critically important . . . . But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself.” Howard gives explanations on why human war with nature unintendedly. These human interventions might startlingly lead to other environmental issues that subsequently end our civilisations. Thus, Howard argues that human should commit to a user-manager way of life to ease the possible tensions and conflicts. (YIP Lo Ming Amber)



# 得獎學生所回應之論文題目

## Term Paper Questions Attempted by Awardees

### 與人文對話 *In Dialogue with Humanity*

#### BAE Seung Mann

“I have seen the power of the market. But when it becomes the only language, when it becomes the only way of thinking about the right thing to do, it leaves us with a very impoverished sense of how to live together. It’s good for creating wealth and creating things and building things, but it’s not a guide. It’s not a useful vocabulary for living together.” (Tippett) You find Giridharadas’ idea inspiring for bringing up the question of “how to live together”, but incomplete and too general. Compose an essay, or write an open letter to Giridharadas by engaging with ideas of two thinkers/ texts from the “In Dialogue with Humanity” syllabus, to propose what might be an informed vision of “how to live together” in the world\* today.

- \* You may also choose specific places or communities or any other way you’d like to interpret the idea in order to delineate the scope of inquiry of your choice.

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## 陳信源

### 希望與美好人生

魯迅曾經在《希望》這篇散文中，不無吊詭地說：「絕望之為虛妄，正與希望相同。」有人認為，這是個「絕望的年代」，一切的社會不公義、生態災難以至個人困苦都看似無法改變。但人生不可以沒有希望，很多時候，希望是我們思考與建構美好人生的基石。接着的問題是：在這個「絕望的年代」，希望與美好人生還可以甚麼為基礎？試以課程的兩至三篇文本為基礎，撰寫一篇論文或故事，比較不同作者/思想家的觀點，並解釋何者對於我們在這個「絕望的年代」仍然抱有希望以及追求美好人生，能夠提供最具洞見與說服力之立足點。

## 鄭嘉汶

你是某電視台清談節目《經典有偈傾》的監製兼主持人，節目最新一集的主題旨在探討「自由與束縛，何者讓我們人生美好（Good Life）？」。你需要在《與人文對話》課程的文本中邀請其中兩至三位作者參與節目，並跟他們展開討論。而作為主持人的你亦應就着嘉賓的言論發表自己的想法。請按照以上的情境，以課程內至少兩至三篇文本把節目中所談論的內容寫成對話記錄（或以其他形式作文字記錄），並為該集起一個題目。

## FENG Yuxiao

As a visionary young thinker, you are apprehensive about a major global problem\* that is troubling humanity now and you see how increasingly serious it will become in the next ten years. Despite the complexity of the

problem, you are serious about taking responsibility by better understanding it and taking action to become part of its solution. To do so well, you are inviting two thinkers you've encountered in the course "In Dialogue with Humanity" to have a dialogue with you. You would like to check your views on what to do next with them so that your judgment will be more informed.

- \* This "global problem" could relate to nature, society, or any aspect of life; it does have to relate to others sharing the world, not just a personal issue.

## **HO Yin Lam**

### ***Consolation for Suffering***

Suffering is a major humanity issue. We may encounter small sorrow, and sometimes great despair. It is believed that humanity classics have the power and are practical in guiding us how to live. Some of the classics of this course try to explain the origin of suffering, suggest ways to avoid suffering, and even teach us how to benefit from suffering. Choose at least TWO THINKERS OR TEXTS from the syllabus and write an essay, to examine their views critically, and bring out your view on suffering. Give your essay or story a title.

## **JEON Min-gyu**

### ***The Way from Fear***

Fear is often seen as an undesirable emotion, and one who is in fear is probably not free. It is, however, our constant companion in life. It is believed that both Chinese and Western humanities classics have the power and are practical in guiding us how to live. Some of the classics of this course try to

explain the origin of fear, suggest ways to overcome fear, and even teach us how to benefit from fear.

Choose TWO THINKERS OR TEXTS from the syllabus and write an expository essay on fear.

### 林巧瑜

赫胥黎 (Aldous Huxley) 筆下創造了人類的烏托邦：再無生老病死的痛苦，社會亦沒有紛擾和爭執，只有無盡的官能享樂和快樂藥「索麻」。一切都是完美的。然而，烏托邦和惡托邦是一體兩面的東西，要維繫這個烏托邦，就必須要狠下手，把人類文明的一些東西，排除於完美城市之外。假如你是美麗新世界的君主，經過你和主角的討論之後，你決定為烏托邦重新建立價值，使這個烏托邦真正符合人類居住，你會如何安排？請指出並解釋你認為最重要和最有逼切性要做的兩個安排。

### 劉紀婧、TSE Wai Yi

#### 誰能明白我

細閱下面 Tina 的故事：

黃文軒，〈【開學恐懼1】入大學追GPA夜夜失眠、終患思覺失調：像沒人明白我〉，《香港01》，2018年9月5日，



%E5%83%8F%E6%B2%92%E4%BA%BA%E6%98%8E%E7%99%BD%E6%88%91。 (瀏覽日期：2018年9月5日)

Tina穿着那件白色印有“Hier, je n’ai pas pu dormir.”—Insomniqaue的T-shirt，心裏茫然，漫無目的地在校園走着，似乎每個經過的人目光都飄向她……不知不覺，她走到校園一角坐下，那裏沒甚麼人，靜靜一個，終於沒人盯着自己了。忽然有兩個人走到她跟前，跟她說起話來。

試構思一個 Tina和那兩個陌生人的對話，並附上題目。那兩人代表課程中兩位思想家或兩個文本。

### 梁瑋珊

Formulate your own thesis or topic of inquiry, engaging with any TWO texts from the syllabus.

### LEUNG Yin

#### *Does Life have Meaning and Purpose?*

Perhaps, most of us would agree that human life should have purpose and meaning. Purpose and meaning are regarded as the foundations of good life. However, some may argue purposeless and meaningless of life are not necessarily something to be feared and avoided, even you don’t have any vision of the purpose and meaning of being human, you may still have a good life. Do you agree with this? Please write a comment (either in form of essay or story) on this by engaging with ideas of two thinkers/ texts from the “In Dialogue with Humanity” syllabus, to explicate your view of good life. Give your essay or story a title.

## 李尚隆

### 自由

自由有很多面向，孔子講隨心所欲不逾矩，莊子講知遊心於無窮，一行禪師講互即互入以破執念的桎梏，盧梭說人生而自由等等。自2019年下半年至今，我們似乎經歷了很多限制、紛爭和痛苦，請運用2-3篇文本討論一下何為自由，你理想中的自由有哪些層面？人為甚麼要自由地活着？或者哪一/幾種自由觀曾給你帶來啟發或釋懷甚至是耿耿於懷？上述問題只是一些思路，不必須回答，文章可以不限於上述思路。請自擬題目，確定文章討論主旨圍繞文本進行討論。

## LI Xinting

Consider this excerpt from an interview with philosopher Jonathan Wolff (JW): “The first thing philosophers have to do is learn to listen rather than talk. Many of us have grown up thinking we have this special capacity for thought, and some philosophers even think that they are personally the smartest person they’ve ever met and they have nothing to learn from anyone else. But the thing I’ve learned is that our talents are much more limited. It may be that things that go down well in philosophical circles don’t always go down so well outside. And people outside philosophy, if they’ve been working in a policy area, will have very nuanced views, very often philosophically sophisticated views. They might not be fantastic in expressing them, but they very often do have things to teach us even about philosophy. So that’s the first thing, be open.” (Feb 24, 2020, Justice Everywhere) Compose an essay in which 2 thinkers in the In Dialogue with Humanity syllabus come into conversation about Wolff’s ideas here, reflecting on how a philosopher positions himself/ herself among others, with the purpose of investigating how relevant “doing philosophy” is in the contemporary world. (There is no

need to involve the entire interview of Wolff. The above excerpt should be treated as a prompt for your essay.)

### **LIEW Yi Jie, WONG Yuen Lung**

Formulate your own thesis or topic of inquiry, engaging with any TWO texts from the syllabus.

### **吳海天**

自選題目。

### **NG Wing Chi**

#### ***Purpose and Meaning of Human Being***

All the classics we have read carry visions of the purpose and meaning of being human. For instance, Zhuangzi believes it is possible to find a “true self” that is free, Muslims participate in Islamic communities to seek a personal relation with Allah, the *Heart Sutra* teaches how being “mindful” in the daily tasks and activities could bring changes to oneself and the world, Rousseau offers a blueprint for a political system for the common good. Pick two or three of the classics covered in the course, and comment on the views expressed about the purpose of and meaning of being human. Give your paper or story a title.

### **蘇泳茵**

#### **亞當斯密、馬克思和莊子在不丹**

香港首富李佳成打算在不丹王國開立兩家「百好超級市場」，並分別邀得亞當·斯密、馬克思和莊子任分店經理。五年後，你代表《香梨日報》前往當地採訪，試以專題報導的形式寫下你的所見所

聞，如三家超級市場的經營方式、工作環境、員工福利、銷售成績等等，及三位經理對快樂人生和理想社會的看法。報導必須自擬標題。

- \* 補充資料：不丹王國位處喜馬拉雅山東面山麓，經濟相對落後，但其國王於1972年提出「國民快樂總值」（Gross National Happiness）比「國民生產總值」（Gross National Product）更能反映一國的生活質素。不丹在2006年發表的「全球快樂排行榜」中名列第八，為亞洲第一快樂之國。

### **TSE Yuen Wing**

#### ***Mutual Aid for Good Life?***

“It seems, therefore, hopeless to look for mutual-aid institutions and practices in modern society. What could remain of them? And yet, as soon as we try to ascertain how the millions of human beings live, and begin to study their everyday relations, we are struck with the immense part which the mutual-aid and mutual-support principles play even now-a-days in human life.” (Kropotkin 188–189) In *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, from a scientific perspective, the Russian naturalist and anarchist philosopher Pëtr Kropotkin forcefully argues that mutual aid is crucial for the prosperity and survival of human and animal communities. Do you think mutual-aid is the foundation of good life and society? Write an essay (you may also compose it in form of story) for or against such view, by engaging with ideas of two thinkers/ texts from the “In Dialogue with Humanity” syllabus. Give your essay or story a title.

### **Works Cited**

Kropotkin, Pëtr. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. Dover Publications, Inc.,

2006.

**WAN Tsz Yan**

***Rebirth of the City***

Imagine that you are given a new version of Plato's Ring of Gyges which grants you the magic power to do anything at will for 100 days. During this period, you gain the strength to eliminate any obstacles to the realization of a utopia. At the same time, you need to formulate a new constitution of the city for the days to come, taking heed of the tremendous harm caused by the brutal force of an absolute government.

Write a diary that illustrates your thoughts on how important it is to construct political legitimacy which will treat every citizen free and equal. This diary should involve at least three thinkers from our course syllabus. Give your diary a title.

**万宇軒**

**論幸福**

亞里斯多德談幸福美滿的人生（Eudaimonia）：人因為有理性，所以能過幸福美滿的人生。亞里斯多德認為幸福美滿的人生需要自我實踐，需要朋友。課程中其他文本可能就「幸福美滿」有所啟發。孔子認為「仁」是人際關係的核心，聖經認為「幸福美滿」需要神性的愛，心經「究竟涅槃」也是一種幸福形式。莊子與盧梭就「自由」角度討論「個人」與「政治」上的幸福美滿。亞當斯密與馬克思就「經濟模式」來談幸福美滿的人生。

請選擇其中兩個文本，自定一個題目，來分析、討論何為幸福美滿的人生？你怎麼看幸福美滿？文章形式可以是議論文，劇本，電視訪談等多種形式。

姚金佑

The relationship between self-interest and collective interest is of paramount significance in discerning the ideal social life. How do the great social thinkers react on this issue? Try to consult the works of Huang Zongxi, J.J. Rousseau, Adam Smith and Karl Marx (choose any three) and assess the ways they tackle this issue. Whose view do you prefer the most? Why?

\* \* \* \* \*

### 與自然對話 *In Dialogue with Nature*

**BANG Tae Won**

An alien visits the Earth and is curious about the scientific advancement of the humankind. “He” raised a question, “In your opinion, what are the crucial factors that lead to the current scientific advancement?” Support your arguments by referring to at least THREE texts from at least TWO parts of this course.

蔡靜怡

2018年，很多名人離世，如果可以，你最想與其中的哪一位對話或寫信？試想像一段你們之間以「生命」為主題的對話/書信。

**CHAN Lok Hang Brandon, YU Ziling**

*Science and Beauty*

Science always impresses us with its objectivity, while beauty often comes from our subjective feelings. Yet, in his *Science and Method*, Poincaré declared that science is beautiful. Based on what you have learned from the course and what you know about science, express your opinions on this

statement in a paper.

### **HEIBA Serageldin Amre Abdelaziz**

Present your views about the current Covid-19 crisis. According to you, what are its main causes and what are possible solutions? In your arguments, take into account the role of beliefs about nature, the role of scientific knowledge, and the role of human values.

[Notice: the focus must be human beings, nature, and knowledge of nature. Partisan political debate or blaming specific persons, groups, countries, is off-topic]

### **何國璋**

「人生而自由，卻無處不在枷鎖之中。」

從自然科學的角度看，你認同盧梭在《社會契約論》的這句名言嗎？

### **黃杰靈**

你認為知識的追求、尋找自我和自然之間三者的關係是甚麼？

### **LAU Ka To**

(On subjectivity) “What is it like to be a bat?”—Thomas Nagel

People have long been curious about how subjectivity arises from a physical brain, made purely of material substances. On the one hand, it makes total sense that there exists a physical world out there that gives rise to our subjective experiences. On the other hand, it’s difficult to perceive how our private, immeasurable subjective experiences can emerge from some physical processes. Furthermore, if we believe in the existence of

a non-physical, non-extended spiritual mind (or soul), how is it possible for the mind to interact with the physical body? Write an essay that presents your own reflections on the questions above.

### **LAU Wing Yan**

#### ***Science and the New Religion***

It seems that science gradually takes over the religion and becomes dominant in our modern society. Hence, some may argue that science has already become the new religion. What do you think about this statement? Based on the texts, please write a paper to express your opinions.

### **LEE Sheung Chit**

Maria Mitchell was the first American woman to work as a professional astronomer. She once said, “We especially need imagination in science. It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but it is somewhat beauty and poetry.” With reference to at least THREE texts from two parts of the course, comment on this quote.

### **馬貞毅**

甚麼是真實？

### **SHU Ying Chi Camille**

(On free will) In light of Benjamin Libet’s set of seminal experiments in 1983, it is a controversial issue whether we have free will or not. Write an essay to discuss your view on the issue. Note that the notion of moral responsibility is tightly linked to the notion of free will.



**TSANG Wai Hung**

You are welcome to design your own topic based on what you have learnt in this course. Please specify clearly the proposition and define the key terms in your essay. You are advised to discuss with the course instructor in advance.

**TSE Howard Hau Fung**

Rachel Louise Carson was an American marine biologist, author, and conservationist. She once said, “Man’s attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself.” With reference to at least THREE texts from two parts of the course, comment on this quote.

**TSOI Pui Lam**

(On life) There are various life forms on our planet, from simple, unicellular bacteria to complicated, multicellular organisms like humans. Apparently they are all composed of atoms whose behaviors are governed by physical laws. Do you think there are life phenomena that escape the bounds of physical laws? How would you define life?

**WU Jiayi**

As a visionary young thinker, you are apprehensive about a major global problem troubling the relation between humanity and nature now, and you foresee how serious it will become in the next ten years. Despite the complexity of the problem, you are keen to take up responsibility so that you could become part of its solution. The first step is for you to understand what’s

at stake in the humanity and nature relation. Engage with ideas from TWO texts/ thinkers in the course “In Dialogue with Nature” that demonstrates your thoughts on the problem. These texts/ thinkers don’t have to be able to provide direct answers but their ideas inspire you as to how to approach, analyze, or research more on the problem.

### 徐翔

想像一下你有一個孩子（兒子或女兒），你會讓他/她在人生的不同階段讀《與自然對話》裏的哪三篇文章？為甚麼你要選這三篇文章？背後有哪些故事或打動你的段落？試將你的想法整理成文。

### YEUNG Pui Yi

Is it easier or more difficult to answer the question “what are we” with respect to the development of science and technology? Support your arguments by referring to at least THREE texts of this course.

### 楊鈺玲

#### 給孩子的「與自然對話」

想像一下你有一個孩子（兒子或女兒），你會讓他/她在人生的不同階段讀《與自然對話》裏的哪三篇文章？為甚麼你要選這三篇文章？背後有哪些故事或打動你的段落？試將你的想法整理成文。

### YUEN Wai Yan

On the value of scientific knowledge.

# 通識教育基礎課程簡介

## 背景

香港中文大學自創校以來，即着重通識教育。配合2012年的新學制，中大在原有的大學通識四範圍（即「中華文化傳承」、「自然、科學與科技」、「社會與文化」、「自我與人文」）及書院通識的基礎上，加設通識教育基礎課程。課程以閱讀和討論經典為主，分為「與自然對話」和「與人文對話」兩個必修科；前者探索科學與知識世界，後者反省何謂理想社會與美好人生。

為了做好準備，中自大2006年開始籌劃這個課程，並由2009年起試行，至2012年起為所有新入學學生修讀。課程推出以來，學生反應甚佳，每年期終論文之優秀，最能反映課程成果之豐碩。

## 目標與願景

通識基礎課程作為中大通識的核心部分，與上述其他部分相輔相成，旨在為學生建立共同的智性及文化基礎，提高學生對人類處境的敏感度，促進師生的智性對話。課程採取小組研討形式，着重閱讀和寫作，致力培養自主學習所需的知識、態度和技巧，讓同學能夠：

- 對塑造當今世界的主要思潮有所掌握；
- 以知性的眼光觀察切身的人生和社會問題；
- 有胸襟和能力去審視嶄新或不同的思想；
- 具備深度 讀的能力；
- 以書面寫作及口頭溝通清楚闡述個人見解。

## 「與人文對話」簡介

本科與同學探討「人文」的意義，從個人和社會兩個層面思索人的本質與核心價值問題，確認人是追求個人幸福的獨立個體，也是謀

求群體福祉的社會一員。同學將與文學家、哲學家、社會改革家的作品直接對話，一同反思三個基本問題：美好的人生應包含甚麼內容？理想的社會應具備甚麼條件？我們如何可達致美好人生與理想社會？

本科從不同的人文學科挑選影響深遠的中外經典著作，輯錄篇章，供同學閱讀、討論及撰文分析。同學需審視各篇章所提出的觀點和理念，思量它們是否適用於當代世界；並就上述問題，尋找自己的答案。

### 「與自然對話」簡介

自遠古開始，人類就對宇宙充滿好奇。古希臘哲人開展了以理性探索宇宙的傳統，為現代物理科學奠定了基礎。後來科學延伸至對生命的探索，科學家開始了解生命的定律，甚至控制生命。與此同時，科學探索所獲得的知識，迫使我們重新審視對人類自己的理解。中國哲人也發展了一套以陰陽和五行為基礎的觀念，卻與西方宇宙觀截然不同。中西文化的衝擊，勢將會影響未來科學的探索。

本科讓同學認識並比較中西科學發展，了解人類如何探索、認識，以至改變宇宙和生命，並反思人在大自然中的地位。本科選輯的篇章涉及哲學、科學史、物理、生物等不同範疇。

### 授課形式

「與人文對話」和「與自然對話」兩科各帶三個學分，皆是每星期導修兩小時，輔以講課一小時。導修每組以二十五人為上限，確保學生有充分機會參與課堂討論，並在論文書寫方面得到適當的指導。

老師致力幫助同學進入經典的世界，提升讀原典、論原典的信心和能力，講課時會介紹該星期所看文本的背景和主題，學生於課後自行閱讀文本，再參與導修課，按照老師提供的重點問題進行討論。同學須發揮批判思維，除堂上討論外，並提交短寫和論文，表達個人見解，深化討論。

## About the General Education Foundation Programme

### Background

General education, GE, has played an important role in CUHK's undergraduate curriculum since the founding of the University. With the 2012 new curriculum, general education at CUHK has been further enhanced with the introduction of the General Education Foundation Programme. The common core programme adds new dimensions to the existing programmes, namely the University GE that consists of four areas: Chinese Cultural Heritage, Nature, Science and Technology, Society and Culture, Self and Humanity, and College GE.

The GEF programme consists of two required courses, “In Dialogue with Humanity” and “In Dialogue with Nature”, in which students engage in dialogues through the study of classics, to reflect on ideal society and the good life, and explore the world of science and knowledge.

CUHK started planning GEF in 2006 and piloted it from 2009. Since 2012, all new entrants have studied under this new curriculum. The programme has been very well received by the students since its introduction. The fruitful outcomes of the programme are best epitomized by the high quality of students' term essays.

### “In Dialogue with Humanity”

The course invites students to investigate the problem of “humanity”—i.e., what it means to be human—at two levels: human as an individual and human as a social being. Students will be engaged in a direct dialogue with three central questions: What is it that makes a “good” life for me? What is it that makes a “good” society for everyone? How do I make possible such

a “good” life and “good” society? Students are expected to read, discuss, and write about a wide range of texts extracted from influential classics in the humanities East and West. They will be encouraged to discover their own answers to the three questions by considering views and arguments expressed in the texts, and by exploring how far and in what ways such views and arguments may hold true for the contemporary world.

### **“In Dialogue with Nature”**

Humans have long been curious about the universe. In the West, ancient Greek philosophers took the lead in exploring the universe with reason and hence laid the foundation of modern physics. Subsequently, science included also the study of the world of life. Scientists discovered the laws governing life and even ways of controlling life, and such discoveries have forced humankind to re-assess its understanding of human understanding. In China, with the concepts of yin, yang and the five elements, Chinese philosophers developed a view of the universe completely different from that of the West. The encounter between Western and Chinese cultures will certainly contribute to future scientific explorations.

This course invites students to study and compare the development of science in Western and Chinese cultures, to explore how the humankind investigated, understood and changed the universe and life, and to reflect on the humans’ place in Nature. Reading materials cover topics including philosophy, history of science, physics, and biology.

### **Pedagogy**

Each 3-unit course is delivered in two hours of seminar discussion supplemented by one hour of lecture each week. The courses are delivered

in small classes, with a maximum student number of 25 per class to facilitate discussion and intensive guidance on academic writing.

Teachers strive to help students enter the world of classics and develop confidence and competence in approaching primary texts. In the lecture, teachers provide a general introduction to the background and main themes of the week's assigned reading. Students then read the texts on their own and come back to participate in the seminar based on the focus questions provided. Emphasis will be placed on students' capacity to respond critically to the selected texts, in the form of class discussions, short write-ups and term papers.

通識教育優秀論文獎 2018-2019及2019-2020  
得獎學生論文

General Education Best Essay Award 2018-2019 & 2019-2020  
Selected Student Essays

LIEW Yi Jie: The Good Life and Its Correlation with Alcohol Inebriation—A Discussion between Confucius, J.S. Mill and Marx | 蘇泳茵：快樂製造商——不丹商業夢 | FENG Yuxiao: Facing the Dawn of the Era of Artificial Intelligence: In Dialogue with Marx and Rousseau | WONG Yuen Lung: Is the Course “In Dialogue with Humanity” Self-contradictory? | 謝宛穎：鼓油辯論 | 万宇軒：論幸福——《尼各馬可倫理學》與《莊子》的幸福觀比較 | 李尚隆：去留肝膽兩崑崙 | HO Yin Lam: A Summer of Freedom's Night Dream: A Reflection on Suffering in Hong Kong's 2019 Pro-democracy Movement | BAE Seung Mann: An Open Letter to Anand Giridharadas: A World of Equal Cooperation and Appreciation of Collective Effort | JEON Min-gyu: The Only Thing We Have to Fear is Fear Itself | 吳海天：莊子幸福嗎？從亞里斯多德看莊子 | 吳穎芝：與哲人同行：終極審判 | 林巧瑜：為了我理想中的烏托邦 | 陳信源：綻放在絕望裏的希望之花 | LI Xinting: The Wandering Idiot to be Named “Philosopher”—A Reflection on How Philosophy Interacts with Reality | 姚金佑：通往幸福的兩座橋：公利、私利的關係與未來 | LEUNG Yin: Paradox of a Purposeful Life: Oedipus' Tragedy from the Buddhist Perspective | 梁璋珊：淺談《心經》與《存在主義是一種人道主義》對行善的認知 | WAN Tsz Yan: Hope and Hemlock | 劉紀婧：「逍遙與空」——一種人生态度的結合 | 鄭嘉汶：自由與束縛，何者讓我們人生美好？ | TSE Wai Yi: Ladder towards Freedom | YEUNG Pui Yi: Decipher the Secret, or Get Devoured by the Sphinx: Tackling the Question with the Aid of Science and Technology in the Provision of Tools and Answers | HEIBA Serageldin Amre Abdelaziz: Man, Nature, and COVID-19: The Origins and Resolutions of the Pandemic | YUEN Wai Yan: On the Value of Scientific Knowledge and Its Significance | 徐翔：@爸爸愛喜禾 | 蔡靜怡：生命：有限與無窮——致霍金先生的一封信 | YU Ziling: Interpreting the Beauty of Science through J. S. Bach's Music | 黃杰靈：論求知、自我與自然 | TSOI Pui Lam: Complexity and the Physical Aspect of Life | BANG Tae Won: Two Wings of Scientific Development: Written Language and Numeral System | WU Jiayi: Human Getting Disconnected with Nature—A Distortion in Aesthetic Judgment | LEE Sheung Chit: Artistic Side of Science | 馬貞毅：論真實 | TSANG Wai Hung: Humanity as the Limits of Modern Science | LAU Wing Yan: Two Olive Branches: Science and Religion | 何國璋：自由與科學的「枷鎖」——相刃抑或相成？ | SHU Ying Chi Camille: The Bearer of Morality | CHAN Lok Hang Brandon: Truth, Beauty and the Pursuit of Science | 楊鈺玲：讓孩子「與自然對話」，發掘生命之美 | LAU Ka To: Solving the Unsolvable | TSE Howard Hau Fung: The Next Spring

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