



ISF 弘立

# BAUHINIA 紫荊花

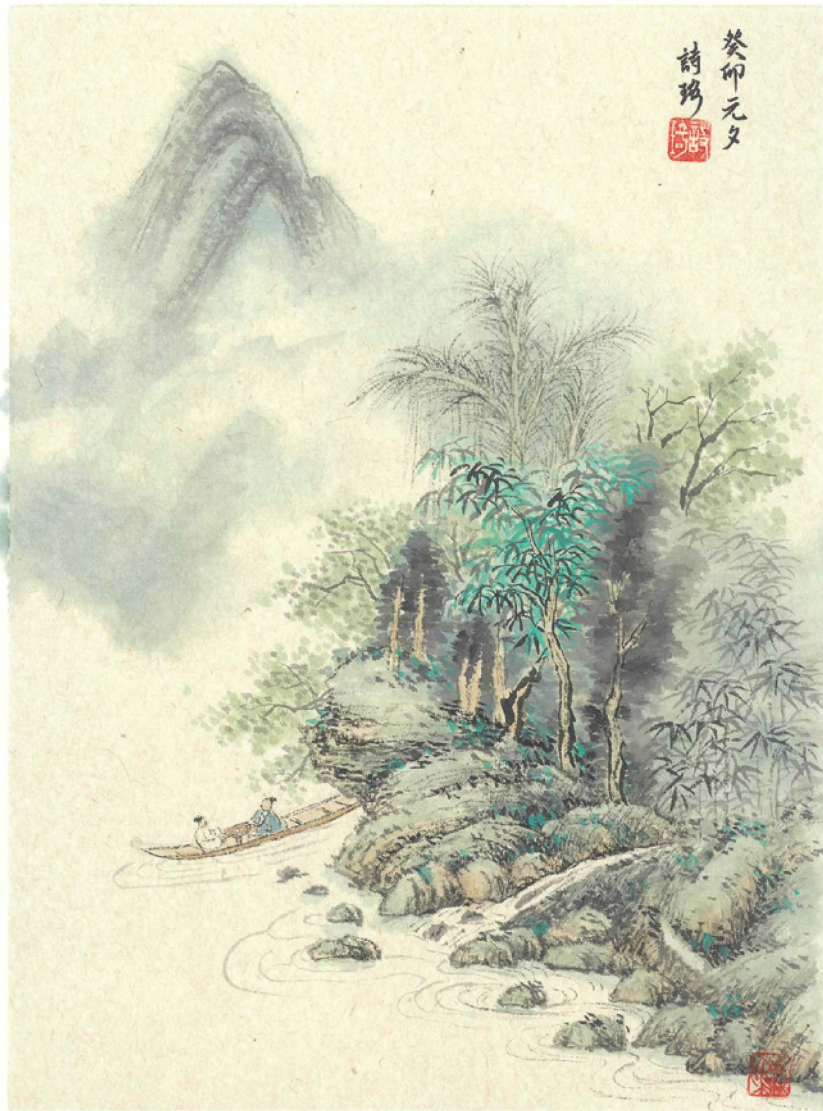


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Editors: *Ms. C. Brillaux, Mr. B. Coronado-Guerra, Ms. Y. De Soto Gallegos, Ms. E. G. Dixon, Ms. B. Genzlinger, Dr. S. D. J. Griffin, Ms. S. Q. Huang, Ms. D. Ibarra, Ms. H. D. Johnson, Mr. K. Kampen, Mr. C. P. O'Neill, Dr. R. Oser, Dr. M. Pritchard, Ms. S. H. Ratzlaff, Dr. L. Worth, Mr. F. Wynne, Dr. Y. L. Zhang, Dr. J. Zhao*

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## Table of Contents

How does Aeschylus reconcile mercy and retributive justice in the <i>Oresteia</i> ?	1
<i>Kleio Kwok 郭玥怡</i>	
A comparison between Aristotle and Confucius:	8
Is the goodness of a “good citizen” the same as that of a “good man”?	
<i>Chelsea Lam 林晉而</i>	
最毒世人心：論《連城訣》中的「毒物」意象	15
<i>Lok Man Li 李樂文</i>	
To what extent are the methods of achieving happiness in the philosophies of Epicurus and Laozi similar?	20
<i>Michelle Tse 謝芷羚</i>	
Different attitudes to merchant status in early China	27
<i>Angela Wang 王一洋</i>	
Can there be knowledge that is independent of culture?	33
<i>Marsha C.Y. Lau 劉卓怡</i>	
歷史學家和人文科學家如何通過講故事賦予知識意義？	36
<i>Atheng Ng 吳欣蓓</i>	
To what extent are the cosmological ideas of Pliny the Elder and Laozi on the creation of the world similar?	40
<i>Selina W.Y. Hui 許暉欣</i>	
The impact of the introduction of chilies on Chinese cuisine, medicine, and cultural expression	47
<i>Kiara Qizhen Ba 巴麒麟</i>	
What role does divine authority play in Confucius’ and Plato’s views of an ideal society?	53
<i>Carissa Wong 王樂怡</i>	
影片「霸王別姬」中的鏡頭語言：菊仙的舊時代女性形象	59
<i>Tina Shen 沈鑫銘</i>	
To what extent is the conception of fate in the philosophies of Zhuangzi and Plato similar?	67
<i>Kathie Lau 劉嘉琳</i>	
Human Nature and ‘Fa 法’:	72
<i>Cheuk Yan Athena Wong 黃卓欣</i>	
論雲間三子及柳如是詞中的「楊花」意象	79
<i>Pui Lam 顏沛琳</i>	
How does Aristotle’s and Confucius’s conceptualization of the self differ, and what does that reveal of the self?	83
<i>Ingrid Yeung 楊子柔</i>	
Jing Ke: a hero or a villain? A comparison of ancient and contemporary portrayals	88
<i>Echo Sheng 盛瑞伊</i>	
從《良友》畫報廣告觀察民國流行文化及其演變	94
<i>David Cen 岑惟恩</i>	
A conflation of voices and viewpoints: an exploration into the function of Ekphrasis in Catullus’ Poem 64	105
<i>Tatiana Zhang 張天豫</i>	
論林夕歌詞中古為今用的意象組合	111
<i>Athena Ng 吳欣蓓</i>	



## Editor's note

With awe for the perseverance of our students and the commitment of our editorial board, we humbly present the eighth volume of *Bauhinia*. Legend has it that all *Bauhinia blakeana* trees commonly found in Hong Kong today, originated from the cuttings of one rare tree preserved in the Hong Kong Botanic Gardens (Dunn, 1908). If so, opine Lau *et al.* (2005), clones of this hybrid species should be susceptible to environmental stressors that might cause its extinction, but thus far the tree has thrived. Similarly, despite the environmental stress of the recent pandemic, our students continue to thrive in the pursuit of knowledge, perhaps a merit of our namesake.

The seeds of this journal were first sowed around 10 years ago with the establishment of *Shuyuan* whose programs germinate high-level learning beyond the mainstream curriculum of the school. The seedlings encouraged the pursuit of thoughtful scholarship in all areas of the school, and so this publication highlights the results of research-based tasks completed in any subject. Finally, our students continue to inspire us, and this year we branched out to produce our first faculty journal, *Aquilaria*.

Though *Bauhinia* trees mostly reach a maximum height of eight meters, we know our students will continue these academic pursuits past this eighth year; we've already received our first submission for *Bauhinia* IX, even before the call for submissions!

Expanding to the genus, *Bauhinia* boasts around 300 species, and so too, we invite you to explore the diversity of articles on offer, a culmination of our students' efforts. Whether comparing the cosmological ideas of Pliny the Elder and Laozi, learning about the introduction of chilies to Chinese cuisine and medicine, or examining the impact of urbanization on bat echoes recorded in Hong Kong, there's something for every reader to enjoy. Please feel free to engage with us via [sy\\_team@isf.edu.hk](mailto:sy_team@isf.edu.hk).

Rachel Oser

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## 編者的話

我們懷著對學生的毅力和編輯委員會的付出的敬畏之心，在此謙卑地推出《洋紫荊》第八卷。傳說中，如今香港常見的洋紫荊樹(*Bauhinia blakeana*)都起源於香港植物園中保存的一棵稀有樹木的剪枝（鄧恩，1908年）。如果是這樣的話，正如劉等人所言，這種雜交物種的克隆體應該對環境壓力十分敏感，這可能會導致其滅絕，但迄今為止，這棵樹一直在茁壯成長。同樣，在近幾年的疫情環境壓力下，我們的學生在追求知識的道路上仍然茁壯成長，這也許是我們名字的優點。

本刊的種子最早在10年前隨著書院的成立而播下，書院的項目孕育了高水平的學術研究，超越了學校的主流課程。這些嫩芽激勵著學校師生們在各個領域，不斷深入地學術追求。因此，本刊重點展示了在學科中完成的基於研究任務的成果。最後，學生們繼續激勵著我們，今年我們擴展出第一本教職員工刊物《菀香》。

儘管洋紫荊樹的高度通常最多達到8米，但我們知道我們的學生會在這第八年之後繼續進行這些學術追求；在征集稿件之前，我們已經收到了第九屆洋紫荊的第一份投稿！

擴展到屬於屬的範疇，洋紫荊約有300個物種，同樣，我們邀請您閱讀本刊，探索文章的豐富性與研究的多樣性，這是我們學生努力的結晶。無論是比較普林尼和老子的宇宙觀念，了解辣椒在中國飲食和醫學中的引入，還是研究城市化對香港蝙蝠回聲的影響，這裡總有一篇文章讓每位讀者喜歡。歡迎通過 [sy\\_team@isf.edu.hk](mailto:sy_team@isf.edu.hk) 與我們互動。

歐睿秋



**Artist:** Ava Osann

**Title:** *Gills*, 2023

**Medium:** Oil on canvas,  
28 x 32 cm

**Description:** This piece explored the connection between mushrooms and neural pathways. I was inspired by the gills of mushrooms and how they resemble neurons. This motif is repeated in other pieces such as *Mytilus Edulis* connecting to how we think subjectively. The bright greens contrast sharply with the black background to create an artificial representation of natural structure connecting to *Sensory Homunculus* in representing the way that reality and the natural world are perceived subjectively.

## A Note about Style

Articles included in this publication are written for many different purposes. Any differences in style are due to the need to adhere to the format required for that purpose. Generally, the Modern Language Association (MLA) citation and format style (8th Ed.) is used for articles written in English as part of the Oxford University Shuyuan Classics Summer Program or the NRI Scholar's Retreat (Needham Research Institute, at Cambridge University). However, articles written in the STEM fields were often adapted from posters students prepared for the American Microbiology Society conference (ASM Microbe) and they adhere to the American Psychological Association (APA) citation and format style (7th Ed.). Articles written in Chinese use footnotes following the style outlined in the Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy. However, articles that were originally submitted as partial fulfillment of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes, such as the Diploma Programme's (DP) Extended Essay (EE) or Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, have followed the specific requirements as outlined by the student's supervisor, and they are published in this journal as they were originally submitted. A footnote under each article indicates the program from which each piece of work was culled.

## 關於文體的說明

本出版物中的文章是為許多不同目的而寫的。任何風格上的差異都是由於需要遵守該目的所需的格式。一般來說，牛津大學書院經典暑期班或劍橋大學NRI研究所(Needham Research Institute)暑期班的英文文章，採用現代語言協會(MLA)的引文和格式(第8版)，而STEM文章則採用美國心理學會(APA)的引文和格式(第7版)。用中文撰寫的文章採用中研院《中國文哲研究集刊》的腳注樣式。但是，如果是作為國際文憑課程(IB)的部分內容而提交的文章，如中學課程(MYP)的個人項目或文憑課程(DP)的擴展論文，則按照學生導師提出的具體要求，按原樣在本刊發表。每篇文章下的腳注都注明了文章入選前所屬的項目。

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# How does Aeschylus reconcile mercy and retributive justice in the *Oresteia*?

Kleio Kwok 郭玥怡

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## Introduction

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (c. 458 B.C.) is the only extant trilogy of Greek tragedies, consisting of the *Agamemnon*, the *Choephoroi*, and the *Eumenides*. The plays depict the cycle of intrafamilial and intergenerational violence that befalls the House of Atreus caused by the family curse. In the *Agamemnon*, the eponymous Argive king is murdered by his wife Clytemnestra upon his return from Troy. In the *Choephoroi*, Apollo commands Orestes to avenge his father by killing his mother; after committing matricide he is relentlessly pursued by the Furies, the chthonic deities of vengeance. The *Eumenides* opens with the first democratic trial in Athens, which results in the acquittal of Orestes. The aggrieved Furies turn their wrath against the city, but Athena successfully pacifies them and gives them a new title: the Eumenides, or the "Kindly Ones". The trilogy ends with a union between Zeus and the Fates/Furies as the Athenians celebrate the dawn of a new society.

Greek tragedy is an ancient form of theatre that flourished during the fifth century BCE, corresponding to the golden age of Athens. It was performed at the Great Dionysia, one of the largest religious festivals held in honour of the god of theatre, Dionysus, and attracted a large audience of Athenians and foreigners every year. The question of why tragedy rose in this time and place is widely debated. One hypothesis is that tragedy arises when there is a "gap in the heart of social existence", and is the response to the tensions between archaic tradition and the modern legal system; this is what influential French scholars Vernant and Vidal-Naquet call the "tragic moment". Thus Greek tragedy is more than just an aesthetic, emotional and religious experience: it is also an important form of political discourse, and challenges citizens to reflect on what it means to be a member of the *polis* (Goldhill 19).

Considering the purpose and spirit of tragedy, it comes as no surprise that the *Oresteia* placed first during the Great Dionysia. Goldhill contends that Aeschylus plots a "charter myth for the city", crafting "a tale of and for the *polis*": for this reason, the *Eumenides* is the only surviving tragedy to be set in the Areopagus, the most important court in Athens and the bastion of traditional authority (11). Under the veneer of the distant past, Aeschylus interrogates controversial political issues of his time, raising the important question: what is justice? The Greek word for this is Δίκη, but its usage varies throughout the trilogy. At times Δίκη refers to the anthropomorphic goddess, the daughter of Zeus and the titan Themis; at other times Δίκη stands in for the will of Zeus, an abstract moral principle that governs the universe. Above all, I was intrigued by the two opposing forces of Justice presented in the play, mercy and retributive justice (embodied by the Olympians and the Furies respectively), and Aeschylus' attempt to reconcile the two.

I begin by exploring the appeal of *lex talionis* (lit. "law of retaliation"), demonstrating that Aeschylus recognised the power of vengeance as a driving force for justice. However, in the next section, I show how Aeschylus lucidly points out the flaws of this system by creating pathos for the characters' plights and illustrating the complex reality of motivations behind crimes. This leads to a consideration of the ending of the *Eumenides* and how we are to interpret it. Ultimately I contend that Aeschylus advocates for a reconciliation between *lex talionis* and mercy. Although he takes the right of personal vengeance away from individuals, he also acknowledges the need to preserve the violence that is characteristic of *lex talionis* and for the state instead to wield it with the overarching aim of mercy, which results in a more nuanced system of justice.

## 1. The tradition of *Lex Talionis*

*Lex talionis* refers to the archaic principle of “an eye for an eye” that governs retributive justice. Aeschylus establishes this as the divinely mandated jurisprudence at the outset of the play, and it corresponds to the doctrines Zeus set forth for man: in the *Agamemnon*, the chorus declare μίμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς / παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα: θέσμιον γάρ (“But it abides, while Zeus abides upon his throne, / that he who does shall suffer; for it is the law.”, 1563-4); the chorus repeat this in the *Choephoroi*: δράσαντι παθεῖν, / τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ (“Let the doer suffer”; /so goes a saying three times ancient.”, 313-4). This reveals that *lex talionis* was seen as a viable justification for murder, which is evidenced by how fifth-century Athenian law legitimised retaliatory killings (Manderson).

The Furies enforce *lex talionis*. They uphold the sanctity of familial bonds, and their ancient privileges grant them the right to punish all those who ἄν γένοιθ’ ὀμμαίος αὐθέντης φόνος (“shed one’s own blood with one’s own hand”, *Eum.* 212). They predate even Zeus, proclaiming: ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμὲν Νυκτὸς αἰανῆ τέκνα (“we are the eternal children of Night”, *Eum.* 416). They assume different forms throughout the trilogy: at times they themselves punish individuals; other times they enact justice through mortal agents.

First and foremost, *lex talionis* is used as a tool for social justice. Avenging wronged obligations or violated rights seems to be the driving force behind the murders in the play, and all the perpetrators cite *lex talionis* as the justification for their revenge.

Clytemnestra’s desire for vengeance against Agamemnon motivates her to enact what she believes to be *lex talionis* justice. She kills him as punishment for the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigeneia, stating: ἄξια δράσας ἄξια πάσχων (“unworthy was what he did to her, worthy was what he suffered!”, *Agam.* 1527). Clytemnestra’s righteous anger and her desire for vengeance recall Calchas’ prophecy after Iphigeneia’s death, where he warns of οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων μῆνις τεκνόποινος (“a keeper of the house guileful, unforgetting, Wrath child-avenging.”, *Agam.* 155). μῆνις (“Wrath”) carries the weight of divine anger (Raeburn and Thomas), and by characterising her as such, Aeschylus elevates Clytemnestra to the role of a Fury, proud to admit her deed. Hence she declares: οὐτῶ δ’ ἐπραξα, καὶ τὰδ’ οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι (“And I so acted—and I will not deny it—”, *Agam.* 1380). Her defiant confession, emphasising the individual agent (ἐπραξα “I acted”, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι “I will not deny”) reveals how she relishes in the autonomy and violence

of her act. She goes so far as to say: μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην (“I swear by the justice accomplished for my child”, *Agam.* 1432), invoking the goddess of Justice herself to reveal the self-avowed legitimacy of her actions.

Like her mother, Electra’s thirst for retribution is an important driving force of her pursuit for revenge. In killing Agamemnon, Clytemnestra irreparably destroys the bond between father and daughter. Electra’s hatred of her mother stems from her devotion to her father: as she pours the libations over her father’s tomb, she says, λέγω φανῆναί σου, πάτερ, τιμᾶρον, / καὶ τοὺς κτανόντας ἀντικαθθανεῖν δίκη (“I pray that one may appear to avenge you, father / and that the killers may in justice pay with life for life”, *Cho.* 143-4). ἀντικαθθανεῖν is passive, connoting “to be killed in return” rather than “kill”; coupled with the adverbial δίκη (“in justice”), Electra asserts her belief in the righteousness of *lex talionis* revenge. She also desires vengeance because of her familial obligation to her brother, who has been exiled by their mother, and includes him in her prayer when she cries: φίλον τ’ Ὀρέστην: πῶς ἀνάξομεν δόμοις (“kindle in our house the dear light that is Orestes!”, *Cho.* 130). This is why, when Orestes shows signs of indecision and laments πᾶ τις τράποιτ’ ἄν, ὃ Ζεῦ; (“Which way is one to turn, Zeus?”) (*Cho.* 409), Electra responds with such vehemence: τί δ’ ἄν φάντες τύχοιμεν ἢ τὰ περ / πάθομεν ἄγεα πρὸς γε τῶν τεκομένων (“What must we say to find the target? Must we recount / the agonies we have suffered, yes, from our begetters?”, *Cho.* 418-9). The rhetorical questions strengthen her incredulity at his hesitation. By reminding him of their suffering, she encourages him to retaliate against their mother and enact retributive justice.

From a psychological standpoint, the appeal of retributive justice is the inevitability of punishment: those who commit wrongdoing must suffer for it, which instinctually strikes us as more equitable. Another appeal of retribution, as Page and Denniston argue, is that we seek assurance in the fact that there is some sense of karmic justice and evil will befall evildoers, even if it is through the punishment of their descendants (12).

## 2. Discrediting *Lex Talionis*

Having outlined the position of *lex talionis* as the orthodox jurisprudence, I will now demonstrate how Aeschylus challenges this principle by revealing its failure to account for the complex reality of character motivations, in terms of both wrongdoers and those attempting to seek justice.

## 2.1 The difficulty of distinguishing between justifiable and personal revenge

A closer examination of the motivations of wrongdoers reveals the difficulty of distinguishing between justifiable retaliation, and personal revenge. This discredits *lex talionis* as a consistent, reliable and fair method of ensuring that individuals are punished for the right reasons. Familial obligations aside, Aeschylus insinuates that Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon is motivated by far less righteous reasons. First is her love affair with Aegisthus. She says: ἕως ἄν αἴθῃ πῦρ ἐφ' ἐστίας ἐμῆς / Αἰγισθος, ὡς τὸ πρόσθεν εἶ φρονῶν ἐμοί ("so long as the fire upon my hearth is kindled by / Aegisthus, as in time past loyal to me", *Agam.* 1435-6). Second is her sexual jealousy of Cassandra, Agamemnon's concubine. She scorns Cassandra's promiscuity, denouncing her as ναυτῶν δὲ σελεύμων / ἰσοτριβῆς ("the public harlot of the sailors' benches!", *Agam.* 1443-4). Unlike Clytemnestra's previous claims about taking revenge for the death of Iphigeneia, inflicting violence on others due to adultery and jealousy is far less morally justified, and vengeance becomes a pretext for blatant wrongdoing.

Another flaw of the system of *lex talionis* (as established in the trilogy) is that individuals become the arbiters of justice, and take punitive measures as they see fit. This leads to a divergence in perceived standards of right and wrong: whilst Clytemnestra deems her murder of Agamemnon to be legitimate, describing herself as δικαίας τέκτονος ("a just workman", *Agam.* 1406), the chorus (*Agam.* 1407-12) and the Olympians (*Eum.* 213-8) condemn her for committing a heinous crime and violating her marital obligations. Therefore Aeschylus highlights the need for an alternative system of justice by demonstrating that individuals lack the objectivity and impartiality to wield retributive justice in a just fashion.

## 2.2 Creating pathos for characters with competing obligations

Aeschylus also reveals the inadequacy of the overly simplistic and results-focused approach of *lex talionis* by dramatising his characters' struggles to choose between competing justified obligations. He also rouses the audience's sympathy for their plight by demonstrating that, regardless of what choice they make, there will be disastrous consequences.

Artemis demands the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter if he wants to gain the favourable winds needed for the Greek fleet to sail Troy. Agamemnon describes both actions — killing his daughter or abandoning the expedition — as being ἄβραεῖα, a "grievous doom" (*Agam.* 206-7): either he must violate his familial obligations, or flout his political duties as the commander of the Greek fleet. He laments: τί τῶνδ' ἄνευ κακῶν; ("which of these courses is free from evil?", *Agam.* 211). The rhetorical question reveals his anguish and helplessness because he knows that both options involve wrongdoing of some kind and will lead to disastrous consequences. It is Agamemnon's awareness of his tragic double-bind, but also his inability to change his predicament (i.e. with an option free from suffering), that rouses our sympathy for him. Aeschylus also creates pathos for Agamemnon's choice through the chorus: although they clearly condemn the murder of Iphigeneia, denouncing it as ἄναγνον ἀνίερον ("impure, unholy", *Agam.* 220), they also present him in a sympathetic light by emphasizing his limited agency. Hence they point to divine forces as the true drivers of his actions, stating: ἀνάγκας ἔδω λέπαδνον ("he put on the yoke-strap of compulsion", *Agam.* 218), indicating that his hand was forced by ἀνάγκας, the goddess of inevitability. Thus Aeschylus reveals the unfairness of *lex talionis* by presenting Agamemnon's moral dilemma from his perspective, but also by indicating the impossibility of choosing a "good option", and that Agamemnon is doomed regardless of what he chooses.

The moral ambiguity of Agamemnon's dilemma makes his punishment for his choice seem even harsher. Aeschylus highlights the tragic irony of his death: his helplessness and fear as he dies forms a stark contrast with his triumphant return earlier in the play, and rouses our sympathy. The sense of *pathos* for Agamemnon's death is heightened through the refrain of the chorus: ἰὼ ἰὼ βασιλεῦ βασιλεῦ, / πῶς σε δακρύσω; ("O my king, my king, / how shall I weep for you?", *Agam.* 1489-90). Their laments emphasise the cruelty of his punishment, further presenting a case against *lex talionis* because the principle of "the doer suffers" focuses purely on the punitive aspect of individual suffering. Aeschylus gives us no indication that Agamemnon understands why he is murdered: offstage, we hear him cry out twice as Clytemnestra stabs him in the bath (*Agam.* 1343, 1345), but he does not have time to learn the lesson that comes through suffering. This presents another limitation of *lex talionis*, and highlights the need for a more reformative and compassionate form of Justice.



Like his father, Orestes faces competing obligations that pit his public duties against his personal responsibilities. Under the orders of Apollo, he must fulfil his social and political obligations by restoring order to the house and reclaiming his rightful throne, or suffer a horrific death (*Cho.* 270-82). Unlike Agamemnon, whose social and personal obligations are very distinct, Orestes grapples with conflicting familial obligations, because he must kill his mother to avenge his father. This decision torments Orestes and he wavers just as he is about to kill her, turning to his companion Pylades: Πυλάδῃ τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἰδεσθῶ κτανεῖν; (“Pylades, what am I to do? Shall I respect my mother, and not kill her?”, *Cho.* 899). His resolve only returns when Pylades reminds him of πιστὰ δ' εὐορκώματα (“the covenant you pledged on oath”, *Cho.* 901). Orestes’ hesitation is highly sympathetic because of the difficulty of his decision, but also because Apollo commanded him to commit matricide, and the decision was largely beyond his control. Hence he states that κεί μὴ πέποιθα, τοῦργον ἔστ' ἐργαστέον (“Even if I lack belief, the deed must be done.”, *Cho.* 298). Aeschylus further creates *pathos* for Orestes because he is innocent, and his current predicament is punishment for the crimes of his parents. By providing a fuller picture of the reasons that led Orestes to kill his mother, Aeschylus guides us towards a deeper psychological understanding of Orestes, instead of judging him based on his actions alone (as the Furies do). Thus a key limitation of *lex talionis* is the inflexibility of its punishment: because it applies a uniform judgement to similar crimes, it does not account for any mitigating circumstances specific to different individual cases. The flaws of *lex talionis* reveal the need for a different approach to justice, one that does take these factors into account.

By creating *pathos* for the plights of his characters, Aeschylus reveals the inadequacies of *lex talionis* in allocating proportionate punishments to individuals and producing fair judgements, thereby revealing the need for an alternative system of justice. Thus he prepares us for the great clash between the two conceptions of justice in the *Eumenides*, but their eventual reconciliation as well.

### 3. Reconciling *Lex Talionis* and mercy

Having established the limitations of *lex talionis*, as seen in the ambiguous fate of Orestes, we must now look to the end of the play to establish whether there is a more coherent alternative of embedding the ancient concept of retributive justice into a system that is more impartial and just.

### 3.1 A shift towards mercy

In an evenly divided jury, Aeschylus advocates for the balance to be swayed in the direction of mercy, and presents it as an improvement from *lex talionis*. However, he acknowledges that violence (a key method of retributive justice) is essential for the state to function. Ultimately, he presents a more sophisticated conception of Justice that foregrounds mercy, but retains and implements key aspects of *lex talionis* in an effective and controlled way.

In the *Eumenides*, the trial of Orestes sets the stage for the clash between Athena and the Furies, who represent mercy and *lex talionis* respectively. The Furies decry Orestes because ἀλλ' ὄρκον οὐ δέξαιτ' ἄν, οὐ δοῦναι θέλοι (“he will not take an oath, he will not give one!”), *Eum.* 429). However, Athena criticises their trickery: ὄρκοις τὰ μὴ δίκαια μὴ νικᾶν (“you must not try to win by oaths an unjust victory”, *Eum.* 432). This is because Orestes cannot swear that he is innocent because he admits to killing his mother, which the Furies would have taken as an indication of their victory (Lloyd-Jones). Hence she says: κλύειν δίκαιος μᾶλλον ἢ πράξαι θέλεις (“You wish to be thought to act justly rather than to do so”, *Eum.* 430) and calls their commitment to justice into question, insinuating that they are driven instead by their bloodlust. By contrast, the Olympians appear to be much more compassionate. Apollo defends Orestes and argues for mercy, stating: οὔκουν δίκαιον τὸν σέβοντ' εὐεργετεῖν, / ἄλλως τε πάντως χῶτε δεόμενος τύχοι (“Then is it not just to do a kindness to him who treats one with respect, / especially in his hour of need?”, *Eum.* 725-6). This is why, when faced with an evenly divided trial, Athena chooses mercy (*Eum.* 753-3). Thus, Aeschylus favours mercy because it is more compassionate, and criticises *lex talionis* for being more rigidly punitive.

Aeschylus also advocates for a system based on mercy because it is more reformatory, and results in greater societal good. The acquittal of Orestes puts an end to the cycle of violence and suffering perpetuated by *lex talionis* which, as demonstrated in earlier sections, is the cause for much of the characters’ torment. Athena’s act of mercy saves him from a gruesome death by the Furies, and he is the only Atreidae who survives the curse. Orestes expresses his reverence and gratitude to her: “O Pallas, you who have preserved my house, / I was deprived of my native land, and it is you / who have brought me home!” (Eum. 744-76). By reinstating the rightful king to his throne, merciful justice also gives rise to greater stability and order. The transformation from *lex talionis* to mercy, however, is

most clearly illustrated through the Furies. In the past, the Furies devoted themselves to this principle, especially in regards to interfamilial crimes: δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν / πληγὴν τινέτω (“for murderous stroke let murderous stroke atone!”, *Cho.* 312-3). Now, with mercy at the helm, they are persuaded by Athena to εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσαν, εὖ τιμωμένην / χάρας μετασχεῖν τῆσδε θεοφιλεστάτης (“to do good and receive good, and in goodly / honour to have a portion in this land most dear to the gods”, *Eum.* 868-9); in this way she renames them as the Eumenides, or the “Kindly Ones”. Society is freed from the vicious cycle of wrongdoing, and embarks on a new positive cycle where the polis flourishes.

### 3.2 Understanding the importance of the furies and lex talionis in the state

Nevertheless, despite advocating for a shift towards mercy, Aeschylus recognises the usefulness of and need for violence in the state.

The anger of the Furies because their ancient privileges have been curtailed is highly sympathetic. They exclaim: ἰὼ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοὺς νόμους / καθιπάσασθε κακὰ χερῶν εἴλεσθέ μου (“Ah, you younger gods, the ancient laws / you have ridden down, and snatched them from my grasp!”, *Eum.* 779-80). Aeschylus creates *pathos* for the Furies because, as Hugh Lloyd-Jones states, the Olympians have “infringed upon their time-honoured prerogative”. Hence they lament: ἐγὼ δ’ ἄτιμος ἅ τάλαινα βαρύκοτος (“I am bereft of honour, unhappy one!”, *Eum.* 810). Their displacement by the Olympians symbolises the superseding of primordial instinct by reason. This tension between old and new particularly resonated with Aeschylus’ Athenian audience because contemporary Athens experienced a rapid period of growth in the past century, and struggled to reconcile the tensions and ambiguities between tradition and its new civic ideology (Goldhill 18). This is part of what Fagel deems the “rite of passage from savagery to civilisation” and indicates that the primordial chaos of the Furies cannot easily be suppressed and discarded.

Aeschylus also demonstrates that the cause that the Furies uphold, protecting blood relations, is very important to the functioning of any society. In the *Oresteia*, family bonds should be respected and upheld, and any violation of this is deserving of punishment. We condemn the unjust sacrifice of Iphigeneia alongside the chorus (*Agam.* 218-27), and recoil in horror with Cassandra when she describes her visions of the gruesome Thyestean feast, the παῖδες θανόντες

ὡσπερὶ πρὸς τῶν φίλων, / χεῖρας κρεῶν πλήθοντες οἰκειὰς βορᾶς (“Children slain, as it were, by the hands of their kindred, / their hands full of the meat of their own flesh”, *Agam.* 1219-20). This is also why Orestes, despite proclaiming his hatred of Clytemnestra (*Cho.* 543-50), is momentarily swayed when she mentions how she implores him to spare her because she is his mother, and hesitates at the critical moment just as he is about to kill her (*Cho.* 896-899).

Aeschylus also presents violence as necessary because of the role it plays in suffering and learning. The first of Zeus’ key doctrines is the “the doer suffers”, but there is another law that features prominently in the trilogy: παθει μαθος (“learning through suffering”, *Agam.* 178), which indicates that suffering is necessary to achieve a greater collective understanding. This suffering takes the form of the violence inflicted on individuals by the Furies, for example their persecution of Orestes. Hence Orestes says: ἀλγῶ μὲν ἔργα καὶ πάθος γένοσθε τε πᾶν, / ἄζηλα νίκης τῆσδ’ ἔχων μιάσματα (“I grieve for what was done and what was suffered and for all our race, bearing as I do the unenviable pollution of this victory”, *Cho.* 1016-7). The expression used here is a kind of bitter paradox because the essence of victory was that it was enviable; however, the particle μὲν indicates that although Orestes laments his fate, he would not have acted any differently (Lloyd-Jones). Orestes’ trial catalyses the union between Zeus and the Fates (*Eum.* 1045-6), and ends the curse of the House of Atreus. Thus violence, despite causing great human suffering, can be reformative and healing as well.

### 3.3 Violence ruled by mercy

At the end of the trial, Athena enshrines the role of the Furies and the violence of *lex talionis*, but on one important condition: ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν (“Be ruled by me, and bear it not with grievous lamentation!”, *Eum.* 794). Thus, while Aeschylus does advocate for incorporating aspects of the ancient tradition of *lex talionis* into the new legal superstructure, he emphasises the importance of doing so in moderation.

The new judicial system marks a transition from personal vendetta to institutionalised violence. By turning over the power of violence to the state, coupled with the establishment of law courts and fair trials, Athena addresses a key problem of *lex talionis*: the impartiality of the individual arbiter of justice. She assures the Furies that they will still be able to exercise violence: θυραῖος ἔστω πόλεμος, οὐ μόνος παρών, / ἐν ᾧ τις ἔσται δεινὸς εὐκλείας ἔρωσ (“Let there be foreign

war, which will come easily enough, / in it shall there be a mighty passion for renown”, *Eum.* 864-5), evidently encouraging the use of violence towards foreign enemies, but also for Athenian citizens to harness violence and win glory on the battlefield. However, she also emphasises: ἐνοικίου δ’ ὄρνιθος οὐ λέγω μάχην (“I do not approve of battle with the bird within the nest”, *Eum.* 866). Through her repudiation of violence against fellow citizens and her celebration of violence against outsiders, Athena forges a united identity for the Athenians, fostering a sense of community that strengthens the *polis*.

For these reasons, Athena enshrines the Eumenides at the heart of the *polis*. She rejoices: ὡς μή τιν’ οἶκον εὐθνεῖν ἄνευ σέθεν (“Honor such that no house can prosper without you”, *Eum.* 895), further claiming, πάντα γὰρ αὐται τὰ κατ’ ἀνθρώπους / ἔλαχον διέπειν (“All the affairs of men / it is their province to manage”, *Eum.* 930-1). Aeschylus does not challenge their ancient rights to violence; by contrast, he is more concerned with who the Furies direct this violence towards, and whether its usage aligns with the will of Zeus. Thus the Eumenides can be a force for much good, but only if they are controlled by appropriate democratic legal institutions, and operate under the rule of mercy.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Aeschylus presents a strong case for mercy by exposing the flaws of retributive justice, primarily its disregard of complex human motivations, and demonstrates the need for an alternative jurisprudence that is rooted in compassion. However, he advocates less for the supplanting of one principle of justice by the other; instead, he strives to achieve a synthesis between retributive justice and mercy. This results in a more sophisticated system of justice that still retains aspects of *lex talionis* violence, but with mercy at the fore.

Goldhill interprets the ending of the *Oresteia* as pessimistic, arguing: “the picture of individual humans’ lives, mired in ignorance, caught in familial narratives, and punished by a silent, unremitting and inexplicable doom, remains constant” (60). It is true that Aeschylus does not solve the problem of human suffering, but this is not his intention: suffering is an inevitable and invaluable process because of the wisdom we gain from it. However, this reading of the play ignores the significant change in our way of being that has taken place on an individual, societal and cosmic level: the psychological growth of Orestes mirrors the political growth of the Athenian *polis*, but also the

metaphysical development implied by the renaming of the Furies. The chaotic and primordial violence of the Furies is now tempered with reason and the rule of law, and is a marked improvement from the days of *lex talionis*.

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# A comparison between Aristotle and Confucius:

## Is the goodness of a “good citizen” the same as that of a “good man”?

Chelsea Lam 林晉而

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### Introduction

In this essay, the difference between a “good man” and a “good citizen” will be examined. Many philosophers have debated about what the notion of being good entails. To narrow down the topic of interest, I will be focusing on whether or not the inherent values of “goodness” in man<sup>1</sup> and citizen differ from each other in Aristotle and Confucius’ works.

Aristotle (387 – 322 BCE) was born in Stagira, Greece (Amadio and Kenny). At 17, he moved to Athens, where he remained for 20 years. A possible reason for his unique views on citizenship is his family’s Macedonian heritage, which had left him unable to find footing in Athens (History.com). Confucius was born during the Spring and Autumn period in China. He is the founder of Confucianism. While Aristotle could not find his home in Athens, Confucius found himself disregarded by the Duke of Lu kingdom, where he was a guard, and resigned, choosing instead to travel around the different kingdoms that Ancient China was made up of to preach his teachings (Li). Despite the similarities in background, however, it is worth noting that they hold contrasting views on the question of whether the goodness of a good man and good citizen are the same. Aristotle argues that they are not the same, whereas Confucius disagrees. This disagreement is significant as it reveals not only key points about the work of the two philosophers themselves but also the contrasting ideologies of the societies that they lived in.

### 1. What Is a good citizen?

A good citizen can be defined, through the lens of Aristotle, as one who places the needs of the state<sup>2</sup> where he lives above oneself, and lives to serve the state. Through the lens of Confucius, a good citizen is one who views the state<sup>3</sup> as a wider family, not necessarily living to serve it, but rather, being willing to do so should the need arise.

#### 1.1. Aristotle

Aristotle outlines that citizenship depends on multiple factors, but most importantly, the right to participate in judicial functions, and the ability to run for office:

People do not all agree that the same person is a citizen [...] for example those who are citizens by adoption; and citizenship is not constituted by domicile in a certain place (for resident aliens and slaves share the domicile of citizens) [...] A citizen pure and simple is defined by nothing else so much as by the right to participate in judicial functions and in office.

(Arist., *Pol.* 3.1275a [Rackam Trans.])

In the extract above, Aristotle points out that, according to common practice of the time and one which is still common today, being domiciled in a place did not necessarily constitute citizenship of that specific place, and he raises the examples of slaves.

Aristotle argues that each citizen has a different purpose and role in the city, and therefore their targets for virtue and virtuous living differ from one another. Because of this, the standards for virtue across an

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<sup>1</sup> In this case, “man” refers to mankind as a whole, as *ἄνθρωπος*, “man” in Ancient Greek, was used to refer to both male and female.

<sup>2</sup> In this essay I will also refer to the “state”, in other words the wider community around the individual and household, as the “city”, as rendered in some translations. Ancient Greece was not a country in itself but rather a collection of city-states that spoke in a shared language, often engaging in disputes with one another.

<sup>3</sup> China during the Spring and Autumn period was, similarly to Ancient Greece, made of a collection of city-states sharing a language.

entire city can differ, and there is no standard for virtue that is universal:

A city is constituted of dissimilar people, just as an animal is necessarily constituted of soul and body, a soul is constituted of reason and desire, a household is constituted of husband and wife, and possession is constituted of master and slave. A city is constituted of all of these, and moreover of different kinds of people; and so the citizens cannot all have the same virtue, any more than the chorus-leader and ordinary member of the chorus can have the same virtue.

(Arist., *Pol.* 1277a [Irwin and Fine Trans.])

Nevertheless, Aristotle elaborates on an overarching goal for all citizens, regardless of their personal standard for becoming a virtuous citizen:

Well, then, we say that a citizen, like a sailor, is one of a number of associates. Now, sailors are dissimilar in their capacities — for one is an oarsman, one a pilot, one a lookout, and another has some other name — and clearly the most exact account of each one's virtue will be special to him, but similarly some common account will also fit them all, since the function of them all is to secure a safe voyage, and that is what each sailor aims at. Similarly, then, the function of citizens, despite their dissimilarity, is to secure the safety of the community; the political system is the community; hence the virtue of the citizen must be relative to the political system.

(Arist., *Pol.* 1267b16 [Irwin and Fine Trans.])

Through the allegory of a sailor on a voyage, Aristotle reveals that despite the dissimilarity between citizens, there is one standard that every good citizen should meet. Each citizen has an active role in society that they must fulfil, just as how on a ship there could be “an oarsmen”, “a pilot”, and “a lookout”, each suited for their own job. It would do no good for an oarsman to do a pilot’s job, for he would not know what he is doing. Yet every sailor works together to complete a main goal, which is ensuring a safe voyage. Similarly, a good citizen’s main goal is to serve the community and ensure its security and longevity.

<sup>4</sup> 君子 can also be translated in English as a person of noble character (Kleeman and Yu).

<sup>5</sup> During the Spring and Autumn period, China was split into multiple states (Daeson), and a “country” refers to the state an individual resided in.

## 1.2. Confucius

As citizenship is an idea that historically originated from the west (Wang), the word “citizen” does not appear in his works. In this essay, I will consider Confucius’ ideal citizen as a *jun zi* 君子 or “gentleman”,<sup>4</sup> and any mention of “citizen” when relating to Confucius refers to a gentleman’s duty to upholding the laws of the country.<sup>5</sup> The word “gentleman” refers to both male and female, because the original Chinese word, though with masculine connotations, has no presumed gender and can be used to describe a female.

Confucius believes that one of the main virtues of a good citizen is filial piety. Not only does he mention a good citizen’s respect towards their parents, he also views such respect shown towards elders as similar to that of a citizen serving the country:

Show piety to your parents, love your brothers, and help each other. This type of character will influence the state.

(Confucius, *Analects.* 為政.)

Influencing the state was commonly held to be only done by guards<sup>6</sup> and the emperor. However, here Confucius argues that through demonstrating piety, even a common man who does not hold importance within the state could influence politics by helping to keep it stable and held together.

Confucius, in the following quotation, reasons that a *shi*<sup>7</sup> 士 or “gentleman” should not be ashamed of rags and meagre rations.

A *shi* who is set on the way, but is ashamed of old clothes and coarse food, is not worth consulting.

(Confucius, *Analects.* 里仁 [Muller Trans.])

The gentleman is content with the “old clothes and coarse food” and instead of spending frivolously, should pay back their parents and help better the state. Sim writes that Confucians, stemming from Confucius, believed that the state was just the family writ large (Sim, 6). Thus, I argue that piety to the family is equivalent to piety to the state, and that Confucius’ good citizen places the needs of the family and state

<sup>6</sup> In ancient China, a guard (官) signified a high-ranking official in the state (Potato).

<sup>7</sup> In this context, *shi* can also be translated to mean “good citizen”.

above the needs and desires of oneself without hesitancy. If not, this *shi* cannot be considered a good citizen and is “not worth consulting”.

### 1.3. Comparison

Although they have similar historical backgrounds, living in countries divided into a multitude of city-states, Aristotle and Confucius have contrasting definitions of what being a citizen entails. While in his works Aristotle has a clear definition of what citizenship means, Confucius on the other hand does not. Aristotle views the state as something larger than the self and family, whereas Confucius sees the state as an extension of one’s family. Aristotle believes that each citizen, because they play different roles in society, has a differing standard for goodness from each other. In contrast, Confucius believes that there is a universal standard of goodness. It is interesting to note that, as Aristotle himself had not been born in Athens, and yet had lived in the city for a majority of his life, he was still not considered an Athenian citizen. Consequently, it is possible that this factor played a role in his political philosophy. Confucius, on the other hand, chose to leave the Lu Kingdom on his own to travel elsewhere to preach his teachings. This difference in motivation creates contrast and thus their respective departures may not have carried the same weight, leading to a dissimilarity in philosophical outlook, despite their similar circumstances.

Confucius names filial piety as a vital quality to being a good citizen, while Aristotle does not mention any specific quality. Aristotle’s idea of citizenship perhaps relies on the active participation of an individual in state matters, whether it be participating in juridical functions or ensuring the security of the state. Confucius, contrastingly, seems to take a more passive approach, placing emphasis on piety and humility, accepting one’s place in the community and giving back to the wider family through abstaining from personal pleasures. Abstainment is, in itself, a passive measure.

Ensuring security and serving the community, however, are the overarching goals of a good citizen, either to the “state”, in Aristotle’s case, or the wider community, in Confucius’ case. Despite the differences in their views of the definition of a good citizen and the role that they play, both philosophers agree that in the end, giving back to the community is more important than satisfying individual desires and the individual themselves.

## 2. What is a good man?

A good man is defined, through the lens of Aristotle, as one who is driven by reason, above all else. Reason is the foundation of all other values of a good man. Confucius’s good man is one who demonstrates filial piety and benevolence.

### 2.1 Aristotle

Aristotle places much focus on courage as one of the most important virtues that a good man should uphold. He defines courage as follows:

The sanguine<sup>8</sup> are confident in face of danger because they have won many victories over many foes before. They resemble the courageous, because both are confident, but [...] the sanguine are [confident] because they think they are stronger than the enemy [...] (A similar boldness is shown by men who get drunk, for this makes them sanguine for the time being). When however things do not turn out as they expect, the merely sanguine run away, whereas the mark of the courageous man [...] is to endure things that are terrible to a human being [...] because it is noble to do so and base not to do so.

(Arist., *Nic. Eth.* 1117a [Rackham Trans.])

Aristotle defines courage as the ability to endure suffering and demonstrate nobleness in times of pain and fear. He draws a distinction between the bold and the courageous, comparing them to drunken men. The drunken man is bold but not courageous, and similarly, men can be daring but fail to embody the characteristic he labels courage. Hence, the deciding factor is man’s ability to endure. While the merely bold man backs down when he sees problems arising, the courageous man pushes on.

Aristotle elaborates on this, declaring that the courageous man should not be completely fearless; rather, he ought to feel fear but overcome it with bravery, but only within reason:

For courage is following reason, and reason bids us choose what is fine. Hence, he who endures formidable things not on account of reason is either out of his mind or daring, but only he who does so from motives of honor is fearless and brave. The coward, therefore, fears even things that he ought not to fear, and the daring man is bold even about things about which he ought not

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<sup>8</sup> In this case “sanguine” is used to describe the overconfident.

to be bold, but the brave<sup>9</sup> man alone does both as he ought [...] the daring man, therefore, faces such things with confidence even if reason does not bid him face them, and the coward does not face them even if it does, but only the brave man faces them if reason bids.

(Arist., *Eud. Eth.* 3.1229a [Rackham Trans.])

The courageous man is not devoid of fear, nor does he rise to the occasion every time; rather, they step up in times of pain and fear when it is within reason for them to do so. The difference between the cowardly man and the courageous man is the ability to act, whereas the difference between the courageous man and the daring man is the ability to see reason.

Another of the virtues that Aristotle believes a good man should embody is temperance.<sup>10</sup> While the brave man is noble in being brave and facing fear, they must demonstrate temperance in more commonplace circumstances. Such are the actions of a temperate man:

Our indulgences should be moderate and few, and never opposed to principle — this is what we mean by “well-disciplined” and “chastened” — and the appetitive part of us should be ruled by principle, just as a boy should live in obedience to his tutor. Hence [...] the temperate man desires the right thing in the right way at the right time, which is what principle ordains.

(Arist., *Nic. Eth.* 1119b [Rackham Trans.])

Aristotle’s simile of a schoolboy highlights how temperance is a skill best learned from a young age and is naturally present in a good man. He does not forbid indulgence completely; however, he argues that this indulgence must be governed by reason. One cannot be brave and courageous all the time, and there must be moments of restraint to balance out the “appetitive part of us” that continually desires more. It would not be bold to say that reason, according to Aristotle, is the virtue that anchors both courage and temperance. The brave man must only be brave within reason, and similarly, the temperate man must only desire within reason. The quality that ultimately distinguishes man, good and bad, is reason<sup>11</sup>:

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<sup>9</sup> “Brave” and “Courageous” can be interchanged in this context.

<sup>10</sup> Temperance is defined as self restraint.

For as man is the best of the animals when perfected, so he is the worst of all when sundered from law and justice. For unrighteousness is most pernicious when possessed of weapons, and man is born possessing weapons for the use of wisdom and virtue, which it is possible to employ entirely for the opposite ends.

(Arist., *Pol.* 1.1253a [Rackham Trans.])

Aristotle argues that the difference between good and bad is reason, whereby the good man employs reason and decides that he must use his weapons for just purposes, whereas the bad man succumbs to animalistic desire and misuses his weapons. Thus reason is the groundwork that supports the making of a good man, elevating him past the ordinary, as Caird writes: “If then reason is divine in comparison with the man’s whole nature, the life according to reason must be divine in comparison with human life.” (Caird, 312).

## 2.2 Confucius

Confucius’ definition of a “good man” is different. While Confucius uses the same word, “gentleman”, as he did when describing a good citizen, there exists an implied difference: in speaking of a “good citizen”, he refers to the public sphere, in other words the individual’s indirect influence on the wider community. In speaking of a “good man”, however, he refers to the private sphere, to the individual’s relationships with those directly involved with them.

A core value that appears the most in the Analects is filial piety. A good man should place the needs of an elder above all else:

In serving his parents, a son may remonstrate with them, but gently; when he sees that they do not incline to follow his advice, he shows an increased degree of reverence, but does not abandon his purpose; and should they punish him, he does not allow himself to murmur.

(Confucius, *Analects.* 里仁 [Legge Trans.])

Confucius creates a contrast between elders and juniors, reiterating that a man should be powerless in face of his parents and must demonstrate this respect in order to be considered good. A man exists to “serve” his parents, and there is a natural hierarchy within the family.

<sup>11</sup> “Reason” can also be interchanged with wisdom in this context.



Confucius also places reverence on benevolence being a major quality of a gentleman, not only to his parents, but also to the other people surrounding him:

Fan Chi asked about benevolence. Confucius said, "Follow the rules at home, be meticulous when working for others, and be loyal and devoted to people. Even if you are in a difficult place yourself, you still must not give up this way of life."

(Confucius, *Analects*. 子路)

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Confucius forges a connection between benevolence and filial piety, arguing that the first level of benevolence lies within demonstrating filial piety. He then branches onto the wider community, onto people the gentleman has a working relationship with, and even the wider community of the general public. Thus the gentleman's goodness stems from him offering to others benevolence, and Confucius warns that the true gentleman does not forget to show benevolence, even when times are difficult for himself. The true nature of a gentleman is to be selfless.

Confucius argues that a gentleman should be able to discern between others like and unlike him. With this knowledge, he can surround himself only with the benevolent. Those excluded will realise that this is so, and change behaviour to become benevolent as well:

Fan Chi asked about benevolence. Confucius said, "Be kind to others." He asked about knowledge. Confucius said, "To differentiate between good

and evil in others." Fan Chi did not understand immediately. The Master said, "Employ the upright and put aside all the crooked; in this way the crooked can be made to be upright." [...] Zi Xia said, [...] "Shun<sup>12</sup>, made king, selected the benevolent from among all the people... after, all who were devoid of virtue disappeared. Tang<sup>13</sup>, made king, selected the benevolent from among all the people [...] and all who were devoid of virtue also disappeared."

(Confucius, *Analects*. 顏淵)

Through two examples of kings surrounding themselves with benevolent people, the superiority and goodness of the benevolent man is highlighted. The gentleman is able to find others like him, as like calls to like. The desire to make a society filled completely with benevolent gentlemen is underlined, suggesting that to become a gentleman one must be benevolent, and surround himself with benevolence. Other gentlemen will naturally do the same, and soon the society will be separated into benevolent and not. When one who is not realises that they are surrounded by the non-virtuous, they will make a conscious decision to change the way they act and become more benevolent, so as not to be excluded. In the end, society will become one where all those "devoid of virtue" disappear.

### 2.3 Comparison

Aristotle's virtues of a good man, courage and temperance, are both values that relate to man's relationship with himself, and explore how a man must look within in order to become good. Reason holds a similar quality of introspection, and deals with battling man's inner demon of animalistic release. In contrast, Confucius's ideas of the virtues a good man should embody, filial piety and benevolence, focus more on man's relationship with others around him, such as his elders and the wider community.

Moreover, Aristotle believes in the overarching virtue of reason, and sees this as the seed which the other virtues spring from, which arguably resembles how a tree expands outwards into different tree-branches. The values that he writes extensively about are all connected to how man reasons with himself and comes to make his decisions based on that reason. On the other hand, while Confucius too connects his values with one another, it resembles a web of tangled threads

<sup>12</sup> Yu Shun 虞舜 was an ancient Chinese emperor before Confucius' time.

<sup>13</sup> Tang of Shang 商湯 was another ancient Chinese emperor.

between the different aspects of a good man, that are all interconnected but still different. One can see themselves reflected in those around them, and by doing so they can learn from others and better themselves and society.

### **3. Is being a good citizen the same as being a good man?**

#### **3.1 Aristotle**

Aristotle argues that while a good man is also a good citizen, being a good citizen does not mean that one is a good man.

The goodness of a good citizen would not be one and the same as the goodness of a good man; for all ought to possess the goodness of the good citizen (that is a necessary condition of the state's being the best possible), but it is impossible that all should possess the goodness of a good man, if it is not necessary that all the citizens in a good city should be good men.

(Arist., *Pol.* 3.1277a [Rackham Trans.])

Aristotle viewed the standards of man's overall goodness to be part of a hierarchical structure: being a good man is above being a good citizen, and to be a good man one must first be a good citizen. The goodness that defines a good citizen and a good man are different, as that of a good man would be higher on this hierarchy, and hence only in an ideal society where every citizen is also a good man are they equal. It is understood that being a good man is more difficult than being a good citizen, though I argue that being a good citizen is more important than being a good man. It is "necessary" for all to be good citizens, whereas the scenario of all becoming good men is "impossible", thus effort should not be wasted on it. A good state must be built upon the foundation of good citizens, and later on one, of their own volition, may aim to become a good man as well.

#### **3.2 Confucius**

Confucius argues that a good man and a good citizen are inherently the same. The values and virtues that both have are the same as one another.

To have universal peace, one must influence the state. To influence the state, one must care for the family. To care for the family, one must first govern themselves.

(Confucius, *Book of Rites*. 大學)

In the quotation, Confucius describes the process of becoming a gentleman: firstly, one must govern themselves and their interactions with others, according to the guidelines mentioned previously in this essay. Then, they must respect the family and show filial piety. By doing so, they can influence the state, and finally they can achieve universal peace. Influencing the state positively to have universal peace are the actions of a good citizen. Since the state is just an extension of one's family, and one's family is an extension of oneself, by displaying the traits of a good man, he is also displaying the traits of a good citizen, and vice versa.

#### **3.3 Comparison**

Aristotle believes that a good man is a subset of a good citizen, much like how a square is a rectangle but not all rectangles are squares, and the standard of "good" in citizen and man differ. Meanwhile, Confucius believes that a good citizen and a good man are one and the same, and can be equated and substituted with each other.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have explored the views of Aristotle and Confucius on whether or not the goodness of a good man and good citizen are dissimilar from one another. The differences between them can be summarised as such: Aristotle views the state as something that the self is a part of, much like a body part within the whole body, whereas Confucius views it as an extension of the family. Along the same lines, Aristotle sees a good man as someone who holds values of goodness within himself, while Confucius sees him as someone who displays values of goodness to others. Thus it can be argued that Aristotle sees the self as a separate entity, where each body part has a different job yet is still part of the whole body, while on the contrary Confucius sees the self as a part of the community, where each body part works in tandem with one another. Accordingly, Aristotle's idea of goodness within man and citizen are different, as a good man is a separate entity, whereas the good citizen is one of the community. Confucius, on the other hand, sees both man and citizen as part of the community, and as a result their "goodness" is the same. Despite the circumstances of their living and the state that they lived in being similar, their philosophies led them down different paths, which would eventually lead to the different beliefs seen in Western and Chinese culture today.

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# 最毒世人心： 論《連城訣》中的「毒物」意象

Lok Man Li 李樂文

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## 引言

《連城訣》敘述了主人公狄雲在江湖上飽經人間險惡的故事。筆者在閱讀文本時發現了「毒物」意象頻頻出現，顯然對本書呈現「人性之惡」的主題有著不可或缺的作用。雖然有評論者對「毒物」在武俠小說題材的整體作用進行分析(小景，〈淺談武俠小說中的「毒」〉)，然而專注分析「毒」意象在《連城訣》中作用的研究還是空白。除此之外，《連城訣》中的毒物意象不但體現人性之惡，更將主題昇華到佛教理論的高度。筆者將分析「毒物」意象的象徵意義，情節作用以及對比性如何呈現人性之惡以及背後的佛教理論。

本文主要通過細讀「毒物」意象出現的每一處文本做出分析從而歸納論點，因為文本細讀是文學研究的主要研究方法。除此之外，筆者會以統計法摘取文本中所有帶有「毒」一字的詞語，以比較法歸納出相似之處和論點，並且通過考慮「毒」一詞在文本中每一處的出現提高分析的全面性。筆者也會將《連城訣》的「毒物」意象使用與金庸的其他小說做比較。

本文選擇了《連城訣》的第三版。筆者閱讀三個版本後，發現作者在第三版本中對情節和故事背景多做了解釋，並且更改了其中一個角色的背景由來。金庸修訂作品其一原因是為了完善作品中的不足，讓其內容能夠充分展示主題以及作者意圖。雖然第三版本的修改部分未必與「毒物」意象有關連，然而這一版本卻確保了本文能夠分析《連城訣》最新以及最符合作者意願的文學選擇。

## 一、人性之惡的具體化：毒物意象的象徵意義

《連城訣》中出現的角色很多都心思歹毒。而作者在描寫人物的想法、心理狀態或性格時會利用「毒物」意象來象徵某些惡念，從而彰顯其醜陋性以致讓人性之惡具體化。

### 一、「毒物」意象意義的雙重性

「毒物」意象包括了毒蛇，毒花，毒蠍等等具備毒素的物品。除此之外，「毒物」意象頻頻作為描寫人物心理的形容詞，象徵心思之歹毒。以下的圖表展示了帶有「毒」一字的心理形容詞在每一個章節的出現：

章節	「毒」作為形容人物心理的形容詞的出現
1.	
2.	陰毒
3.	惡毒，毒辣，陰險狠毒，惡毒心腸
4.	
5.	狠毒
6.	凶狠惡毒
7.	凶惡惡毒，凶狠惡毒
8.	陰狠毒辣，歹毒之極
9.	滿腔怨毒，陰險惡毒，惡毒，狠毒，惡毒
10.	凶狠惡毒，陰狠毒辣
11.	
12.	狠毒殘忍

圖表一. 金庸

圖表一中的形容詞，有一些將「毒」與其他心理形容詞做匹配。如「滿腔怨毒」中的「怨」形容人物心中的不滿，而加上「毒」一字後，以「毒」的威脅性呈現了「怨」對他人甚至自己的破壞性。「毒」一詞凸顯了人物心理缺陷對旁人和自己的迫害性，從而彰顯人性之惡。

## 二. 「毒蛇」與嫉妒心的象徵

以「毒蛇」象徵妒忌心表達了嫉妒心對人的禍害，從而突出它作為人性之惡重要的一環。當汪嘯風聽見有關青梅竹馬的師妹水笙被主人公狄雲奪去清白的流言時，流言「便如毒蛇般在咬噬他的心」（金庸，292）。此處所指的「毒蛇」是指汪嘯風聽取謠言後對狄雲產生的嫉妒。狄雲之後也接連成為了「毒蛇」的受害者。狄雲欲帶紅顏知己師妹戚芳遠走高飛。但是戚芳卻顧念和萬奎的夫妻之情，回去救丈夫最後卻遭暗算。狄雲內心「有一條妒忌的毒蛇在隱隱地咬噬：『你……你究竟是愛你丈夫，寧可自己死了，也要救

他。』」（金庸，400）。「妒忌的毒蛇」明顯地將「毒蛇」象徵為嫉妒心。兩處都通過將「毒蛇咬噬內心」的畫面象徵妒忌之念生起的場景，來表達妒忌有侵蝕善心的危機。所以，以「毒蛇」意象象徵嫉妒心突出了妒忌心的禍害以及它作為人性之惡的一部分。

## 三. 「金波旬花」之毒與戾氣的象征

作者更通過「金波旬花」之毒象徵了凌退思暴戾的心理。凌退思為了得到連城寶藏不惜活埋女兒，更以金波旬花的劇毒殺害與女兒真心相愛的丁典。此設置讓金波旬花初步象徵了象徵凌退思的兇殘。之後，狄雲以「金波旬花」與凌退思的心機做比較：「這人的心腸，可比『金波旬花』還要毒上百倍」（金庸，404）。凌退思以「金波旬花」毒害有「神照功」護身的丁典，更見接地殺害了武功高強的寶象。這足以證明「金波旬花」的毒有多劇烈。然而，狄雲卻認為凌退思殺害親女兒的行徑比「金波旬花」有過而無不及。這讓金波旬花與凌退思的象徵意形成遞增的效果，通過正襯彰顯凌退思活埋女兒毒害女兒情人的狠心。人性之惡由凌退思令人唏噓不已的心思得以展現。

綜上所述，「毒」意象與人物的心理相結合。這凸顯了一些扭曲的想法，如嫉妒、殺念、和圖表一羅列的一些負面情感如「狠」和「怨」，從而將人性之惡具體化。

## 二、巧合與必然：「毒物」意象與情節的因和果

「毒」意象在書中頻頻成為了結人物的工具。這些角色大多都為非作歹，死有餘辜。這些角色被毒死的情節設置具有明顯的巧合性和必然性，展現了佛教的因果論以及人性之惡的下場。

### 一. 中「毒」情節的巧合

寶象惡僧中毒情節的因和果具有很強的巧合性，展示了因果報應的無可避免。作惡多端的寶象是因為喝了有毒的老鼠湯而被毒死的。用來熬湯的老鼠吃了丁典屍體帶有「金波旬花」毒的血肉而被毒死。因此老鼠屍體也帶有「金波旬花」的劇毒。寶象喝了用帶毒老鼠熬製的老鼠湯，而被毒死。寶象一開始看到丁典的死屍時為了「連城劍譜」仔細地搜身了一遍，更在屍體上砍了一刀，極為不尊重丁典的屍體。所以，寶象被丁典屍體殘留的毒素間接毒死，體現了因果報應。其中的因果關係曲折離奇，體現了作惡多端的人無論如何一定會遭到報應。

### 二. 不同角色結局情節的必然性

所有歹徒最終的結局殘酷，而善良的角色結局良好的設置，體現了情節的必然性以及因果論。雖然寶象中毒的情節屬於巧合，書中很多為非作歹角色都因為爭取連城寶藏而被毒死，如凌退思、汪嘯風、花鐵干、萬奎和戚長髮。這些角色都因為貪圖寶藏，而在爭奪珠寶時被塗在寶藏上的毒藥毒死。此情節設置有非常清楚的因果關係，體現這些角色的結局的必然性，從而展示因果論以及給為非作歹的人一個忠告。作者在警告歹徒後，再表達人

性之善在險惡的世界上仍有一片淨土容身。書中狄雲宛如江湖中的一股清流，屢屢彰顯了人性美麗的一面：狄雲面對著仇人萬奎最終選擇放下奪妻之恨和在牢房度過多年的苦楚，把解藥給他解毒。狄雲當時雖然目擊眾人搶連城寶藏，卻因為不貪心所以並沒有向眾人一般人落得中毒身亡的下場，反而活過來到雪谷和水笙隱居。狄雲的結局是由自己心裡的潔淨而造成的，因此具有強大的必然性，更突出了因果論。

綜上所述，「毒」意象被運用在人物死亡情節的「因」和「果」當中。其中情節更有鮮明的必然性和巧合性，展現了佛家的因果論，以及表達了為非作歹的下場。

## 三、美好和惡毒的對比：毒物意象對人性主題的深化

「毒」意象除了和人物的心理作比較，更通過和有人性之美的聯想的意象作對立，深化人性之惡的主題。

### 一. 「毒」意象和佛像意象的對立性

佛像與「毒」意象在書的結局中形成了對立。結局中，眾尋寶者發現了佛像裏面藏著的金銀珠寶。然而，沒有人察覺到珠寶塗了毒藥。尋寶者們在搶珠寶時都沾上了毒藥。這導致「他們一般地都變成了野獸，在亂咬、亂搶，將珠寶塞到嘴裡」（金庸，418）。此處的毒藥象徵著佛教三毒中的「貪」，而原本已經財迷心竅的尋寶者中了「貪」毒後猶如禽獸的設置更是象徵著完全受貪念控制的極端情況。相反地，「面目慈悲的如來佛像」則象徵著

完全撇除貪念尋求「往生極樂」（金庸，409）的理念。佛像意象脫俗的氣質與中了「貪」毒的尋寶者「變成野獸」（金庸，418）的場景形成鮮明的反差，令中毒的尋寶者更為淒慘可悲。此淒涼的感覺結合了尋寶者爭奪珠寶場景的血腥味，為人性之惡渲染了一股沈重邪惡的氣氛。

## 二. 金波旬花的豔麗和其毒性之間的對比

文本中「金波旬花」的毒素，與「金波旬花」本身的嬌豔形成了鮮明的反差，與先前解藥意象有同工異曲之妙。「金波旬花」象徵著凌霜華。丁典入獄的時候常常觀賞凌霜華放在窗口的花。丁典因為撲在凌霜華棺材上而死，再次反映了「金波旬花」與凌霜華之間的象徵意。再者，「金波旬花」極為鮮豔動人。這符合了書中凌霜華「清秀絕俗」（金庸，98）的外貌形象。「金波旬花」的劇毒則象徵著凌退思的陰險。凌退思活埋自己女兒，又以「金波旬花」毒死丁典，被狄雲感嘆道：「這人的心腸，可比『金波旬花』還要毒上百倍。」（金庸，404）因此，「金波旬花」的豔麗與其劇毒的對比象徵了人性之惡常常隱藏在看似美好的東西裡，深化了人性之惡的主題並且傳達了作者對人性之惡的見解。

再者，金波旬花起名為「波旬」其實暗含寓意。「波旬」是佛教的其中一個魔王，會試圖阻止佛門弟子修煉。因此，凌退思用以毒殺丁典的花被命名為金「波旬」花，象徵了凌退思破壞丁典和凌霜華戀情的舉動。這有助於突出破壞旁人的努力和

幸福的舉動作為人性之惡之中常見的行為，深化了主題。

綜上所述，「毒」意象通過和有人性之美的聯想的意象作對立，凸顯人性之惡。作者以具有人性之美聯想的意象來營造讀眾對人性之善的期待。如佛像製造了看破貪念的期待，如解藥呈現狄雲的慈悲，如金波旬花的美麗動人讓讀眾期待丁典和凌霜華單純美好的戀情。然而「毒」的意象卻以不同方法介入，將讀眾對人性之美期望落空，使書中的人性之惡更讓人不寒而慄。

## 結論

「毒」意象對揭露人性之惡的主題有著不可或缺的作用。「毒物」意象所象徵的心理惡念彰顯了人心的惡毒。「毒物」意象終結不同人物的情節更展示出了因果論以及人性之惡的下場。

「毒物」意象更與其他展示人性光輝的意象形成對比，凸顯並且深化了人性之惡的主題。筆者並沒有預想到「毒物」意象所蘊涵的佛教思想如此的多。這為日後的研究提供了一個可取的方向。筆者更發現了狄雲和水笙名字中的「雲水」傳統意象絕配，以宿命論呈現了他們廝守終身的結局並且體現好人有好報的思想。

「毒」意象除了在《連城訣》中是主要意象之一，更在金庸的其他武俠小說中發揮了無比重要的作用。如《神鵰俠侶》中的「情花毒」，象徵了楊過與小龍女戀情的煎熬。相對而言，《飛狐外傳》胡斐中了七海星棠的毒要靠程靈素一口一口把毒素吸取，體現了愛情的光輝。然而，「毒物」在《連城訣》中卻處處凸顯人性的醜

陋，體現了《連城訣》中的現實主義，並且破滅了金庸其他武俠小說的浪漫主義。因此，筆者同意繆海榮對《連城訣》的現實主義評點。然而，以「『無俠』的江湖」（繆海榮）評價《連城訣》又過於極端，因為主人公狄雲一直維持自己的道德高地。因此，金庸雖然揭露了現實生活中的種種人性陰險，卻從而反襯出了狄雲的厚道，激勵人心。

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# To what extent are the methods of achieving happiness in the philosophies of Epicurus and Laozi similar?

Michelle Tse 謝芷羚

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## Introduction

What the goal of human life is and how to achieve it are perennial questions long disputed by philosophers, including Epicurus and Laozi, who lived in vastly dissimilar environments. Despite the disparities of their cultures and eras, both philosophers came to notably similar conclusions about what happiness entails and how to attain it. In the first part of my essay, I will provide contextual background about the two philosophers; in the second section, the philosophers' definitions of happiness are described and compared. In the third section, I will refer to their views on the importance of curtailing desire, and, finally, I will review and critique their arguments about how to live a good life, for they arguably believe that happiness is the goal of life. Overall, it will be shown that Epicurus and Laozi both believe that happiness is synonymous with contentment, and both emphasize the importance of curtailing desire, arguing that doing so is essential to attaining peace of mind.

## 1. Context

### 1.1 Epicurus

Epicurus (341 BC – 270 BC) was one of the major philosophers in the Hellenistic period and the founder of Epicureanism. Although he wrote more than 300 works in his lifetime, his only surviving works are three letters contained within Diogenes Laërtius' writings. Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus* in particular will be explored within this paper because of its focus on his philosophy of happiness and its attainment.

### 1.2 Laozi

Laozi 老子 allegedly lived in the 6th century BC. A highly influential Chinese philosopher, he is traditionally known as the founder of Taoism and the reputed author of the *Tao Te Ching* 道德經, a text which presents a way of living with integrity,

goodness, and in harmony with nature. This paper will examine the aforementioned text to better understand Laozi's philosophy.

## 2. The definition of happiness

For simplicity's sake, I have chosen to use "happiness" as a blanket term to refer to Epicurus' and Laozi's ideas about pleasure and contentment in this essay. While the terminology used in their respective philosophies is not interchangeable, there are clear parallels between them. Although Epicurus uses the term *ἡδονή* or "pleasure", it is not to denote positive enjoyment, as in the modern sense of the word, but rather a state of being comparable to Laozi's philosophy of *zhi zu* 知足, meaning "contentment", and satisfaction.

### 2.1 Epicurus

Epicurus posits that happiness (*ἡδονή*) is the absence of pain, and argues that it is the highest good in life. In his *Letter to Menoeceus*, he writes:

τότε γὰρ ἡδονῆς χρεῖαν ἔχομεν, ὅταν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ παρῆναι τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀλγῶμεν. <ὅταν δὲ μὴ ἀλγῶμεν> οὐκέτι τῆς ἡδονῆς δεόμεθα.

[We] need pleasure only when we are in pain caused by its absence; but when we are not in pain then we have no need of pleasure.

[Saint-Andre Trans.]

The above quotation implies that Epicurus believes pleasure "in [its] modern and contemporary empiricist senses" (Rosenbaum, 406) has the function of alleviating suffering. However, if one is not experiencing pain, then pleasure in the conventional sense, or positive enjoyment, is unnecessary. Hence, although he uses the term *ἡδονή* or "pleasure" to represent his view, Epicurus' "negative description of

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[happiness] as *ataraxia*, freedom from anxiety, pain, and fear, [is] contrary to the common concept of pleasure” (Rosenbaum, 406). This is suggested in the following quotation:

[...] τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἔστι τέλος.

[...] the health of the body and the serenity of the soul — since that is the goal of a completely happy life.

[Saint-Andre Trans.]

The Greek term *ataraxia ἀταραξία* consists of the alpha privative (α-), a negation, and *tarache*, meaning “(mental) disturbance”. Although it is translated as “serenity” here, a more literal translation may be “being free of all troubles and anxiety” (Striker, 100). This distinctive view of pleasure is accentuated when Epicurus summarizes his argument in the *Letter to Menoeceus*:

[...] ἀλλὰ τὸ μήτε ἀλγεῖν κατὰ σῶμα μήτε ταράττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχὴν.

By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.

[Hicks Trans.]

Happiness in Epicurean terms, therefore, is achieved in the absence of discomfort, be it mental, physical, or otherwise.

## 2.2 Laozi

Laozi argues that to be happy, one should strive for contentment, which he defines as a freedom from desire. “Freedom” can therefore be understood to mean a lack of constraints; or, in a more literal sense of the Chinese term *zi you* 自由, the ability to do as one wishes. In his philosophy, Laozi focuses on internal rather than external constraints. Specifically, one’s desires reduce one’s freedom, because the need to satisfy them becomes a constraint in itself. In the *Tao Te Ching*, he writes:

故令有所屬：見素抱樸，少私寡欲。

It is more important

To see the simplicity,

To realize one’s true nature,

To cast off selfishness

And temper desire.

[Feng and English Trans.]

The quotation suggests that fewer desires will lead to fewer constraints for the individual. Laozi contends that seeing the “simplicity” in life and prioritizing introspection to “realize one’s true nature”, casting aside desires and material objects, is what will lead to contentment. Within the phrase *jian su bao pu* 見素抱樸 “to see the simplicity”, the character *jian* 見 means “see”, while *bao* 抱 can be translated as “embrace”. Hence, it is important to both see and embrace simplicity as part of one’s life. Additionally, the characters *shao* 少 and *gua* 寡, though translated as “cast off” and “temper” respectively, can also mean “lessen” or “reduce”, accentuating the importance of curtailing desire.

Furthermore, Laozi indicates that:

禍莫大於不知足；咎莫大於欲得。

故知足之足，常足矣。

There is no greater curse than the lack of contentment.

No greater sin than the desire for possession.

Therefore he who is contented with contentment

Shall be always content.

[Feng and English Trans.]

By “no greater curse”, Laozi emphasizes that the greatest obstruction to happiness is discontentment, which arises from the “sin [of] desire”. “Possession” further connotes having ownership or control, hinting at a hunger for more than what one already possesses. Therefore, the second sentence of the Chinese quotation above suggests that if one limits their desire and is “contented with contentment”, they “shall be always content”, achieving happiness. As *zhi zu* 知足 may be literally translated as “knowing [what is] enough”, the second sentence in the original quotation above may be translated as “[one who] knows that contentment is enough, shall always be content”, accentuating the importance of curtailing desire and finding satisfaction in “the simplicity”.

## 2.3 Comparison

Both philosophers refer to happiness as the absence of desire and pain, rather than viewing it as the presence of joy. Although Epicurus focuses on freedom from pain, while Laozi emphasizes freedom from desire, it will become more clear in the following section that both philosophers contend that pain stems from desire, and that reducing desire is crucial to achieving happiness. Rather than trying to seek happiness by fulfilling desire, it is the very seeking of happiness

itself that leads to pain, and one must exercise self-control to avoid this.

### 3. The importance of curtailing desire

“Desire” is a state of mind in which one wishes to attain more, and is often accompanied by action to fulfill this longing. Implicit within this concept is dissatisfaction with one’s current situation. Laozi argues that desire causes a lack of contentment, and Epicurus similarly believes that pain stems from desire. A point of contention that both philosophers raise is the degree to which unfulfilled desire will cause pain. While satisfying desire may cause pleasure, the inherent issue is that of the extent to which this is possible. Hence, curtailing desire, rather than attempting to fulfill it, is a significant part of their philosophies in achieving happiness.

#### 3.1 Epicurus

Epicurus argues that curtailing desire would have many benefits, including but not limited to what he states in his *Letter to Menoeceus*:

τὸ συνθερίζειν οὖν ἐν ταῖς ἀπλαῖς καὶ οὐ πολυτελέσι διαίταις καὶ ὑγείας ἐστὶ συμπληρωτικὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἀναγκαίας τοῦ βίου χρήσεις ἄοκνον ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τοῖς πολυτελέσιν ἐκ διαλειμμάτων προσερχομένοις κρεῖττον ἡμᾶς διατίθησι καὶ πρὸς τὴν τύχην ἀφόβους παρασκευάζει.

Training yourself to live simply and without luxury brings you complete health, gives you endless energy to face the necessities of life, better prepares you for the occasional luxury, and makes you fearless no matter your fortune in life.

[Saint-Andre Trans.]

In the original text, Epicurus uses polysyndetic listing (“καὶ”, meaning “and”) to emphasize the benefits of plain living, which is made possible by curtailing the desire to live luxuriously. Living “simply” means reducing the objects of desire around oneself, thus limiting thoughts of desire elicited by them. Without continuously expending energy on desire, one will have increased vigor, or “endless energy”.

Curtailing desire will also reduce pain that it causes, which is defined as all physical pains and mental agitations. Specifically, desire leads to the anxiety that one’s wishes will be unfulfilled, impeding the achievement of happiness. Should one limit desire,

one’s anxieties would be assuaged, bringing “complete health”. Regardless of their “fortune in life”, having no expectations would enable one to become ἀφόβους, signifying “fearless”, or literally “no fear”.

#### 3.2 Laozi

Laozi holds that the curtailment of desire is advantageous, and have benefits that extend beyond the individual. This is evinced in the *Tao Te Ching*:

不欲以靜，天下將自定。

By stripping of desire quiescence is achieved,

And the world arrives at peace of its own accord.

[Lin Trans.]

The character *jing* 靜 suggests “still”, or “quiet”. It can be argued that it alludes to both a mental state of quietude and a stillness within society that arises from a lack of conflict. This is because limiting desire affords one the ability to set their mind at ease and become content. There will then be no need to pursue ambitions, resulting in less competition for resources, which naturally causes a reduction in conflict between individuals. On a larger scale, if societies are able to limit their desires, then the world will “[arrive] at peace of its own accord” through their non-action. Laozi argues that the curtailing desire is not only beneficial to the individual, but will cause a ripple effect affecting the wider society, creating a more peaceful world.

#### 3.3 Comparison

Both philosophers maintain that curtailing desire is beneficial. Although Laozi does not explicitly state the benefits of curtailing desire to the self, a potential interpretation of “quiescence” in the aforementioned quote is inner tranquility, which is achieved when desire no longer plagues the mind. As such, both Epicurus and Laozi argue that curtailing desire would allow oneself to become free of the worries that desire brings. Here, the key difference between their thoughts is that Epicurus’ argument is mainly egocentric, focusing exclusively on the benefits to the self, whereas Laozi’s points out the benefit to society as a whole.

### 4. How to attain happiness

Overall, Epicurus posits that happiness is the absence of pain, and that desire causes pain, which entails both mental agitation and physical pain. In an analogous manner, Laozi contends that happiness is contentment, and that pain stems from desire. Having defined

happiness and the importance of curtailing desire, the practical implications of attaining happiness must now be taken into consideration. As will be explored in the following section, Epicurus argues that one should keep in mind the implications of one's actions in the long run when pursuing happiness. He also divides desire into three categories, explaining which ones should be curtailed and to what extent. Laozi's philosophy, on the other hand, is less specific: his Way, or *Tao* 道, of living is inexplicit, for attempting to give it boundaries would be reductionistic. Nonetheless, an emphasis is placed on one's virtues, such as eschewing pride and following the "natural way" by avoiding indulgence.

#### 4.1 Epicuru

Epicurus discusses *phronesis* in his *Letter to Menoeceus*, which is understood as "practical intelligence, or practical wisdom" (Rosenbaum, 391). He also describes it as *τούτων δὲ πάντων ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν φρόνησις*, meaning "the foundation of all [pleasures] and is the greatest good" (Saint-Andre trans.). In short, practical wisdom is essential to finding happiness, and one should make decisions that result in a surplus of pleasure over pain in the long term. He further states:

[...] ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὅτε πολλὰς ἡδονὰς ὑπερβαίνομεν, ὅταν πλεῖον ἡμῖν τὸ δυσχερὲς ἐκ τούτων ἔπηται· καὶ πολλὰς ἀλγηδόνας ἡδονῶν κρείττους νομίζομεν, ἐπειδὴν μείζων ἡμῖν ἡδονὴ παρακολουθῆ πολὺν χρόνον ὑπομείνασι τὰς ἀλγηδόνας.

Instead, we pass up many pleasures when we will gain more of what we need from doing so. And we consider many pains to be better than pleasures, if we experience a greater pleasure for a long time from having endured those pains.

[Saint-Andre Trans.]

The quotation indicates that if foregoing pleasurable activities that evoke instant gratification will result in less pain in the long run, then the short-term pain of abstinence is preferable to the eventual pain evoked by engagement with the activity. For instance, although Epicurus believes that bodily pleasures are the highest pleasures, he also states that indulging in them prevents one from attaining a good life, for bodily indulgences are pleasurable for only a short duration of time and are followed by pain.

In summary, rather than satisfying all pleasures, Epicurus contends that the ideal life would be in part

attained by abstaining from unnecessary desires. To explain which desires should be eliminated and which should be satisfied, he divides desire into three categories: natural and necessary desires, natural and unnecessary desires, and desires both unnatural and unnecessary. This is evinced in *the Letter to Menoeceus*:

ἀναλογιστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι φυσικαί, αἱ δὲ κεναί, καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν αἱ μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ φυσικαὶ μόνον· τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαῖων αἱ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν, αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν.

[Keep] in mind that some desires are natural whereas others are groundless; that among the natural desires some are natural and necessary whereas others are merely natural; and that among the necessary desires some are necessary for happiness, some for physical health, and some for life itself.

[Saint-Andre Trans.]

As this suggests, Epicurus argues that natural and necessary desires should be fulfilled. These are desires essential for life, such as basic food, water, and shelter. Being fundamental biological needs, they are both difficult to eliminate and naturally limited by human biology; for example, the desire for food consumption is restricted by the amount one can consume. Thus, these desires can and should be fulfilled, in order to achieve *εὐδαιμονία*, meaning both "happiness" and a general state of "well-being".

Secondly, natural and unnecessary desires, otherwise known as the *φυσικαὶ μόνον* or "merely natural" desires, are ones that build upon natural and necessary desires, such as the desire for luxury food. Although food is necessary for survival, luxury food is an indulgence. Epicurus argues that while one should not spurn this if it is available, dependence upon this kind of object of desire should be avoided.

Finally, unnatural and unnecessary desires are societally induced, such as the desire for "wealth, fame, power, and sensual pleasures", according to Smith. To describe them, Epicurus employs the term *κενός*, which Saint-Andre has translated as "groundless", alluding to their basis not being in human biology. Epicurus contends that as these desires are not inborn requirements of human nature, they do not have natural restraints, and may be limitless; as such, they are impossible to satisfy. No matter how much of these one obtains, it is possible to get more, and the more

one has, the more one desires. As such, they are likely to bring more pain than pleasure. Epicurus therefore believes that these desires should be eliminated.

Epicurus further divides pleasure into “static” and “kinetic” pleasures. Kinetic pleasures involve an active stimulation of the senses, whereas static pleasures arise from the feeling of satiety, which comes after a need has been fulfilled. For example, a kinetic pleasure is the action of eating, while a static pleasure would be the sensation of contentment after a meal. Just as Epicurus defines pleasure to be the lack of pain, he asserts that static pleasures are the best. Happiness, therefore, can be attained by achieving the satiety of both the mind and the body through the pursuit of static pleasures, as opposed to kinetic ones.

Overall, he takes a fairly ascetic stance with regard to how best to attain a pleasurable life. As he writes in his *Letter to Menoecus*:

οὐ γὰρ πότοι καὶ κῶμοι συνείροντες οὐδ’ ἀπολαύσεις παίδων καὶ γυναικῶν οὐδ’ ἰχθύων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα φέρει πολυτελῆς τράπεζα, τὸν ἡδὺν γεννᾶ βίον, ἀλλὰ νήφων λογισμὸς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας ἐξερευνῶν πάσης αἰρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς καὶ τὰς δόξας ἐξελαύνων, ἐξ ὧν πλεῖστος τὰς ψυχὰς καταλαμβάνει θόρυβος.

For a pleasant life is produced not by drinking and endless parties and [...] consuming delicacies of an extravagant table, but by sober reasoning, searching out the cause of everything we accept or reject, and driving out opinions that cause the greatest trouble in the soul.

[Saint-Andre Trans.]

By engaging in contemplation, having a rational selection of pleasures and pains, and otherwise practicing *λάθε βιώσας*, commonly translated as “living in obscurity”, Epicurus believes that a pleasurable life could be led. To achieve this goal of life, one must be content; hence, attaining satiety is essential. One should abstain from pursuing boundless, unnatural desires, but bounded natural desires may be satisfied, as their fulfillment will bring “static” pleasures as well.

## 4.2 Laozi

Laozi’s *Tao Te Ching* is vague with regards to defining how to live a good life, because 道可道，非常道， meaning “the *Tao* that can be named is not the eternal *Tao*” (Feng and English trans.). The nature of the *Tao*, or the Way, is that which cannot be encapsulated by

words; if it were given a specific definition, then it would not be the true Way, for some aspect of it would have been excluded from the definition. However, it can be inferred that Laozi generally believes that living a simple life, without engaging in extremes, is the best way to achieve a good life. The *Tao Te Ching* states that:

將欲取天下而為之，吾見其不得已。

夫天下，神器也，非可為者也。

There are those who will conquer the world

And make of it (what they conceive or desire).

I see that they will not succeed.

(For) the world is God’s own Vessel

It cannot be made (by human interference).

[Lin Trans.]

In the above quotation, Laozi suggests that an individual who does not curtail their desire but acts upon it, trying to change the world through violence or force, will be unsuccessful (將欲取天下而為之，吾見其不得已). He posits that *tian xia* 天下, which may literally be translated as “under heaven”, hence meaning the world and its people, cannot be made to change through violent means, because of forces outside of man’s control: “(For) the world is God’s own Vessel”. In essence, trying to force a change upon the world and going against the “natural way”, which is the unfolding of events dictated by the natural laws, will be unsuccessful. This part of the *Tao Te Ching* is concluded by the following quotation:

是以聖人去甚，去奢，去泰。

Hence the Sage eschews excess, eschews extravagance,

Eschews pride.

[Lin Trans.]

The term *sheng ren* 聖人, or “Sage”, denotes an extremely wise man. Hence, by conveying what he believes a Sage would do, Laozi puts forth the ideal way to live a good life. In the above quotation, he suggests that one should forego “excess” and “extravagance”, both of which connote desiring more than what is necessary. Rather than attempting to change the world, one should allow the world to change at its own pace; rather than pursuing desire to the extreme, one should *shun qi zi ran* 順其自然, or “follow the ‘natural way’”, for desire is unnecessary and “unnatural”. Eschewing luxuries allows one to live in moderation and in harmony with the “natural way”.

Laozi also believes that one should be humble, and not glory in one's success; in other words, to *qu tai* 去泰, or "eschew pride". Without pride, one would not feel a sense of loss, nor worry about losing the source of it. Similarly, Laozi counsels the reader to be unaffected by loss or gain in the *Tao Te Ching*:

何謂寵辱若驚？

寵為下，得之若驚，失之若驚，是謂寵辱若。

What do you mean by "accept disgrace willingly"?

Accept being unimportant.

Do not be concerned with loss or gain.

This is called "accepting disgrace willingly."

[Feng and English Trans.]

By becoming unconcerned with change, one will be able to maintain a peace of mind and body; by accepting the unimportance of oneself, one will no longer have the desire or ambition to become important and powerful. In this instance, the word "disgrace" can be interpreted to mean what society holds to be undesirable. Hence, Laozi suggests that one should "accept disgrace willingly", indicating that one should not trouble themselves with societal values, but focus on achieving inner tranquility to attain contentment and happiness.

While Laozi believes that one should attempt to follow the natural order of events, one must still do what needs to be accomplished, as this is part of the "natural way". Moreover, Laozi refers to *wu wei* 無為, or "non-action", another essential concept within Taoism. Non-action does not mean that no action should be taken. Rather, Laozi argues that it is by taking no action outside of the natural way that one is able to live a contented life. As such, he says that everything can be achieved through non-action:

道常無為而無不為。

The Tao never does,

Yet through it everything is done.

Reference to (Part 37 [Feng and English Trans.])

By making desires negligible and following the natural way, Laozi believes that one would be able to lead a good life. Through this, contentment and inner tranquility will be achieved, leading to the attainment of happiness.

### 4.3 Comparison

Epicurus and Laozi both believe in leading a plain and simple life of moderation. Epicurus' view regarding the fulfillment of desires holds certain similarities to Laozi's contention that one should live by the "natural way". According to their philosophies, decadence and overindulgence in general is to be avoided, and making desires minimal is ideal. Just as Epicurus argues that unnatural and unnecessary desires – being socially induced – should be curtailed, Laozi asserts that one should become unconcerned with what society may consider "disgraceful". In essence, Epicurus' philosophy is to "ignore whatever [is] outside of [one's] control, cultivating simplicity to maintain control over what [is] within [their] power" (Morse, 243). Similarly, Laozi advocates for simplicity.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, both Laozi and Epicurus define happiness as the absence of pain. In turn, pain, which they contend is caused by desire, may take the form of agitation induced by an inability to fulfill the desire or anxiety that desire will remain unsatisfied. As such, both philosophers emphasize the beneficial outcomes of curtailing desire, and believe that a good life is plain, simple, and free of societal desires. Rather than trying to change one's situation, one should curtail desire as much as possible.

What is the value of studying ancient philosophers who lived in a world so different to ours? In the modern era, many individuals pursue societally induced desires, deeming power to be synonymous with happiness. However, will the trouble this desperate ascent brings ultimately be worthwhile? Despite their contrasting sociocultural contexts, Epicurus and Laozi both concluded that the simple life is the happiest one, and similarly maintained that adapting a different mindset towards desire can lead to contentment. Regardless of how unconventional these philosophies may be in the present day, the insight they provide can aid one by reminding us of the importance of a growth mindset, even if one is unlikely to stop pursuing desire. Without giving up the pursuit of one's goals, the modern individual can still find pleasure in the process of learning, rather than trying to force immediate change. It is also important not to dwell on mistakes, but to face them with equanimity; being neither, as Laozi says, 得之若驚，失之若驚, meaning "concerned with loss [nor] gain" (Feng and English trans.), and seeking always to improve.

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# Different attitudes to merchant status in early China

Angela Wang 王一洋

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## Introduction

Throughout history, mercantile activity has always been a major contributor to China's social development, with the merchant being an indispensable component of trade. As important as they were, merchants had a controversial status within ancient Chinese society, a topic that continues to be debated by scholars today. Focusing on merchant status within the Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) and referencing some examples from earlier periods, two important primary sources, the chapter 'Money-makers' 貨殖列傳 within the *Records of the Grand Historian* 史記 by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145 BCE - 87 BCE) and the *Book of Han* 漢書 by Ban Gu 班固 (32 - 92 CE), provide vital insights into contradicting views on the contributions and value of a merchant.

During the Han Dynasty's economic expansion, merchants became part of the social structure due to the value they added to the transfer of wealth. This economic expansion and the wealth created facilitated technological advancement, specifically in iron and steel, that increased urbanization and encouraged population migration. Urbanization created the need for the convenient exchange of goods and services, leading to the growth of metal coinage, which impacted the monetary system. Furthermore, the construction of the Grand Canal and new trade routes of the Silk Road were established, providing more ways for merchants to trade. Merchants became highly important figures in the economic growth of the Han Dynasty as they were the transporters of goods and exchangers of money within society. However, the merchant class (商 *shang*) was devalued because the emerging ideas of Confucianism valued "humaneness and propriety" (仁義 *ren yi*) over "profit" (利 *li*), the main goal of merchant activities, and of the merchant class itself. The devaluation of merchant status was shown through the Confucian social class system that had its roots in the Zhou Dynasty, the Four Occupations (四民 *si min*). It included government

officials (士 *shi*), peasants (農 *nong*), artisans (工 *gong*), and merchants (商 *shang*), with their classes ranked from high to low respectively (Sterckx 496). Moreover, the wealth of merchants were seen as a potential impediments to the government's central power, and restrictions such as taxation and limitations on political influence were put on merchants. Thus, merchants came to be viewed in a negative light during this important time of economic expansion in the Han Dynasty as opposed to being treated equally to governors in the Warring States Period (476 BCE - 221 BCE).

In order to study the controversy regarding merchant status within the society of the Han Dynasty, this inquiry will focus on the practices merchants used to increase their wealth, thereby establishing a connection between those practices and the status of the merchant. Additionally, by exploring the prevailing philosophy of the time period, Confucianism, insight is provided into the moral values of the Han society and how those values impacted the view of profit. Finally, social attitudes are evaluated to establish the extent to which merchants were a necessary component of the growing economy and how society largely viewed merchants as providers of needed goods and services.

## 1. Money-making strategies and impacts on social status

Many of the predecessors of the Han Dynasty merchants such as Ji Ran 計然, Fan Li 範蠡, and Bai Gui 白圭 were successful merchants who used their distinct ingenuity and resourcefulness to gain influence and fame throughout the individual Chinese states. Their fame rested on their meticulous attention to detail, flexibility, and target audience. Because they understood their market and the commodities available to them, including natural resources like land, precious stones (e.g. jade), grains, silk, metals (e.g. gold and silver), and livestock, they attained wealth and influence across the states.

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As stated earlier, merchants were devalued during the Han Dynasty, yet the ancient mercantile system sustained them during this period, as they continued using the methods of those that came before them while at the same time being consigned to the lower ranks of society. Progenitors such as Ji Ran, a famous Chinese advisor and economist during the Spring and Autumn Period (771 BC - 476 BC), inspired the implementation of a set of economic precepts (intended initially to destroy the state of Wu) commonly used by merchants in subsequent dynasties that included the following: understanding supply and demand of various goods, anticipating need, evaluating prices, and studying times of surplus and shortage. For example, when evaluating pricing, Ji Ran understood that:

When the price of grain is too low, the farmers suffer; when it is too high, the merchants and artisans suffer. When the merchants and artisans suffer, wealth is not forthcoming; when the farmers suffer, they stop weeding the fields. If the price of grain is neither too high nor too low, farmers and merchants and artisans will all profit.

夫糴，二十病農，九十病末。末病則財不出，農病則草不辟矣。上不過八十，下不減三十，則農末俱利。

(Sima Qian 1199)

Ji Ran's principles have survived the centuries with noted wisdom that has stood the test of time, such as "When things are expensive, sell them off as if they were dirt, and buy up cheap goods as though they were jewels (貴出如糞土，賤取如珠玉)," "Money should circulate like flowing water (財幣欲其行如流水)" (Sima Qian 1199), and "In the time of drought, invest in boats; in time of the flood, invest in carriages (旱則資舟，水則資車)" (Sima Qian 1197).

Fan Li, Ji Ran's only disciple, used the same principles to ascend in economic status as he "acquired land property, stored up commodities, and made a profit by biding his time without much exertion (乃治產積居，與時逐而不責於人)." He was also able to accumulate thousands of pieces of gold three times within nineteen years. Later, his name became a byword for a rich man ("故言富者皆稱陶朱公") (Sima Qian 1201).

Preceded by Ji Ran and Fan Li, Bai Gui, the most famous merchant who lived during the Warring States Period, also developed strategies that influenced mercantilism throughout the centuries. His strategy mainly focused on the concept of "What others spurned I took, what others sought I supplied (故人棄

我取，人取我與)" (Sima Qian 1202). Similar to Ji Ran, Bai Gui understood the best time to buy and sell: "At harvest, he [stored] grain and sold silk and lacquer, when cocoons came on the market he [stored] raw silk and sold grain (夫歲孰取穀，予之絲漆；繭出取帛絮，予之食)" (Sima Qian 1202). He recognized the concept of supply and demand, knowing when the supply was low and the demand was high, he had commodities (grain and silk) available to make a higher profit. In terms of Bai Gui's lifestyle, he spent little on food and drink, curbing his appetite and sharing the hardships and pleasures of his slaves, but seized on any chance of attaining gain. Bai Gui encapsulated the ingenuity and resourcefulness of his predecessors and required the same of anyone who wished to follow in his footsteps. He asserted, "If men lack the intelligence to change with the times, the courage to make quick decisions, the magnanimity to give things away, and the strength to hold what they have, though they want to learn my art I will not teach them (是故其智不足與權變，勇不足以決斷，仁不能以取予，強不能有所守，雖欲學吾術，終告之矣)" (Sima Qian 1203).

The early profit-making strategies resulted in the social status rise of merchants. An example would be Lou of Wushi 烏氏僕, who traded livestock with the King of the Western Tribes 戎王 during the Warring States Period and was repaid tenfold. Sima Qian asserts that "The First Emperor of Qin made him equal in status to a prince and allowed him to pay homage at court in spring and autumn with the ministers (秦始皇帝令僕比封君，以時與列臣朝請)" (Sima Qian 1205). This suggests the high status of merchants during the Qin Dynasty (221 - 206 BC), a contrast to the low merchant rank later in the Han Dynasty.

An interesting note to make about the change in merchant status from the Warring States Period to the Han Dynasty is the impact of the rise of Confucianism. Ironically, according to Sima Qian, one of the ways Confucianism gained popularity was through Zigong 子貢, a merchant disciple of Confucius. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, Zigong was treated as an equal by the rulers of the states wherever he went and helped spread the fame of Confucius:

Wherever he went, the ruler received him as an equal. Indeed, it was thanks to Zigong that the fame of Confucius spread—a clear case of power increasing reputation.

所至，國君無不分庭與之抗禮。夫使孔子名布揚於天下者，子貢先後之也。此所謂得勢而益彰者乎？

(Sima Qian 1203)

However, years later Confucianism would relegate profit as immoral and bring down the status of merchants from prince-like to serf (L'Haridon 2).

## 2. Contradictory attitudes to profit (利 *li*)

Merchant activities and the “desire for profit” (欲利 *yu li*) are in opposition to Confucian moral values of “humaneness and propriety” (仁義 *ren yi*). The ideology of “desire and profit” in conflict with “humaneness and propriety” can be often found in ancient texts, which illustrates the clear juxtaposition between the two values: “The Master said, ‘The gentleman is versed in his duty. The small man is versed in his profit.’ (子曰：「君子喻于義，小人喻於利。」)” (*The Analects* 論語 4.16). To further demonstrate this, Huan Kuan 桓寬 (1st century BCE) points out that rulers should dissuade the frivolity of “profit” and pursue “humaneness and propriety”:

It is our humble opinion that the principle of ruling men lies in nipping in the bud wantonness and frivolity, in extending wide the elemental of virtue, in discouraging mercantile pursuits, and in displaying benevolence and righteousness. Let lucre never be paraded before the eyes of the people; only then will enlightenment flourish and folkways improve.

竊聞治人之道，防淫佚之原，廣道德之端，抑末利而開仁義，毋示以利，然後教化可興，而風俗可移也。

(*Yantie Lun* 鹽鐵論 1.2)

“Humaneness and propriety” were central values to the concept of the “gentleman” (君子 *jun zi*), who presented a standard of behavior in Confucianism to help the people and treat others with respect. Profit (or *li* 利), on the other hand, was considered to be a private enterprise: “The Master said, ‘To act with an eye to personal profit will incur a lot of resentment’ (子曰：「放於利而行，多怨。」) (*The Analects* 4.12). At times a topic of scorn within Confucianism, *li* was a very paradoxical and complex part of this intellectual tradition (L'Haridon 3). This is because of the ambiguous interpretations regarding *li*, which can mean either “benefit” or “profit.” Ancient Daoist

philosopher, Laozi 老子 (6th century BCE), expressed the complexity of *li* through this paradoxical statement: “Eliminate sageliness, throw away knowledge, and the people will benefit one hundredfold...Eliminate craftiness, throw away profit, then we will have no robbers and thieves (絕聖棄智，民利百倍...絕巧棄利，盜賊無有。) (*Dao De Jing* 道德經 19).” By using this contronym, *li*, in one and the same context, Laozi welcomes “benefit” and rejects “profit.” Carine Defoort, in discussing Warring States Period masters such as Mengzi 孟子 (ca 380 - 289 BCE) and Xunzi 荀子 (ca 310 - 235 BCE), details an inner tension regarding *li*:

Paradoxical expressions concerning *li* [profit] in various sources are the clearest indication that the difference in meaning was intended by the [authors]. Expressions...such as “大利不利” (六韜 *Liu Tao*), “利而弗利” (唐虞之道 *Tang Yu zhi Dao*), “利而勿利,” “不利之利,” “其利不利” (呂氏春秋 *Lü Shi Chun Qiu*), “利而不利者” (荀子 *Xun Zi*), and “不以利為利” (大學 *Da Xue*)...

(Defoort 154)

These examples illustrate the complex nature of *li* during this time period, as authors frequently used double meanings of *li* within the context of one discourse. For example, the terms “大利不用 (great benefit is useless)” and “大利不義 (great profit is not righteous)” contain different meanings for the world *li*. If the two did not differ, the expressions would be misleading and irrational (Defoort 154).

A story of Shun 舜 in the *Guanzi* 管子 demonstrates the paradox clearly between “benefit” and “profit”: “He tilled the mountains and fished the marshes, ‘not for his own benefit but to instruct the hundred surnames. They (in turn) benefited him. (不取其利，以教百姓。百姓舉利之。)’” (Defoort 179). The “benefit” is many times not as obvious because it is nonmaterial; conversely, “profit” is seen as resentful because later masters tilted their idea of *li* to material “profit” (e.g. money) rather than nonmaterial “profit” (e.g. education). However, Carine Defoort states, “The majority trend [of ancient Chinese masters] was still more positive about *li*, even in the sense of material benefit, but distinguished between its object: to benefit others was fine, not to benefit oneself” (Defoort 180).

Thus, profit was treated as both productive and destructive, an idea that developed more through the Warring States Period. Later, Sima Qian put forth that the desire for profit is the foundation of economic life (‘Autobiographical Afterword of the Grand Historian’

循吏列傳 149). This includes religious ritual aspects of society, which is juxtaposed to the idea of profit, but it required adornment and luxuries as part of the ritual practices. Based on the need for wealth in traditional ritualistic behavior (i.e. adornment and luxuries are necessities for worship), the desire for profit can be destructive because it evokes a continuous competition for wealth (L'Haridon 3).

The Grand Historian says: When I read the text of Mengzi, whenever I came to the question of King Hui of Liang, “What is good for my country,” I would put down the book and sigh: “Alas! The pursuit of profit is indeed the beginning of all disorder! The reason Confucius seldom talked about profit is that he was always on guard against this source of misfortune, as he said, “Acting according to one's own interests will lead to much resentment.” From the sovereign to common people, the destructive effect of the longing for profit is nothing different!

太史公曰：余讀孟子書，至梁惠王問「何以利吾國」，未嘗不廢書而歎也。曰：嗟乎，利誠亂之始也！夫子罕言利者，常防其原也。故曰「放於利而行，多怨」。自天子至於庶人，好利之弊何以異哉！

(Sima Qian 471)

### 3. Reflections on society's attitudes towards merchant activity

Unlike farmers, merchants were relegated to the lowest ranks of society because of moral rhetoric in that the merchant represented selfish desire, moral decline, and destructive profit, which is in direct contradiction to the Confucian principles of moral speech and character regarding behavior and social order. While Sima Qian discussed the complexity of economic life with no hierarchy of professions, nearly one hundred years later, Ban Gu wrote about an economic system that mirrored the Four Occupations. Though the merchants were suppressed, the rhetoric elevated the social status of agrarian practices, connoting “moral integrity, productivity, economic stimulus, communal labor, the sharing of wealth, and being tied to land and locality” (Sterckx 467). Traditional viewpoints of “emphasizing agriculture and suppressing mercantilism (重本抑末 *zhong ben you mo*)” became a complex issue within the Han society, as identified by Sima Qian, who argued that merchants were historically a necessary component of society. This argument opposes the traditional idea of

“agriculture as the ‘essential’ or ‘fundamental’ activity (本 *ben*) and commerce as the ‘unessential’ or ‘secondary’ activity (末 *mo*),” which was supported by Jia Yi 賈誼 (201-169 BC) and Chao Cuo 晁錯 (d. 154 BCE) (L'Haridon 5).

Jia Yi believed that wealth equals grain. He proposed hoarding grain as a guarantee for social order and a “great lifeline” (大命 *da ming*) for the empire:

As for the accumulation of supplies, it is the great lifeline of the world. If grain is abundant and there are ample material resources, what cannot be accomplished if attempted? [...] Now may your Majesty drive the people to return to farming, so that all will stick to the fundamentals, and cause everyone under Heaven to feed oneself from one's own labor so that all those who work at secondary occupations and those who wander from place to place without a secure means of livelihood will turn around and follow the road to the “southern acres”. Then the accumulation of supplies will be sufficient and the people will find joy in their station. Thus wealth can be created and the world can be kept at peace.

夫積貯者，天下之大命也。苟粟多而財有餘，何為而不成 [...] 今毆民而歸之農，皆著於本，使天下各食其力，末技遊食之民轉而緣南畝，則畜積足而人樂其所矣。可以為富安天下

(*Book of Han* 24A.1130)

Jia Yi emphasizes social order and political control by forcing economic independence and self-sufficiency through agriculture and limiting the movement of citizens.

Their nature will be at ease, they will be fully dedicated to their job, they won't have a mind to overstep the mark or be bent on illicit gains. Their conduct will be respectful and frugal, their supplies will accumulate, and they will be happy in their station. Therefore, it is said that if you work the people hard, they will be increasingly happy.

則民安性勸業而無懸愆之心，無苟得之，行恭儉蓄積而人樂其所。故曰：苦民而民益樂。  
(*Xinshu*, 3.103)

Although Jia Yi and Chao Cuo both had the same objective of maintaining power over the populous, Chao Cuo focused on the role of a ruler as a facilitator to “open up the way to means and resources” for the people (為開其資材之道也) (*Book of Han* 24A.1130). He suggested that meeting the people’s needs for food and clothing was necessary to keep their allegiance. Therefore, Chao Cuo stressed that the value of grains and textiles should be higher than that of precious metals and stones (Sterckx 477). However, although farmers were theoretically elevated by law to a higher status, they were still poor and looked down upon. This is juxtaposed to the plight of the merchants who were discriminated against by law but well-respected due to their wealth.

Now, the laws and regulations despise merchants, but the merchants have already become rich and noble; the law esteems peasants, but the peasants have already become poor and debased. Therefore, what is esteemed by custom is looked down upon by the ruler and what is despised by officials is honored by the law.

今法律賤商人，商人已富貴矣；尊農夫，農夫已貧賤矣。故俗之所貴，主之所賤也；吏之所卑，法之所尊也。

(*Book of Han* 24A.1133)

All in all, the central theme of elevating the agrarian and lowering the status of the merchants was a political statement in order to maintain control of a population as Chao Cuo maintains that “grain (economy) is the greatest utility of a ruler and the fundamental task in government” (粟者，王者大用，政之本務) (*Book of Han* 24A.1132).

Although it is clear that governmental authorities desired to maintain power and control over the merchant activities, there was still a powerful force within the society echoing Sima Qian that desire for profit would continue to overshadow the efforts of the empire to suppress the mercantile activities. Controlling the circulation of goods and people was a difficult task for a growing economy and impacted the empire’s efforts to remain a central power (Sterckx 472).

For instance, according to the *Book of Han*, the Western Han promoted agriculture over mercantile activities and expanded its anti-mercantile rhetoric. For instance, an emperor would never be seen in marketplaces or supporting merchants. The two main

markets were also located in the north-western part of the capital (長安 *Chang’an*), and ordinary citizens were restricted access to the merchants through specific gates which were far away from the imperial palaces. This was all to deter attention from being given to merchant activities and to restrain their significance within the population as a whole. To emphasize the difference in the court’s attitudes towards merchants and agriculture, the emperor was required to participate in the annual plowing ceremony where he plowed designated sacred fields (Sterckx 466).

Although merchants were put in a lower status and discriminated against by sumptuary laws, limiting their freedoms, they were well-respected because of their wealth. This only added to the polarized moral view of agrarian and mercantile activities that were perpetrated by the general public during the Han Dynasty. By contrast, scholars today believe that there was a significant difference between the anti-mercantile court rhetoric and economic reality. As the economy grew, the Han royal court realized that they needed new ideas for wealth management because the economy had become more monetized and market-oriented. However, the traditional moral ideology of “humanness and propriety,” as opposed to “desire for profit,” was used to contradict any calls for innovative thought (Sterckx 471).

The argument over wealth management versus moral idealism, in reality, was between government control and economic innovation. Specifically, it shifted from morality and duty to command over the economy, political control, and the assurance of social order. As the debate over how to address these seemingly paradoxical arguments, mercantilism gained strength throughout the region (Sadao 577). With the circulation of money growing, merchants were able to invest in land with cash, and those not officially registered as merchants began to practice mercantile activities.

## Conclusion

The controversy over the status of the merchant in early China began thousands of years ago, recorded in works such as ‘the Money-Makers’ chapter of the *Records of the Grand Historian*, the *Book of Han*, and more. Through these primary sources, it becomes clear that the complex correlation between merchants, social values, and political influence continues today. The practices used to increase their wealth, which added to their power and were sometimes vilified by society’s elite, are documented through records of Ji

Ran, Fan Li, and Bai Gui. In contrast, agriculture was revered and elevated as a socially moral enterprise by the accepted Confucian philosophy of the time that praised agrarian practices as examples of “humaneness and propriety,” which at the same time detested the individualism associated with “profit.” Ultimately, during the Han Dynasty merchants were looked down upon, to a greater extent than in earlier empires, because the goal of profit-making was directly in opposition to the prevailing philosophy of the day. Nevertheless, it was also widely accepted that merchants were a necessity in a growing economy. The transfer of goods and services was not simply greed but reflected the economic needs of the everyday Han Dynasty citizen. The elites and the religious needed luxury items, which came from the merchants, to practice their faith. Although consigned to a lower social status primarily by the thinkers of the day, the elite too needed the merchants’ services. This points to the complex issue between the moral and economic needs of a people. Additionally, the central governing authority used the Confucian moral code to legitimize their view of merchants as lower-class citizens in order to maintain their power, recognizing that merchants were an important component to the growth and strength of the Han Dynasty economy and wanting to thwart their influence among the populous. The elites profited, both monetarily and politically, from the work of the merchant while making sure to denigrate them socially for their own social gain. If one looks around today, much has not changed in how the public views the successful merchant. While enjoying their goods and services, they are sometimes besmirched by the profit they have amassed from their understanding of the market and those they serve. Though socially merchants seem to have been relegated to a lower status, works such as the *Record of the Grand Historian* and the *Book of Han* give evidence that mercantilism was a necessary part of economic growth during the Han Dynasty, making the contribution of merchants (along with farmers) an important component of the public good.

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# Can there be knowledge that is independent of culture?

Marsha C.Y. Lau 劉卓怡

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## Introduction

*Swan Lake*, one of my favourite ballets, is composed by Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky and choreographed by French dancer Marius Petipa (Teeuwissen). Despite the cultural differences between Tchaikovsky and Petipa, they both conveyed the same knowledge which I, as a Chinese student, also understood. This suggests that knowledge can transcend culture, even though culture is integral to our daily lives. Culture is the system of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour shared by a group of people. Knowledge that is independent of culture can be identified as universal truths, which remain consistent when exposed to different cultures. With reference to mathematics and the arts, this essay argues that there can be knowledge that is independent of culture, but the methods used to discover or communicate these truths cannot be. Firstly, I will examine how truths in mathematics manifest as outcomes that mathematicians attempt to discover, but culture dictates the gaps in knowledge that need to be filled with mathematics, subsequently influencing the methods used to discover these outcomes. Next, I will investigate how truths in the arts are fundamental human experiences rooted in biology and evolution that transcend culture (Gottschall 159). However, the methods in which artists portray them are dependent on the culture's definitions of these experiences.

## 1. Truths in Mathematics

Firstly, outcomes in mathematics can be independent of culture because they are universal truths that mathematicians attempt to discover. This means that outcomes discovered in one culture can be applied to another without changing its meaning or application. The Mayans discovered the truth of zero in 4 AD when constructing their calendar system consisting of 20-day months (Atkinson). The days were denoted by numbers zero to 19, zero being a placeholder with no numerical value to “give the god that was carrying the

number a rest” (Bellos). Thus in Mayan culture, zero meant “no number” to label that first day of the month. Meanwhile, Indian Buddhism practised the philosophy of *Śūnyatā*, meaning “emptiness” or “nothingness”. This philosophy led to the discovery of zero in the 5th century by Indian mathematicians to represent *Śūnyatā* (Szalay). Despite differences in Mayan and Indian culture, both arrived at the same truth of zero, meaning “absolute nothingness” and to indicate “nothing” (Resnick). This indicates that zero is a universal truth independent of culture, in other words, a truth that is there for any culture to discover. Hence, outcomes in mathematics, such as zero, are universal truths that can be discovered. They are unassociated with, and perhaps even a separate entity from, culture. This means that culture does not change the outcomes discovered and their applications, which deem them independent of culture.

However, culture indicates the gaps in knowledge that need to be filled with mathematics. These gaps then dictate the methods used by mathematicians to discover outcomes that can satisfy the needs of the culture. Therefore, different cultures may discover the same universal truth, but the methods used to reach this truth are dependent on culture. The discovery of zero in Maya was driven by the cultural need to represent the unnumbered first day of the month on its calendar to show devotion to its god (Bellos). Thus, Mayan culture presented a gap in knowledge: the absence of a symbol to represent this religiously significant day. Such cultural need directed Mayan mathematicians toward the truth of zero, thereby bringing forth the discovery of this outcome to fill the gap in knowledge, enabling the religious practice of honouring the gods on the calendar. In contrast, the discovery of zero in India originated from *Śūnyatā* — a realisation that Buddhists strive to master (Shizuteru et al. 9). This cultural practice presented a gap in knowledge: the inability to mathematically denote the concept of “emptiness”. Thus, this gap in knowledge directed Indian mathematicians towards the truth of

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zero, bringing forth the discovery of this outcome as a means of fulfilling the cultural need to numerically represent a significant concept in Buddhist culture. Despite discovering the same truth of zero, the reasons for such discoveries were different in the Mayan Empire and India because the two cultures indicated a different gap in knowledge that was to be filled with the outcome of zero. Therefore, Mayan and Indian mathematicians employed separate methods of discovering the same truth to meet their respective cultural needs. The former discovered zero by understanding the religious symbolism behind the calendar's placeholder and discovering an outcome that can most appropriately honour their god. In contrast, the latter discovered the same truth by dissecting the significance of *Śūnyatā* in Buddhist philosophy and discovering an outcome that can best represent this abstract concept that would otherwise be difficult to comprehend and achieve by Buddhists. Thus, culture reveals a need for certain truths to be discovered and thereby dictates the methods that mathematicians use to reach these truths to fill the gaps in knowledge informed by culture. This suggests that methods used to discover outcomes in mathematics cannot be independent of culture because they rest on the needs of the culture.

## 2. Truths in Arts

The arts differ from mathematics in that truths are not outcomes that can be discovered, but rather experiences that the artist inevitably encounters due to their evolutionary biology as human beings. Nonetheless, these truths are similarly independent of culture because they are part of the common human experience that resonate with every individual regardless of culture, an example of such being love. Unlike mathematics where culture informs the truths that need to be discovered, the motivation to communicate truths in the arts originates from the artist's experience. "How do I love thee?" is a sonnet written by the British poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1850, expressing her powerful and eternal love for her lover (LitCharts). Similarly, "The Reed", an ancient Chinese poem written by an anonymous poet around 1046-771 BC, expresses the poet's longing for his beloved (Shanghai Daily). Despite both poems being written in two separate cultures and time periods, they reflect the same truth of love. This suggests that love is a universal experience explored in literature that is not a product of culture but rather biology. Such biology may include physiological mechanisms that stimulate love, such as the neurotransmission of dopamine (Fisher et al. 61), or the instinctual desire for

successful reproduction inherited through evolution (Wedekind et al. 245). Since these experiences are universal and deeply embedded in the human species, they precede the influence of culture (White). This enables the truth of love that is portrayed through arts, like Browning's and the Chinese poem, to be relatable to all artists and audiences, thereby transcending culture. Therefore, universal truths in the arts are independent of culture because one, they reflect experiences that are fundamental to all humans regardless of the artist and audience's culture; and two, the motivation to communicate them through the arts stems from the experience of the artist, which are shaped by factors not limited to culture, including evolution.

Similar to mathematics, the methods that artists use to convey truths through their art cannot be independent of culture because culture produces unique facets of the same truth that impact the artist's understanding of their experience. Subsequently, artists select methods of creating art that can most accurately reflect their cultural understanding of the experience. Therefore, the methods used to communicate truths in the arts are dependent on the culture's definition of the truth, though the truth itself is independent of culture. "How do I love thee?" explores the feeling of yearning more passionately with direct proclamations, whereas "The Reed" depicts love more subtly through metaphors of crossing a stream filled with reeds as a symbol of the obstacles between the poet and his lover (Sun and Zheng). The contrasting differences in how the two poets convey the same truth of love lie in the variations of what love is accepted as by the poets' cultures. British culture defines love as romantic, prompting Browning to explore this truth based on her experiences with this culturally specific definition (Shi 25). Thus, the method that the poet uses to communicate love is through a romantic and passionate sonnet — a representation of romantic love defined by British culture. On the contrary, Chinese culture condemns the kind of passionate love Browning expresses, viewing it as an individualistic, selfish desire devoting no intentions toward the continuation of family (Shi 26). Hence, "The Reed" depicts love using a more subtle and tragic approach. As seen, under each universal truth in the arts are branches created by culture, which define the truth in a way that is compatible with the culture's values. These facets shape the artist's understanding of their experiences and the methods they take to communicate truths. Therefore similar to mathematics, the methods in which truths are portrayed in the arts cannot be independent of culture.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, knowledge can be independent of culture in both mathematics and the arts, but the methods in which these universal truths are discovered or portrayed cannot be. In mathematics, culture does not change the outcomes themselves, but the methods used to discover them are dependent on the specific gaps in knowledge that culture dictates need to be filled. In the arts, experiences transcend culture, but the methods used to communicate them are dependent on the culture's definition of the truth. Despite similarities across both Areas of Knowledge (AOK), mathematics is perhaps more independent of culture than the arts due to the existence of a single truth that mathematicians strive to discover. Truths in the arts are merely relatable cross-culturally due to human nature, but are inevitably coloured by the artist's and the audience's experiences. The arts' consequent susceptibility to factors of nurture render them more inextricable from culture. Therefore, while mathematical truths may be detached from culture, the same cannot be said in the arts, deeming mathematics more independent of culture than the arts.

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## 歷史學家和人文科學家如何通過講故事賦予知識意義？

Athena NG 吳欣蓓

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故事是一種敘事方式，其特徵有語言、藝術手法的運用，以人為中心等等。歷史、人文科學家講的故事均與人相關：歷史學家追溯人類的過去，人文科學家則探討人類和社會之間緊密的聯繫。本文將從知識的真實性、道德性兩方面探討歷史、人文科學家如何通過講故事的方式賦予知識意義。

歷史與人文科學家在故事中結合知識與合理想像性質的故事，建築一個游移於真實歷史事件與故事中，並加插一系列細節，讓受眾接觸到最接近知識的「真相」。標準教科書，如《全方位中國歷史3》(下稱《全3》)扼要概述歷史人物、事件。例如《全3》對太平天國的記述只提到領袖洪秀全因受《勸世良言》教義啟發，自稱上帝之次子，創立拜上帝會傳道<sup>1</sup>。傳統課本對知識只進行片面、概括的描述，導致受眾接觸的相關知識僅限於表層。

反觀《太平天國》<sup>2</sup>，作者史景遷在故事中描寫洪秀全與表兄分享《勸世良言》後皈依基督教、互相施洗的欣喜之情，為自稱上帝次子一事進行鋪墊。作者撰寫時

以史料為基準，進行想像及推論，探索人物的心路歷程。平白的歷史事件被豐富，補充了受眾對洪秀全選擇動機的空白。歷史學家通過想像力將人物的心理立體化，添補課本省略的細節，由此巧妙講述故事。此外，合理化想像的細節有助還原歷史空間，使受眾能夠認識更真實的歷史人物。

同樣張五常在《給女兒上的一課——也是女兒給我上的一課》中以解答女兒功課作主線<sup>3</sup>，引用「果農賣蘋果」的寓言解釋計劃、市場經濟的相對性。作者以溫馨家庭生活的真實情感引起讀者共鳴，容許立體化的知識與受眾連結；寓言則將理論融洽到有血有肉的故事，從而解釋計劃經濟對香港的影響，讓受眾貼近理論真相，亦即應用層面。人文科學家在故事中建立生活化的想像空間，將理論外推，使得知識更豐富。這讓受眾有身歷其境的理解，某程度更貼近經濟生活，達到其應用意義。

為細節化的故事進一步還原歷史真相，關鍵在於基於人性角度出發的合理化想像，然而這有其限制。《全3》以「一

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<sup>1</sup> 梁一鳴等：《全方位中國歷史3上》，2017年重印版，香港：時信出版(香港)有限公司，2011年。

<sup>2</sup> 史景遷(Jonathan D. Spence)：《太平天國》，朱慶葆等譯，台灣：時報文化出版企業股份有限公司，2016年3月。

<sup>3</sup> 張五常：〈給女兒上的一課——也是女兒給我上的一課〉，取自香港教育城網頁，1988年5月11日，

<https://reader.hkedcity.net/bookshelf/585/OEBPS/Chapter.xhtml>, 2022年2月19日讀取。

朝人物論成敗」的角度切入歷史<sup>4</sup>，但黃仁宇在《萬曆十五年》<sup>4</sup>，通過剖析歷史人物述封建帝國滅亡一事<sup>5</sup>。人物在細節下呈現鮮明的性格特徵，如皇帝因記錯朝會時間一怒之下扣減官員工資，突出他的孩子氣。但明史專家陳梧桐指出故事中對事實的敘述並無反映全部真相<sup>6</sup>。作者以事後諸葛推論人物動機並進行藝術加工<sup>7</sup>，人物的舉止都被塑造成理性的，嚴謹性有失於偏頗。因此，書內的主觀文筆、引導性語言可能使受眾出現偏差性認識。

如要透過故事細節化引起受眾共鳴，以達到理解之效則因人而異。這跟受眾的文化背景掛鉤，影響傳釋角度。林行止在《烏龜背蠍子過河的教訓》以題中寓言的細節<sup>8</sup>，比喻及評論香港回歸的隱患。該故事前後未論述詳細背景，如非殖民時期的港人，定難以體會隱喻背後對香港未來的憂慮。因此，單憑故事細節未必有助理解知識原貌，受眾亦需依賴已有知識或文化經驗領略故事的情思。

歷史、人文科學家在講故事時通過添加細節，將刻板化知識在心理描寫、寓言等濾鏡下，變得更豐富和貼近原貌，體現其真實性。相比教科書，故事細節能深化受眾對該知識領域的理解，但效果因人而異，只揭露某部分真相亦會導致認識偏差。

其次，歷史與人文科學家在故事中賦予知識道德屬性，激發受眾反思。以心理學家 Philip Zimbardo 撰述的「史丹佛監獄實驗」為例<sup>9</sup>，實驗探討了人性善惡的本質，並借用墮天使的典故提出「路西法效應」解釋觀測結果<sup>10</sup>，指人在權力的誘惑下，會拋棄固有的道德觀念。震撼情節讓受眾瞭解到性格並非評斷善惡的唯一原則<sup>11</sup>，因而引起關於善惡二元性的反思。Zimbardo 在書末祭出抵抗守則，推廣堅毅等品德，受眾因而獲益。人文科學家在故事中解釋社會現象時加以針對性的應對方案，推動品德教育。

Hayden White 提出歷史學家講故事時會賦予歷史本身缺乏的意義和框<sup>12</sup>，因此受眾可達到「讀史修德」之效。以《廉頗

<sup>4</sup> 黃仁宇:《萬曆十五年(新版)》，1999年7月，台灣:食貨出版社。

<sup>5</sup> <書評 - 萬曆十五年>，Jason的虛擬世界，n.d., <https://www.carjaswong.com/Reading/1587%20Page.htm>，2022年2月28日讀取。

<sup>6</sup> 歷史的真相1: <怎麼評價黃仁宇的《萬曆十五年》?>，小熊問答,2021年7月10日，<https://bearask.com/zh-hk/history/356798.html>，2022年2月28日讀取。

<sup>7</sup> zxasqw44: <萬曆十五年 黃仁宇 感想>，知識分享平台，痞客邦，2010年1月3日，<https://zxasqw44.pixnet.net/blog/post/3593743>，2022年2月28日讀去。

<sup>8</sup> 林行止:《烏龜背蠍子過河的教訓》，《信報》，取自世代懺悔錄:香港前途考古札記，1984年1月30日，<https://medium.com/recall-hk/f-a2bf28182c>，2022年2月26日讀取。

<sup>9</sup> 菲利浦·金巴多(Philip Zimbardo):《路西法效應:在善惡的邊緣了解人性(修訂版)》，孫佩奴、陳雅馨譯，2014年9月，台灣:商周出版。

<sup>10</sup> 郝廣才《史丹佛監獄實驗》，今周刊 921 期,2014年8月14日，<https://www.businesstoday.com.tw/article/category/80407/post/201408140035>，2022年2月14日讀取。

<sup>11</sup> NaL:<More Than Thriller : 探討人性善惡本質,一場聞名世界的史丹佛監獄實驗>，A Day Magazine 時尚生活雜誌，A Day Magazine 時尚生活雜誌，2018年6月27日 <https://www.adaymag.com/2018/06/27/stanford-prison-experiment.html>，2022年2月14日讀取。

<sup>12</sup> 柯文:<【書摘】歷史學家柯文:講故事,是我的史觀的核心>，《走過兩遍的路:我的中國歷史學家之旅》，取自端傳媒 Initium Media，2021年8月1日，<https://theinitium.com/article/20210801-note-bookreview/>，2022年2月11日讀取。

藺相如列傳》為例<sup>13</sup>，司馬遷透過塑造人物的對立性提出「和而不同，求同存異」的啟迪<sup>14</sup>，並倡導「先國家之急而後私讎」的儒家高尚情操。鑑於這些道德思想與現實社交生活有密切關聯，受眾可聯繫個人經歷傳釋。歷史學家通過具道德性的故事引發思辨，為培養社交價值觀起了積極影響。

雖然歷史故事可反映道德意義，但某些倫理價值卻顯得不合時宜，未見得能在現實社會體現。司馬遷《史記》致敬了游俠、刺客等追求非主流價值的人物<sup>15</sup>，例如在《荊軻列傳》便歌頌俠義精神、捨命報恩等封建倫理道德<sup>16</sup>。然而時境變遷，這些價值觀不再適用於提倡個人主義的當代社會，因此並非所有故事蘊含的道德倫理具跨時空性。

縱使人文科學中的故事具教育意義，卻未必牽連到倫理價值。以《永遠的現在式》為例<sup>17</sup>，心理學家 Suzanne Corkin 對失憶症病者 H.M. 進行有關記憶的研究，並得出海馬迴具儲存記憶的結論<sup>18</sup>，這無疑對學術界了解大腦功能有莫大貢獻。作者在故事中以第一人稱視角紀錄與 H.M. 的交流，旨在傳達研究的重要性，並無衍生倫理意義。

課本知識旨在協助學生掌握考試重心，猶如閉門造車。歷史、人文科學家在講故事時通過對人物的塑造及設置情節中的衝擊力，增添教育意義，有效填補課本缺漏的道德觀念。而某些故事無法引申道德意義，又或當中思想與當前社會不相投合。

綜上所述，歷史和人文科學家在講故事時通過建構真實性、道德性等手法為知識賦予意——包括還原知識面貌、傳遞價值觀等，然而預期效果卻受限於傳釋角度、時空等因素。相比課本單調的敘述，故事更有效賦予知識意義，然而故事作為語言的載體，嚴謹性不足，衍生意義極可能為弦外之意，混淆受眾。因此，若能先吸收課本知識再閱讀故事，定能為知識賦予更上一層樓的意義。

<sup>13</sup> 司馬遷:《廉頗藺相如列傳》(節選),取自香港教育局網頁, <https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/tc/curriculum-development/kla/chi-edu/nss-lang/0051.pdf>, 2022年2月19日讀取。

<sup>14</sup> 喻家糊塗仙:〈廉頗藺相如的「和而不同」〉,人人焦點, 2021年2月13日, <https://ppfocus.com/0/cu34fe3b7.html>, 2022年2月19日讀取。

<sup>15</sup> 林嘉穎:〈《史記》盡錄價值觀 人生追求可不同〉,香港文匯報·中文視野專欄,取自香港浸會大學國際學院, 2016年4月29日, <https://resources.cie.hkbu.edu.hk/chiview/2016/04/29>, 2022年2月27日讀取。

<sup>16</sup> 陳雅雯:〈解讀邊緣人物的內在情志——《史記》:〈刺客列傳〉、〈游俠列傳〉、〈滑稽列傳〉讀後有感〉,遠東學報第二十卷第二期,台灣:遠東技術學院通識教育中心, 2002年2月11日, <http://www.fe.u.edu.tw/adms/aao/aao95/jfeu/2022/2/27>, 2022年2月27日讀取。

<sup>17</sup> 蘇珊·科金(Suzanne Corkin):《永遠的現在式:失憶患者 H.M. 給人類記憶科學的贈禮》,謝雯仔譯,台灣:夏日出版, 2015年5月。

<sup>18</sup> 黃怡:〈永遠的現在式——HM 與腦部科學家們的奇異旅程〉,獨立評論@天下·藝文, 2017年7月1日, <https://opinion.cw.com.tw/blog/profile/195/article/5838>。

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# To what extent are the cosmological ideas of Pliny the Elder and Laozi on the creation of the world similar?

Selina W.Y. Hui 許暉欣

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## Introduction

Since the very beginning of recorded history, philosophers around the world have attempted to develop theories to explain the creation of the universe. Such theories include the philosophies developed by Pliny the Elder and Laozi. Pliny the Elder was a key figure of Stoic natural philosophy who lived in Rome during the first century, theorizing that Nature was both the Creation and the Creator, which was created out of nothingness and created for humans. On the other hand, Laozi advocated Daoist natural philosophy, stating that the universe was created by the Creator (*Dao* 道) according to the rules of nature. Both these original philosophies were theorized more than a thousand years earlier than the modern Big Bang Theory. These beginnings of metaphysical philosophy eventually led to modern cosmology<sup>1</sup>, the active area of mainstream physics and astronomy as we know it today based on Einstein's 1917 model of the universe (Smeenk and George).

In this essay, I argue that Pliny the Elder and Laozi's views on the creation of the universe are similar but different. I will begin with an account of Pliny the Elder's anthropocentric<sup>2</sup> theory and Laozi's ecocentric<sup>3</sup> theory on how the universe was created and an analysis of the arguments that drove their theories. Then, I will compare and contrast these two theories to find their similarities and differences. Finally, I will conclude and discuss the implications of my research. By examining the similarities of these theories, we can better understand the connections between the two philosophers even though they were vastly divided by space and time. By understanding the differences in these ancient theories, we can learn how to shape our global worldview today by caring about nature and not acting only for human gain.

## 1. Introduction of philosophers

### 1.1 Pliny the elder and his idea of nature

Pliny the Elder (23 CE – 79 CE) was a Roman scholar and dedicated naturalist, to the extent that he sacrificed his life for the wonders of nature. He was also the author of *Natural History*, an encyclopedic work of uncertain accuracy that was the scientific authority until the Middle Ages. The work was dedicated to Titus, who was the emperor of the Roman Empire from 79 to 81 CE. The *Natural History*, which was divided into 37 books, was completed in 77 CE (Stannard).

Despite the disputed accuracy of his work, there were some notable values such as the importance of nature that are still of value today. Some important parts of Pliny's thoughts, including the underlying concept of *natura*, or nature, were informed by Stoic<sup>4</sup> natural philosophy, which maintained that "Natura is the world, both as a whole and as its separate components; she is both the creator and the creation" (Beagon 26). He also drew on the Stoic conception of a divine power permeating the universe, a directing force or spirit present in everything in the world ("Pliny the Elder").

Pliny began a military career at age 23, serving in Germania (present-day Germany), where he became a commander. Later, in semi-retirement, Pliny focused on his studies and writing, as described by his nephew, Pliny the Younger (61 – 113 CE), in various published letters. He finally returned to Rome upon the ascension of Vespasian (69 CE), his last assignment as the commander of a fleet in the Bay of Naples, where he

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<sup>1</sup> Cosmology is the field of astrology that involves the origin and evolution of the universe (Tillman and Harvey 1).

<sup>2</sup> Anthropocentrism literally means "human-centered", or philosophically, the ethical belief that humans alone possess intrinsic value, while everything else only holds value in their ability to serve humans (Goralnik and Nelson 1).

<sup>3</sup> Ecocentrism is the ethical belief that recognizes intrinsic value in all parts of the environment and nature.

<sup>4</sup> Stoicism is the school of Hellenistic philosophy founded by Zeno of Citium in Athens, emphasizing personal eudaimonic virtue ethics informed by a system of logic and views on the natural world.

was charged with the suppression of piracy. In his late years, he went ashore to ascertain the cause of an unusual cloud formation, which was discovered to be the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Records say that Pliny was overcome by fumes resulting from volcanic activity, and died in 79 CE (Stannard). His death was caused by his deep curiosity about the wonders of nature.

## 1.1 Laozi and Dao

Laozi 老子 purportedly lived in the 5th century BC and was known as the founding philosopher of Daoism<sup>5</sup> and author of the primary Daoist text, *Daodejing* 道德經. He was venerated as a philosopher by Confucians<sup>6</sup> and as a saint in traditional religion, and was worshiped as an imperial ancestor during the Tang dynasty (Ames and Kaltenmark).

Laozi's personal life is a mystery, but according to the *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*] recorded by Sima Qian 司馬遷, Laozi was the head of the state library and museum of Eastern Zhou 東周 during the Warring States period (戰國時期). With this distinguished position, the state library and museum provided an abundant source of knowledge and wisdom for Laozi, which laid the foundation for his philosophy ("Lao Tzu"). It was said that he met the young Confucius, who was fascinated by Laozi to the extent that he compared Laozi to a dragon. Later he realized that the great Zhou Dynasty was on the verge of collapse (the beginning of the Warring States period). Hence, he resigned his post in court and traveled to Yinxi. On this voyage to the west, he went to the Hangu Pass 函谷關, the entrance to the state of Qi 齊國, where the legendary guardian of the pass, Yinxi 尹喜, insisted he write a book for him (Littlejohn). Laozi accepted and wrote a book in two sections of around 5,000 characters, the *Daodejing*, where he set down his ideas about the *Dao* or "the Way", and *de* 德 "virtue". At the end of the legend, Laozi left and Sima Qian states that "nobody knows what became of him" (Ames and Kaltenmark).

The *Daodejing* focused on presenting a way of life that intended to restore harmony and tranquility to a kingdom plagued by widespread disorder in the Warring States period. It introduced *Dao* or the "Natural Way" as the virtue for which the text called *ziran* 自然 or "nature", and *wuwei* 無為 or "effortless action". (Littlejohn).

<sup>5</sup> Daoism (or Taoism) is a Chinese philosophy that was invented in 6th century BCE which emphasizes living in harmony with *Dao*.

<sup>6</sup> Confucianism is a system of Chinese philosophical thought that focuses on the importance of personal ethics and morality founded

## 2. The nature of the "Creator"

Stoicism and Taoism both claim that the ideal way of living is to follow nature, agreeing that living with nature is the same as living virtuously (Yu 1). Perhaps this apparent similarity roots in the comparable concepts of the "Creator" that Pliny and Laozi had, the sacred being that created everything in the universe. Both philosophers theorized that the singular being deemed the "Creator" created the universe. Nevertheless, Pliny the Elder thought that the being was Mother Nature (*natura*), while Laozi thought that it was *Dao*.

### 2.1 Mother nature as the "Creator"

The word "nature" originates from the Latin word *natura*, which means "the course of things; natural character; quality; the universe". The concept of nature was defined very broadly, most notably by the early philosophers of ancient Greece, such as Pythagoras and Plato, the theorists of the physical world. The Stoics thought that the basis of human "happiness" was to "live in agreement with nature" (Yu 1). Hence, the Stoics maintained their understanding of human nature in a cosmic or universal nature, saying "our natures are parts of the nature of the universe". They imagined the universe as a 'living animal', and the nature of the universe as πνεῦμα *pneuma*, a "fiery form of air" that was present in the whole universe (Yu 2). Specifically, they also identified *pneuma* as the sacred being that was the "Creator" of the universe. Pliny the Elder was a Roman philosopher that advocated the Stoic natural philosophy regarding the nature of the "Creator". The theory was well recorded in his sole surviving work, *Natural History*.

In the second part of book II, Pliny shows "nature" as a divine, immortal being with many unique characteristics:

*sacer est, aeternus, immensus, totus in toto, immo vero ipse totum, infinitus ac finito similis, omnium rerum certus et similis incerto, extra intra cuncta complexus in se, idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipsa natura.*

by Confucius. The followers of this belief and Confucius were called Confucians.

It is sacred, eternal, immense, wholly within the whole; finite, and yet resembling the infinite; certain of all things and yet resembling the uncertain, holding in its embrace all things that are external and internal; at the same time the work of nature and nature herself.

(Plin., *Nat.* II. ii. [Bostock Trans.])

Numerous elements of the persona Nature (*natura*) are presented. Pliny first describes nature as *sacer* or “sacred”, which suggests the holy nature and divinity of the “Creator” and aligns with the Stoic association of *pneuma* as a holy entity.

He states nature is also *aeternus*, or “eternal”, with the Creator being metaphysically present to eternity. The term *immensus* shows that “nature” is a boundless and vast being that exists in the universe, which makes sense as it is the Creator of the universe. Then, he uses four different paradoxical characteristics to describe Mother Nature. Firstly, he proposes that nature is *finito* or “finite”, yet resembles the *infinitus* or “infinite”. “Finite” and “infinite” are concepts that directly contradict each other, meaning “limited” and “unlimited”, respectively. Pliny views nature as everything in the universe without limits, yet it exists within the bounded world. The idea that Nature encompasses both the finite and infinite is illogical, and most people would think this opposes common sense and logic, but Pliny advocates this theory broadly. Subsequently, the second paradox is that nature is ‘certain of all things, yet resembling the uncertain.’ He illustrates the *certus* or “certainty” of all things in nature but states successively the presence of *incerto* or “uncertainty” in nature. Pliny theorizes that Nature follows specific patterns with certainty, but there is uncertainty with the many variations of boundless possibilities. Next, Pliny articulates nature to “hold in its embrace all things that are external and internal.” This means the “Creator” made everything that is inside and outside the universe. For the last paradox, Pliny states that the Creator is the “work of nature and nature herself”. As the most abstract concept, he portrays nature as both the “Creator”, “Mother Nature”, and everything in the universe.

Here, Pliny uses asyndetic listing to present the paradoxes, many contradictory characteristics of “mother nature” simultaneously. This shows the flexibility of his philosophical model, as he describes the identity and character of Nature over a wide spectrum, allowing for multiple interpretations. Overall, Pliny the Elder theorizes that the nature of the Creator is a singular being who created the universe with many unique characteristics.

Furthermore, Pliny also gave the “Creator” a name. Pliny the Elder named “nature” as the mother of all creation, with a solemn salute to the natural world. With this honor, he elaborates on the nature of the Creator: “Salve, parens rerum omnium Natura” [Hail, Nature, mother of all creation] (Plin., *Nat.* XXXVII. LXXVIII. [Bostock trans.]). Pliny first hails Nature as the “mother of all creation”, a praise that is given to the holy. The Latin word *parens*, meaning “parent” or “mother” in this context, emphasizes the important role Pliny gives to Nature, especially as he specifies the role with *rerum omnium*, the “mother of all creation”. The lexicon he uses shows his worship of Nature as a goddess, hailing her as the abstract being that both created and is the beginning of the universe’s existence.

## 2.2 Dao as the “Creator”

Laozi also based his philosophy on nature, using *Dao* as the premise of Daoism. *Dao* in its most literal form means “road” or “pathway,” while in its verb form, it also means “to show the way.” Additionally, Laozi’s concept of *Dao* is described as the “correct or natural way the universe operates”, or as Schwartz put it as a working definition, “organic order” (194).

In cosmology, Laozi shares Pliny’s identification of a singular entity as responsible for the creation of the universe, and he gave this “Creator” a name. In the *Daodejing*, Laozi describes his theory as follows:

無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。

At the beginning of heaven and earth, there was no name; when it became the mother of a myriad of things, there was a name *Dao*.

(*Daodejing*, Chapter 1 [Legge Trans.])

In short six-character prose, Laozi summarizes his idea of the role of the “Creator”. As *wu* 無 “nothingness”, birthed *tiandi* 天地 “heaven and earth”, he says the “Creator” had no name at the beginning of the universe and appeared from nothingness. On the contrary, if the “Creator” was conceived of as *youming* 有名, or “having a name”, then it would be *wanwuzhimu* 萬物之母 or the “Mother of all things”. After the “Creator” created everything in the universe and became the “mother”, she was given a name - *Dao*, the central belief in Daoism. Hence, *Dao* was the mother of heaven, earth, and a myriad of things. This metaphysical belief was a core ideology in Daoism, with the “Creator” given multiple names and identities.

Furthermore, this is shown when Laozi attempts to specifically name the “Creator” while referencing specific Daoist concepts.

吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之，名曰大。

I do not know its name, so I give it the designation of the Dao (the Way). Giving it another name, I call it the “Great”.

(*Daodejing*, Chapter 25 [Legge Trans.])

In this extract, Laozi attempts to describe the “Creator” and give it multiple names. He first states he did not know its name and tries to give the being the name of *Dao*. Laozi thinks *Dao* is the natural way the world operates, which makes sense as the “creator” of the universe dictated the order of the universe. As another attempt at naming this sacred being, Laozi names it *da* 大 “Great”. This name describes *Dao* as an infinitesimal, boundless, and all-powerful being. Laozi’s description matches his core theory of the “Creator” personified as *Dao*, the being that controls the natural order of the universe.

### 2.3 Comparison: both Pliny and Laozi paint the “Creator” as a singular being

Comparatively, Pliny and Laozi’s theories are similar in the way they both agree that the “Creator” was an abstract singular being. Pliny believes “mother nature” is the sole divine being that created the universe, while Laozi thinks *Dao* created the universe, who received its name after creating everything in the universe. Thus, it is generally thought that the one who created the universe is a sacred abstract being, which both regard as a maternal figure.

## 3. The origination of the universe

The Stoic doctrine stated that *pneuma* was the core force that permeated the whole world (Rubarth). In *Natural History*, Pliny often linked the origins of life with direct generation from the elements: sky, sea, and earth. These theories were on par with the Stoic thinking at the time, which attributed the seeds of life to the fiery generative *pneuma* (Beagon 24). Daoism predominantly thought that everything in the universe spontaneously appeared following the “Natural Way” (Yu 3). This was starkly different from Pliny’s philosophy and tended to focus on the natural order.

Thus, both philosophers had varying views on the origin of the universe. While Pliny’s theory was anthropocentric, focusing on human beings as the most important entity in the universe, Laozi’s theory was ecocentric, placing value on the entire environment and all life in it, and not just the parts that were beneficial to humans.

### 3.1 Pliny’s anthropocentric reasoning

Pliny’s reasoning closely resembled the school of Hellenistic<sup>7</sup> philosophy he followed, Stoicism, and he explained that mother nature created the universe for mankind, which is a largely anthropocentric theory. In *Natural History*, Pliny states the following:

*principium iure tribuetur homini, cuius causa videtur cuncta alia genuisse natura, magna, saeva mercede contra tanta sua munera, non ut sit satis aestimare, parens melior homini an tristior noverca fuerit.*

Our main attention is justly due to Man, for whose sake all other things appear to have been produced by Nature; though, on the other hand, with so great and so severe penalties for the enjoyment of her bounteous gifts, that it is far from easy to determine, whether she has proved to him a kind parent, or a merciless step-mother.

(Plin., *Nat.* VII. I. [Rackham Trans.])

Using the words *principium* “main”, and *iure* “justly”, Pliny immediately emphasizes the importance of “Man” or mankind by stating everything that happened was, according to him, done as a tribute to men. Having not yet mentioned the subject of the sentence, he already states that the act was done for men, placing the human species on a pedestal. This shows his selfishness and bias towards mankind, as he thinks humans are the center of the universe and only human beings have innate value. This is further verified when he continues with “for whose sake all other things appear to have been produced by nature”. It was only for mankind’s “sake” that mother nature had created the world and produced other things in the universe, emphasizing the superiority of mankind over the environment. The word “man” is repeated with the corresponding Latin word *homini* “human” twice in the phrase, which places further emphasis on the importance of humans. Hence, Pliny the Elder rather egotistically thinks mother nature created the universe only for men.

<sup>7</sup> The Hellenistic period is the era of Ancient Greek and Mediterranean history between the death of Alexander the Great

in 323 BC and the emergence of the Roman empire and the conquest of Ptolemaic Egypt (“Hellenistic Greece”).



### 3.2 Laozi's ecocentrism

Laozi's theory on the creation of the universe was more respectful of the environment. He thought that the universe was created by *Dao* with no emphasis on serving mankind, which was a more ecocentric philosophy. In *Daodejing*, Laozi states that the standard sequence of the universe is as follows:

人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

Man follows earth, earth follows heaven, heaven follows *Dao*, *Dao* takes itself and nature as the standard.

(*Daodejing*, Chapter 25)

Firstly, the quotation suggests that *di* 地 “earth” includes the space of existence. He states *renfadi* 人法地, “the law of mankind’s existence must be subject to the operational laws of the earth”, while the course of the Earth is *difatian* 地法天, “must follow the laws of heaven”. For example, this can be shown using the seasons, since the four seasons depend on the operational rotation of the Earth around the sun. Next, the laws of heaven are *tianfadao* 天法道, “controlled by the laws of *Dao*”. Lastly, the laws of *Dao* are *daofaziran* 道法自然, “must follow the natural flow of things”, which means using the existing state as a standard without needing to make any overt changes. In summary, Daoism states that mankind, earth, heaven, and *Dao* all have to follow the laws of nature to operate.

But what are the laws of nature? This can be exemplified by another quote below:

道常無為而無不為。

The *Dao* in its regular course does nothing.

Yet through it, everything is done.

(*Daodejing*, Chapter 37. [Legge Trans.])

This quote states that when following the regular rules of *Dao*, one does not have to do any change explicitly but should rather follow the flow of nature. In summary, heaven and earth both have to follow the rules of nature in Daoism to operate.

Laozi's ideology is a hierarchy of matter in the universe (Seidel et al.). At the bottom, mankind is required to follow the laws of nature, while on top, the natural order of the universe must be followed by everything. He theorized everything in the universe

had to follow the natural laws of nature in his ecocentric philosophy, with mankind being the least important being, which is in stark contrast to Pliny's theory.

### 3.3 Comparison: Pliny's anthropocentrism vs. Laozi's ecocentrism

By comparison, Pliny the Elder and Laozi have contrasting views about the origin of the universe. Pliny emphasized throughout his book the importance of mankind, saying that mother nature created the universe solely for mankind's sake. He gave mankind superiority over other things in the universe, inferring that mother nature created the universe as a “tribute” to mankind, a wholly anthropocentric theory. On the other hand, Laozi emphasized and placed value on all matters of nature, saying that the order of the universe was following the natural flow of nature. He said that mankind has to follow the natural course or flow of things or *Dao*. Hence, if *Dao* created the universe from nothingness, everything including mankind must follow the natural flow of the universe, a more ecocentric theory.

### Conclusion

It is often thought that Pliny the Elder's anthropocentric theory of the creation of the universe is overly egotistical since it mainly focuses on “mother nature” serving mankind. Rather, Laozi's more environmental and objective reasoning in his theory takes a broader perspective and places inherent value on all aspects of nature in the universe. Coincidentally, Pliny the Elder and Laozi both expressed that abstract beings, nature, and *Dao* respectively, were the mother of all creation and created the universe. Ancient Western and Chinese theories were sometimes very similar, even though these philosophers were far apart in space and time.

The two philosophers also had different reasons for the purpose of the creation of the universe, with Pliny's being anthropocentric, focusing on the importance of serving mankind; while Laozi's was ecocentric, with a greater focus on the combined value of the natural environment in the universe. These differences in their respective theories were probably due to the philosophical schools of thought they belonged in. Pliny the Elder was a Stoic philosopher, who firmly believed in the divine power permeating the universe, which strongly influenced his anthropocentric ideologies. By contrast, Laozi was the founder of the Daoist school of thought, which focused on the key

idea of *Dao* and nature and allowed the natural run of its course.

Moreover, a possible reason for their dissimilar ideologies could be because of the historical period they had lived in. Pliny lived during the two centuries known as the *Pax Romana* or “Roman Peace”, the golden age of the Roman empire which had unprecedented stability and prosperity. During this period of Roman imperial expansion, the citizens lived in an empire that had conquered most of the Western world they knew, and hence they felt an enhanced sense of superiority, as the so-called “rulers” of the world (“The Roman Empire”).

On the other hand, Laozi lived during the late Zhou Dynasty in the early part of his life. When he wrote the *Daodejing*, his country was about to fall into an era of division with frequent warfare and annexations of various states (Quan), which caused him to write about many topics including the natural order of the universe. Laozi’s theory of harmonious order was largely influenced by his desire for peace as he witnessed the downfall of a great dynasty.

There is much value in studying ancient philosophers’ ideas about how the universe came into existence. In the modern world, the environmental crisis represents the biggest challenge to humanity today, perhaps ever (Gill and Galluzzo). These ancient philosophers’ ideas are opposite theories in the area of environmental ethics, regarding how humanity views and deals with nature. It is thought that the main reason for the environmental crisis we face today is because of the overdominant “anthropocentric” thinking that stemmed from ancient philosophic thought, which eventually led to the destruction of the environment.

Contrarily, ecocentric thinking could provide an alternative to the modern impasse (Nelson 295). Nowadays, concern with nature for its own sake, as more than a product of human concern and calculation, cannot be separated from the questions of human welfare and happiness (Adorno and Horkheimer 16). This is accentuated in Chinese culture, as environmental destruction connects intrinsically with the goals of achieving health, longevity, and wellbeing. Hence, I believe we should follow Laozi’s ecocentric way of thinking by advocating against excess human interference or damage to the environment. If we stop cutting trees and emitting greenhouse gasses into the environment, which interferes with “the natural way” in Daoism, the environment can be saved from destruction and the human race can live harmoniously.

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# The impact of the introduction of chilies on Chinese cuisine, medicine, and cultural expression

Kiara Qizhen Ba 巴麒麟

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## Introduction

Chilies are known worldwide for their unique flavor - the pleasure and pain they bring due to their numbing quality. The Chinese, especially, are famous for incorporating the spice into their culture. According to Guinness World Records, China produced more than twenty million tons of chilies in 2018, accounting for 45.2% of chilies in global production (Guinness World Records, 2018). In a 2015 online survey involving residents in Chinese tier-1 cities, 11.48% said they ate chilies the most often out of all seasonings (Ma). Despite the large production and widespread consumption, chilies did not originate in China and were not recorded as a part of Chinese cuisine until the 1790s (Dott 57).

This essay will explore how the introduction of chilies impacted Chinese cuisine, medicine, and cultural expression. Initially, chilies were used often among the common folks due to the lack of salt at the end of the Ming Dynasty in economic recession. Over time, it developed into a spice used to cover the smell of rotten foods and preserve and flavor foods. Chilies in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) are seen as irritants connected to the five elements, flavors, and organs. Chilies became integrated into TCM as a *yang* 阳 food and replaced many existing local herbs to cure malaria and hemorrhoids in China. Due to their circulation improvement property, chilies play a role in removing humidity in the body in humid and hot locations (Dott 109).

The concept of “pungent” or *xin* 辛 that chilies fall under existed since ancient times, as seen through the oracle bones. It was initially a pictogram of a knife used for tattooing, the extended meaning is a painful sensation that makes people shed tears (Figure 1). This is later changed to mean an irritating feeling, which is the modern definition of the character. Before chilies, examples of foods under the *xin* category include

shallots, radish, leeks, rapeseed, lettuce, and mustard greens. When chilies were introduced, Chinese people found that chilies have a different flavor than other foods, and the category *xin la* 辛辣 was created. *Xin la*



Figure 1. The development of the character xin “辛” from oracle bones to the modern character (Pin Shi Wen Wang 品诗文网).

came to be associated with chilies and foods such as onions, garlic, and ginger.

## 1. Introduction of chilies to China

Chilies, which fall under the genus *Capsicum*, originated in Central and South America (Dott 22). During his first voyage to America from 1492 to 1493, Christopher Columbus found them, documenting in his journal that they were “everywhere”. He later brought the fruit back to Spain, and chilies were later on carried worldwide through the waves of the Age of Exploration (Dott 23).

Various theories exist on how chilies were introduced to China. The first record of chilies in a Chinese source is from a gazetteer in 1591 from Hangzhou, Zhejiang (Dott 25). “Gazetteer” or *di fang zhi* 地方志 refers to a history of events happening at a specific location throughout the dynasties, usually written by officials and literati. The Zhejiang gazetteer provides a primary source for when chilies were introduced in China, suggesting that chilies were brought to China by sea. A second theory is that chilies were first introduced to India, then brought to China by crossing the Himalayas by European merchants (Dott 25). A third theory states that they spread from the coast of India to China through the Maritime Silk Road and were

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widely used among sailors (Jiang *et al.*). Finally, others believe that chilies were introduced to China through Japan and Korea (Ho). These theories can be supported by the names given to chilies in China. For example, the “foreign pepper” or *fan jiao* 番椒 refers to imports from Western regions. The “ocean pepper”, also known as *hai jiao* 海椒 refers to imports from the sea. “Qin pepper” or *qin jiao* 秦椒 refers to imports from Shaanxi. These names hint at the possible routes chilies had taken into China (Cao 11).

Regardless of the routes chilies took, the spread of chilies would not have occurred without smaller communities, such as traders, sailors, and farmers, pushing it forward. Brian R. Dott, author of “The Chile Pepper in China: A Cultural Biography”, observed the lack of documentation, and believed that farmers played a major role in introducing chilies (Dott 40). He writes, “northeastern *Shengjing* farmers, for whom exchanges with nearby Korean farmers may have been more common than any interactions with sailors, traders, government officials, or elite authors” are responsible for the spread of chilies (Dott 40). Because the records were mainly controlled by the elite, noble, and imperial families, the official documents might not have recorded these interactions within these smaller communities.

The journey of chilies in China can be broken down into four rough stages. The first was from the 1600s to the 1700s, when chilies were beginning to be accepted in the Chinese community. From the 1700s to the 1800s, people began to develop a deeper understanding of chilies in cuisine as famous dishes emerged. According to folklore, the dish Dan Dan noodles and Ma Po Tofu were believed to be created in this period, the former in 1841 (Leung), the latter in 1862 (Sun). There is no direct evidence of these dishes recorded, as traditions associated with chilies may have been passed down from generation to generation, unnoticed by officials. In this period, chilies were also categorized as “pungent and spicy” or *xin la*. The phenomenon of incorporating chilies into cuisine shows the population combining traditional Chinese cultural concepts such as *xin* with new imported goods from America, creating new categories like *xin la* (Cao 40).

According to Cao Yu, from the 1800s to the 1900s, chilies moved from practical to symbolic (Cao 40). As the Chinese territory expanded under the Qing dynasty, chilies were carried into different regions and integrated into regional cuisines. Disasters such as rebellions and famine resulted in depopulation. For example, 75% of Sichuanese disappeared or were

killed due to chaotic events during the Ming-Qing transition. The province, however, soon found itself repopulated by immigrants from Hunan and Hubei. These examples of internal mass migration due to man-made or natural disasters may have led to an increased spread of the fruit in households nationwide (Leonard).

From the 1900s onwards, chilies became a symbol associated with revolutionaries and the fighting spirit, which was heavily influenced by the social and political turmoil of the century. From 1927 to 1949, chilies spread through the Chinese Civil War as a symbol of resistance. Previously, chilies were considered spices only for the workers and were used as a substitute for salt for those who could not afford it. However, as the revolutionaries won the Chinese Civil War, chilies were stripped of their title as the spice for the poor and appealed to a broader range of audiences. The spice also gained popularity after Chairman Mao considered chilies to play an essential role in this revolution. He claimed, “if you are even afraid of chilies in your bowl, how will you dare to attack your enemies? (“你连碗里的辣椒都怕，还敢打敌人?”) (Dott 191).” Its spread was due in large part to the mass migrations resulting from reforms, wars, and revolutions during the twentieth century in China. For example, during the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945, chilies gained popularity due to forced migration and citizens fleeing from the war. Many citizens in this period found themselves temporarily settling in the city of Chongqing in Sichuan province, living as if they were locals. After the war ended, some people who temporarily settled in Chongqing decided to return to their hometown or head to other provinces. They brought the habits developed in Chongqing with them, including eating chilies (Pilcher).

It is essential to acknowledge that chilies still bear strong symbolism today. After the communist party won the civil war, policies for agriculture reform, foreign trade, and investment were made. The industrialization of China resulted in much of the countryside population moving into cities for new opportunities. These citizens took the habits from their hometowns, such as eating chilies, to preserve their culinary practices. As a result, local brands producing chili products emerged as the nation industrialized. In 1996, the famous chili sauce named *Lao Gan Ma* 老干妈 was created in Guizhou, with *La Mei Zi* 辣妹子 following in 1998 in Hunan, *Ying Chao* 英潮 in 2000 in Shandong. With the increase in population in coastal cities, demand for delicacies followed. Food

reminded people of home. A chain of restaurants was then created to suit the needs of citizens, bringing foods from all over the nation to the coastal cities. Chilies mass-sold in bottles such as *Lao Gan Ma* added flavor to quick dishes and chile sauces were added to a wide variety of snacks. These ongoing changes were all part of the industrialization journey of chilies in China.

## 2. Chilies In Chinese cuisine

In Chinese culinary practices, chilies were used to preserve and add flavor. First, it became a type of flavoring (Dott 88). By the end of the Ming Dynasty, the corvée labor salt producers were put through a decreased number of salt producers, resulting in a decline in salt production (Guo 507). Furthermore, the government put tight regulations on markets, including salt, which was then limited. Thomas O. Höllmann writes: “each market had a large administrative system,” responsible for “issuing licenses, certifying contracts, regularly setting prices, inspecting weights and measures, checking the money in circulation, supervising product quality, and keeping watch on visitors (Höllmann 42).” The increased price of salt may be due to demand being greater than the supply, as most social classes relied on the salt market for cuisine and food storage. The strict administrative system may have made salt inaccessible and unaffordable to many households. The importation of chilies filled this space, giving the common folk a solution for enhancing dull, unflavored foods, as it had been one of the only abundant flavorings available when the salt industry was going through a crisis (Dott 88).

In the same period, chilies were beginning to be accepted into local communities, and the Ming government had no tight regulations on the resource. Chilies could have spread from household to household compared to salt that was gathered in one market, although there is a lack of records and materials on chili markets in the Ming Dynasty. This fact may indicate that the fruit was not yet widely available or used for cuisine or was in the process of being bartered between smaller markets or between households. As gazetteers were mainly government officials, they may also not understand the lifestyle of the common folks, who may have used chilies before the elites grew fond of the fruit.

Chilies also gave civilians a new solution to preserve food in the absence of salt (Figure 2). The evidence of chilies replacing salt, in the local minorities especially, can be shown from records of gazetteers across China,

e.g. in Suzhou in 1722 and Guizhou in 1741 (Dott 76). This practice has been recorded around the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, the last reference dating back to 1877 (Dott 89). Substitution of salt using chilies was uncommon starting from the nineteenth century, which could be attributed to the Chinese empire’s interaction with the West. The West may have brought competition into the market for salt, leading to a larger supply, which could have made salt more affordable. The revenue for salt may also have improved due to government management, hence reducing the use of chilies.

According to Paul Sherman and Jennifer Billing: “the hotter the temperature of the region, the more spices are consumed in the regional cuisine” (Billing *et al.* 49). Their theory was that spices had anti-microbial functions, which may help to preserve meat in tropical or subtropical regions. In the absence of salt, this may also suggest why chilies had suddenly become the most used spice in specific regions, such as Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou in China. These regions are known for their humidity and hot temperatures. The people living in these regions eat chilies to remove the humidity or dampness *shi qi* 湿气 from their bodies. However, while this applies to many areas in China, it does not necessarily have universal value.



**Figure 2.** Gua La Zi 挂辣子, or “hanging up chilies” by Cao Quantang 曹全堂. The artwork shows Chinese people harvesting dried chilies. Chinese words of “*ji qing you yu* 吉庆有余, *bu bu deng gao* 步步登高, *hong bian tian di* 红遍天地” are hidden in the art. The words carry the meanings of good luck, steady rise in career, and status (date unknown).

### 3. Chilies In traditional Chinese medicine

Chilies were widely used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and viewed as food and as a type of medication, often, the two categories overlapping in the field of TCM. Both cuisine and medicine strive to maintain this balance through different methods, one from a habit established in everyday life through cuisine, the other using a more invasive method, through drugs and medicine. In Chinese medicine, health is viewed more as a state of well-being than an “absence of disease” (Deirdre 56). Chilies are often seen in TCM as food and medicine due to their pungent taste. According to TCM, pungency can remove “evil” in the body, promoting wellbeing.

TCM advocates nurturing life and achieving a state of well-being by finding a balance between *yin* and *yang*, two concepts representing all polarities in the universe. According to TCM, there is harmony within the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, earth), the five flavors (pungent, sour, salty, bitter, sweet), and the five key organs (lungs, liver, kidney, heart, spleen). Chilies are a representation of *yang* foods, with their pungent taste and red color. Specifically, chilies' pungent and spicy characteristics are linked to metal and lungs in the five elements and the five organs. To the ancient Chinese, chilies are also known to improve circulation of *qi* (气), “blood” or *xue* 血, and “body fluids” or *jin ye* 津液, removing toxic substances in an individual in the process (Deirdre 75). *Qi* 气, in Chinese culture, is regarded as the “vital force” behind everything. In *Lunheng* 论衡, the philosopher Wang Chong 王充 (27AD~97AD), writes that: “*qi* 气 can be found anywhere in the universe, only with *qi* 气 can things grow” (“天地气合，万物自生”). The geographical location of an individual also mattered. Depending on whether the location is cold, hot, dry, or humid, there are different foods to take to reach a balance.

The idea of “nurturing life”, or *yangsheng* 养生 is not always spoken about in a medical context, as TCM is also built on the argument that “medicine and cuisine share the same origin” or *yao shi tong yuan* 药食同源. The concept comes from the *Inner Canon of Huangdi*, also known as *Huangdi Nei Jing Taisu* 黄帝内经太素 from the Tang Dynasty. The author Yang Shang Shan 杨上善 explained the connection between cuisine and *yangsheng* further. “eaten on an empty stomach, it is *shi wu* 食物 or “food”; eaten when suffering, it is *yao wu* 药物 or “medicine” (Yang). Sun Simiao 孙思邈, a Chinese physician in the Tang Dynasty, raised the

concept of *shi zhi* 食治, or “treating diseases with cuisine” (Wilms).

Records reveal the use of chilies to cure diseases in ancient China. In *Shi Wu Ben Cao* 食物本草 [*Food Materia Medica*], the capsaicin in chilies is known to increase the production of saliva and gastric juices, hence increasing appetite (Dott 106). Malaria can be found in humid places and can often be cured with chilies. A gazetteer from Guangdong recorded the use of chilies on Malaria in 1766, “[they] can remove waterborne malaria *shui zhang* 水胀 and disperse rheumatism or *feng shi* 风湿. In Guangxi, Malaria is even more prevalent, and one cannot go a single day without [eating them] (Dott 110).” Chinese physician Zhao Xuemin 赵学敏 (1719AD – 1805AD) also identified chilies as a treatment for Malaria. He wrote, “A young servant had developed Malaria. [He took] myriad medicines without result. In early winter, by chance [he] ate some chile paste. He found this very palatable and needed it with every meal. Before long, the Malaria was cured (Dott 110).” In TCM, the pungency and spiciness of chilies is believed to help release toxins from one’s body. It would make sense for the common folk to use local foods available, as chilies are usually grown in humid regions, where Malaria is the most common (CDC).

Before chilies arrived and were incorporated into TCM, malaria was cured using other locally available plants. For example, *chang shan* and *shu qi* were recorded to be used for malaria in 1596, in *Ben Cao Gang Mu* 本草纲目 [*Compendium of Materia Medica*] and other medical works in 1565, 1667, and 1680 separately. Both plants are categorized as pungent in TCM, the same category as chilies. However, there seemed to be a halt in its use from 1680 onwards, which could have been caused by the rise of popularity of chilies in local communities (Dott 78).

The antimicrobial qualities of chilies also cure forms of seafood poisoning, as Dott points out, using an example from 1757: “It [chili] can detoxify poison or *jie du* 解毒 from aquatic animals. People who overeat fish or crab and get diarrhea, also known as *xie xie* 泄泻, or dropsy, translated from *zhang man* 胀满, can boil the fruit to make a dose of medicinal broth” (Dott 108). The use of the fruit can also treat diarrhea in a general fashion, where it is used to detoxify poisons, sometimes in the large intestines, other times used for snakebites (Dott 111). Xu Wenbi 徐文璧 (1537AD – 1602AD), a military general, recorded that chilies were known as “a miraculous cure for hemorrhoids (Dott 111).” Terms derived from chilies like *xin la* are incorporated into everyday lives in contemporary

China. However, the use of chilies to cure diseases is now less prevalent, as many focus on maximizing its use in cuisine rather than medicine, turning to western medicine for treatment.

#### 4. Chilies In Chinese cultural expression

Several historical accounts reveal the association of chilies with the fighting spirit. First of all, the fruit is deeply connected with the Chinese Communist Revolution and its fighting spirit. Chairman Mao once said, “不吃辣椒不革命” or “no eating chile peppers, no revolution (Leonard).” The song “The East Is Red”, also known as *Dong Fang Hong* 东方红, which slowly evolved into a revolutionary tune, also included chilies. Parts of the lyrics sang, “if you want to eat chiles, you must not fear spiciness. If you want to become a red soldier, you must not fear killing.” (Dott 167). The soldiers in the song dream of fighting for a new society and a new world. In that line alone, the spiciness from chilies is directly linked to fearlessness and the fighting spirit. This is one of the examples of using chilies to emotionally appeal to the song’s audiences and encourage fearlessness from the public.

Furthermore, chilies were also a symbol of fierce women emerging during and after the revolution. Women who had an assertive personality and a sex appeal, often willing to bend female gender norms, are given the nickname of *la mei zi* 辣妹子, literally translating into “chili girl” (Dott 163). In this scenario, the chili’s characteristics of spicy and hot relate to human characteristics, such as being hot-headed and speaking up for oneself. This personality was encouraged, as seen in many propaganda posters during the Chinese Communist Revolution and reforms. In these posters, women take an independent role, dedicating themselves to the communist party for the greater good. There is still controversy on whether the term *la mei zi* is a symbol of gender equality or gender inequality, as some regard (Dott 163) it as an example of objectifying women. Nevertheless, the symbol of chilies has been deeply incorporated into history.

It is significant to note that the link also applies to literature. In the play *The Peony Pavilion*, chilies are used to represent the passion the female lead has for the male lead in the opera (Dott 158). In the book *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, one of the characters in the book is given the nickname *Feng Lazi* 凤辣子, translated into “Chili Feng.” In this case, “Feng” is taken from the character’s name, while *Lazi* is a

colloquial term for chilies, hinting at the character’s feisty personality (Dott 161).

In addition to representing the revolutionary spirit, chilies are also recognized for their beauty. Chilies were first used as decoration by the elites, incorporated into aesthetics for the white flowers and the red fruits they bore. The earliest medical text to include chilies, *Shi Wu Ben Cao* 食物本草 [*Food Materia Medica*], also pointed out that “people plant them [chilies] in pots as decorations (Dott 147).” Red has often been associated with fertility and happiness in China, and because of its symbol, many objects use red. For example, a specific shade of red was used to make imperial ceramics in the Qing Dynasty for the elites (Dott 144), called “chili red” or *la jiao hong* 辣椒红. This may show the impact and the importance the spice has on the culture, for even the imperial house deemed it a beautiful color.



Figure 3. The Xi’an government’s Eight Great Oddities of Shaanxi Culture poster. The third shows the oddity of a girl filling the bowl with chili peppers. The text translates to “chili peppers are considered a main dish” in Shaanxi, published in 2014 (Dott 154).

In many parts of China, chilies can still be seen as a symbol or a tool for cultural expression. First, chilies have appeared on posters of the “China Dream” or *Zhong Guo Meng* 中国梦, a campaign encouraging young Chinese people to contribute to the nation (Dott 153). In the capital of Shaanxi province, Xi’an, chilies were included in the poster for “Eight Great Oddities of Shaanxi Culture” (Figure 3). Finally, chilies are most commonly used as decoration during Chinese New Year, where chilies are often hung on decorative strings on the door. It symbolizes good luck, which Chinese people describe using a four-character word: *hong hong huo huo* 红红火火, meaning “vitality” and “prosperity”.



## Conclusion

The introduction of chilies changed the Chinese in various ways - this essay specifically focused on cuisine, medicine, and cultural expression. Chilies provided an alternative method of flavoring and preserving foods and became a substitute for salt in China when the supply was low. It became a cure for common diseases such as malaria and hemorrhoids in TCM. It also acted as a symbol of resistance in revolutionary periods and of independent women as China entered reforms. In modern times, chilies are a symbol of prosperity and good luck.

It is essential to realize that spices such as chilies can reflect the history of many different cultures and carry cultures across nations, ancient empires, modern societies, and worldwide. From Native Americans to Columbus, to many unnamed Portuguese and Spanish merchants, to finally the people of China, the chili has crossed the ocean to reach where it is today. Studying chilies allows us to gain insight into both the practices and the ideologies of different groups of people at a given point in time and trace the development of cuisine, medicine, and cultural expression developments throughout the centuries. Studying chilies means researching the social history of China. The history of food is never just about the food itself, but the people, the nation, and the never-ending culture behind the food.

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# What role does divine authority play in Confucius' and Plato's views of an ideal society?

Carissa Wong 王樂怡

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## Introduction

Belief in divine authority was a prominent aspect of society during the time of ancient civilizations. Religion has been used to legitimize power since the concept of kingship in Mesopotamia around the 23rd century BC (Brisch). The belief in god(s) brought people together and helped form social structures, inspiring new political thought such as the divine right of the kings, and paving the way for religious rule and theocracies in today's society.

The Greek philosopher Plato lived from 428 BC – 348 BC in Greece. He was a student of Socrates who founded the Academy and wrote many works on the different branches of philosophy, including political thought (Meinwald). The Chinese philosopher Confucius lived between 551 BC - 479 BC in the state of Lu 魯 (now Shandong province 山東省 in China). He formed the way of life known as Confucianism with influences from the Duke of Zhou 周公 (Chin, 2).

This research paper aims to determine the role of divine authority in Plato's and Confucius' conception of the ideal society by comparing their works: *The Laws* and the Mandate of Heaven recounted from the *Shujing* 書經. Though these visions of society consist of multiple factors, education, economy, morals, and so on, this paper will focus on two crucial elements alone: namely the role of the ruling elite and the maintenance of social order among the people. These factors are arguably the most significant and the basis for creating an ideal society.

Plato and Confucius both argue that divine authority is important because it rules society indirectly and establishes control over the people. However, their proposed method of governance differs, with Plato believing in a ruling elite and Confucius, an emperor. This is because Plato contends that the innate ability of "reason" imbues humans with the ability to act as a proxy for the gods, while Confucius believes that the Mandate of Heaven dictates the proxy.

## 1. Context

### 1.2 Plato's ideal society

Plato wrote *The Laws* when Athens was a democracy (around 356 BC), contrasting the social norms and practices of the time (Balot and Fossheim, 388-389). When democracy was restored in Athens in 403 BC, the city made it illegal to enforce laws that had not been inscribed, which raised the status of written laws that were already in place. During the time of Plato's production of *The Laws*, the Athenians were more 'document-minded' and had more trust in written texts, which potentially made his work more influential in society (Nightingale, 106).

In *The Laws*, which offers a description of the second-best ideal city after that shown in *The Republic*, Plato draws up laws for a regime in which philosophers are absent. Even though *The Republic* is Plato's most distinguished work, it is removed from human reality, as it represents Plato's vision of a highly idealized utopia. In contrast, *The Laws* represents his vision of a realistic city that takes into account the defects of human nature (Baima, 1). Therefore, this essay uses Plato's work *The Laws*, where divine authority is more thoroughly emphasized as there is more information about the role of the gods that could be analyzed. *The Laws* introduce an ideal society called *Magnesia*, where citizens govern themselves rather than being governed by philosopher-kings but are kept in line by the written laws. The citizens here see the city as founded with the help of the gods and believe the law to be an embodiment of divine reason. (Lane, 176)

### 1.3 Confucius and the Mandate of Heaven

In his philosophy, Confucius proposed recalling beliefs and lifestyles from the Zhou 周 dynasty by advocating a ritualized life and promoting the continuity of cultural values and social practices.

Confucius was inspired by the Duke of Zhou, who helped refine the feudal ritual system using the Mandate of Heaven. The Mandate of Heaven, considered as a divine source of authority, claimed that there can only be one legitimate ruler reigning as *tianzi* 天子 “The Son of Heaven”. The mandate did not require a ruler to be of noble birth or stipulate any time conditions. Due to the success of this ruling system, the Zhou kings were able to hold their kingdom for several centuries. However, by Confucius’ time, the system had become so corrupt that symbolic power alone was not able to hold the kingdom together, and civil war over the centuries divided the country into 14 feudal states (Weiming, 1). The dominant view adopted by Realists and Legalists during Confucius’ time was that strict law was the basis of policy. Many people thought that the system used in the Zhou dynasty was bankrupt, in light of the apparent evidence that the gods failed to prevent social upheavals from happening (Berling, 1). Therefore, Confucius reinforced the Mandate of Heaven through his teachings.

孔子曰。君子有三畏。

畏天命、畏大人、畏聖人之言。

小人不知天命而不畏也、狎大人、侮聖人之言。

The Master said:” The noble man stands in awe of three things:

1. He is in awe of the decree of Heaven
2. He is in awe of great men.
3. He is in awe of the words of the sages

The inferior man does not know the decree of Heaven; he takes great men lightly, and laughs at the words of the sages.

(Confucius, *The Analects*, 16-8 [Lau Trans.])

In the *Analects*, Confucius states that every man should follow the Mandate of Heaven. The “decree of Heaven” is mentioned as the first thing a “noble” man should be “in awe of”, indicating its importance, which comes before great men and sages. He also constantly mentions the word *wei* 畏 in this phrase, which is translated to “awe”. This suggests the “respectful fear” people should have for gods, which I will mention below. It is evident that the Mandate of Heaven is significant in determining what makes a good citizen through the juxtaposition of the “noble” man versus the “inferior” man. It also implies that there is nothing in. If a man does not know the decree or is not in awe, he is not considered a “noble” man in society. This emphasizes the importance of the

Mandate of Heaven as a means of ruling and establishing social control over the citizens.

The inspiration for Confucius’ political ideas originate from the historical accounts of the Mandate of Heaven in the Zhou dynasty, which is found in the *Shujing*. Therefore, this essay will use the *Shujing* for the analysis of divine authority in the Mandate of Heaven.

## 2. Role of divine authority in the ruling elite

### 2.1 Plato

Plato argues that *Magnesia*, the ideal society in *The Laws*, should be ruled by laws that are mandated by the gods and are communicated by the ruling elite.

Specifically, he argues that the system implementing the laws will consist of many political offices, some of which will be decided by the people. However, there will be some offices chosen by elite citizens. This raises the question, who is capable of becoming an elite citizen or running the political offices? Plato describes the standards of a member capable of joining the synod (nocturnal council) in the description below:

δέκα μὲν τῶν νομοφυλάκων τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους αἰεί, τοὺς δὲ τὰριστεῖα εἰληφότας ἅπαντας δεῖν εἰς ταῦτὸ συλλέγεσθαι τούτοις, ἔτι δὲ τοὺς ἐκδημήσαντας ἐπὶ ζήτησιν εἴ τί που πρὸς τὴν νομοφυλακίαν γίγνοιτο ἐν καιρίον ἀκοῦσαι καὶ σωθέντας οἴκαδε, δόξαι, τούτοις αὐτοῖς διαβασανισθέντας, τοῦ συλλόγου ἀξιοκοινωνήτους εἶναι: πρὸς τούτοις δὲ ἓνα ἕκαστον δεῖν προσλαμβάνειν τῶν

The ten senior members... in company with all who have won the award of merit; and, moreover, those inspectors who have gone abroad to discover if they could hear of anything pertinent to the safekeeping of laws, and who, in the belief that they have succeeded, have come safely home again, shall, after undergoing a searching test, be deemed worthy to take part in the synod?

(Plato. *The Laws* XII 961a [Bury Trans.])

Similar to *The Republic*, the “ten senior members” are the “guardians of the law”, who supervise the general citizen bodies, and scrutineers who check their authority. The nocturnal council, the most distinguished office – also known as the ruling elite – is in charge of researching the philosophical nature of law and mandating law through Plato’s philosophy of divine reason (Baima, 1).

Moreover, the idea that the ten senior members have to have “won the award of merit” reveals traces of meritocracy in society. It can be seen in the possibility of determining who is capable of joining the nocturnal council. This mirrors the conceptualization of philosopher-kings as seen in *The Republic*. However, while *The Republic* is mainly autocratic, *The Laws* provide a more balanced society with a mix of democratic, autocratic, and meritocratic elements, allowing greater flexibility and freedom for the people. However, this brings in the question, how are humans capable of implementing laws that are supposed to be mandated by gods?

Plato connects the law mandated by gods and the role of humans with an explanation of a myth of life during the time of the titan Kronos. In this narrative, Kronos, knowing that human nature is corrupt, puts divine beings in charge of humans. Through their love for humanity, the divine beings take charge of humans in a society generously, and keep people free from feuds and happy (Baima, 1). The Athenian then proceeds with an explanation:

*λέγει δὴ καὶ νῦν οὗτος ὁ λόγος, ἀληθείᾳ χρώμενος, ὡς ὅσων ἂν πόλεων μὴ θεὸς ἀλλὰ τις ἄρχη θνητός, οὐκ ἔστιν κακῶν αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ πόνων ἀνάφυξις: ἀλλὰ μιμεῖσθαι δεῖν ἡμᾶς οἷεται πάση μηχανῇ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ Κρόνου λεγόμενον βίον, καὶ ὅσον ἐν ἡμῖν ἀθανασίας ἔνεστι, τούτῳ πειθομένους δημοσίᾳ.*

[And] it deems that we ought by every means to imitate the life of the age of Kronos, as tradition paints it, and order both our homes and our States in obedience to the immortal element within us, giving to reason's ordering the name of “law.

(Plato. *The Laws* IV 713e-714a [Bury Trans.])

He explains that although the reign of Kronos is over and divine beings are no longer present, there is a divine element called reason within human beings, as supported by the word “immortal”. This allows the gods to communicate order towards the nocturnal council, letting them mandate the law of the people. Through his logic that the laws are connected to the divine, Plato concludes that “those who serve the interests of the city are serving the gods.” (Baima, 1). Δημοσίᾳ meaning “belonging to the people” is used as the definition of “law”, emphasizing that this law exists within us, drawing out the democratic elements that make up this society. This also appeals to the people, making them feel as though they have an important role to play in society.

Plato believes that gods are indirectly ruling society

through the ruling elite and that humans are endowed with divine ability, allowing them to communicate the laws mandated by the gods. Therefore, he proposes that the ruling elite can use this ability to convey these laws to guard people in society.

## 2.2 Confucius

Confucius argues that the ideal society should follow the ruling system in the Mandate of Heaven, similar to the European principle of the “Divine Right of Kings”. However, unlike this concept, the Chinese believed that the mandate was granted by the heavens, a supreme power that could be interpreted as a deity or an impersonal nature, rather than a single god or gods (Kucha and Llewellyn, 1). In this framework, the emperor (Son of Heaven) rules society under the Mandate of Heaven which was granted to him/her in the political form of a benevolent autocracy. Thus, heaven rules earth indirectly through the son of heaven (Miyamoto).

Moreover, the Mandate of Heaven heavily emphasizes the importance of *ren* 仁, or “humanity”, and virtue in the emperor. In line with this, adverse conditions which occur throughout the country are blamed upon the lack of virtue in the ruler. In the face of a natural disaster, the emperor must amend the situation by imposing taxes or famine relief. Thus, the Mandate of Heaven functions as a type of social contract, or a hypothetical agreement between the ruled and the rulers. This requires the emperor and his ministers to show their love for their country to ensure the mythical ideal state. If they fail to do so, the emperor will be considered unworthy and so the people will have the right to remove him (Miyamoto).

One notable account about using the Mandate of Heaven to instruct the emperor was related by the councilor of Shang Yi Yin 伊尹 to the young emperor Tai Jia 太甲, the second of the Shang 商 kings:

He said, “Oh! Of the old the former kings of Xia cultivated earnestly their virtue, and then there were no calamities from Heaven...“Oh! Do you, who now succeed to the throne, reverse these warnings in your person. Think of them! -- sacred counsels of vast importance, admirable words forcibly set forth! The ways of Heaven are not invariable: -- on the good-doer it sends down all blessings, and on the evil-doer it sends down all miseries. Do you but be virtuous, be it in small things or in large, and the myriad religions will have cause for rejoicing.

(*Shujing*, Book V, Chapter XIII [Legge Trans.])

Shang Yi Yin emphasizes the importance of virtue in the first line whilst warning the emperor about the social contract when he mentions, “there were no calamities from Heaven” and “revere these warnings.” The repetition of “Do you” and imperatives such as “revere” create a commanding tone, inducing fear but purpose for the emperor to ensure prosperity. The juxtaposition of “good-doer” and “evil-doer” further suggests that there is no in-between between “good” and “evil. By highlighting the consequences when one is not a “good-doer”, the emperor is forced to remain in virtue to prevent being labeled as an “evil-doer”.

Another account using the Mandate of Heaven to justify the overthrow of the emperor of Shang was used by the Duke of Shao 召康公, who was a high-ranking minister of the Zhou dynasty:

我不可以不監于有夏亦不可不監于有殷，  
我不敢知曰，有夏服天命，惟有歷年，  
我不敢知曰，不其延惟不敬厥德乃早墜厥命。

We should by all means survey the dynasties of Hea and Yin. I do not presume to know and say, ‘The dynasty of Hea was to enjoy the favoring decree of Heaven for so many years,’ nor do I presume to know and say, ‘it could not continue longer.’ The fact was simply that, for want of the virtue of reverence, the decree in its favor prematurely fell to the ground.

(Shujing, Book V, Chapter XL [Legge Trans.])

As seen in the Duke’s repetition of 我不敢 “I do not presume”, he is cautious of offending the current emperor, sticking to his role of a duke who should not question the will of the gods. However, his short answer emphasizes the importance of virtue in maintaining the Mandate of Heaven in the emperor’s favor. The metaphor that describes how the decree “fell to the ground” suggests the severity of failing to maintain this social contract. This highlights how much faith and belief people have for the Mandate of Heaven. Thus, emperors who are accused of losing the Mandate of Heaven could automatically lose the faith of the people as well. In this case, the importance of the Mandate of Heaven is placed above the emperor, magnifying the significance of divine authority in the ruling elite.

## 2.3 Similarities

Divine authority is seen to play a dominant role in justifying and supporting the rule of the ruling elite in both Confucius and Plato’s depictions of the ideal

society. Their different method of governance reflects the distinct cultures and societies of the philosophers. While Plato uses the rule of laws mandated by the gods, and Confucius, the rule of an emperor under the gods, their ruling elites both demonstrate the indirect rule of divine authority

## 3. Role of divine authority in maintaining social order among the people

### 3.1 Plato

Plato relies on the belief in the gods to maintain social order among the people as he argues it is a key element in persuading people to believe the laws, which are the embodiment of reason. He does this by arguing that “αἰδοῦς” “respectful fear” is fundamental in maintaining social order among the citizens. Respectful fear suggests that humans should be in awe of the gods, fearing their power but also respecting that gods are doing everything for the sake of humans. This is essential in a society like *Magnesia*, as the philosophers in *The Republic* are absent because society is ruled by the laws governed by a ruling elite. Plato demonstrates this through his critique of democracy in book IV:

For, thinking themselves knowing, men became fearless; and audacity begat effrontery. For to be fearless of the opinion of a better man, owing to self-confidence, is nothing else than base effrontery; and it is brought about by liberty that is audacious to excess.... Next after this form of liberty would come that which refuses to be subject to the rulers...then, as the penultimate stage, comes the effort to disregard the laws.

(Plato. *The Laws* IV, 701a-b [Bury Trans.])

Plato argues that the fearlessness of men leads to audacity and that finally leads to excessive freedom. This mindset sets off a chain reaction, whereby citizens begin to question rule and end by disregarding laws, encouraging rebellions, and finally orchestrating the downfall of this ideal society. While *The Laws* does not mention any specific example of fearing the gods, he explains the reasons why humans must follow virtue and respect them.

He asserts that the gods care for humans because care is one of the main virtues Plato’s ethics is based on (Lane, 17).

He was present at our recent argument, and heard that the gods, being good with all goodness, possess such care of the whole as is most proper to themselves... Let us join next in enquiring what is that goodness of theirs in respect of which we agree that they are good. Come now, do we say that prudence and the possession of reason are parts of goodness, and the opposites of these of badness?

(Plato. *The Laws*, Book X, 900d [Bury Trans.])

Plato strengthens his argument with the repetition of “good” when mentioning the gods. He also links the “goodness” of gods to reason, encouraging the citizens to feel connected and part of the gods as a part of their “goodness” exists within the citizens. The citizen’s belief in the gods is also supported by Plato’s portrayal of Kronos in the myth where the divine authority ruling the earth is shown as virtuous and aspiring for prosperity.

Finally, he manifests the mindset of serving society by linking it to honor in the translation below:

The right way to gain honor is by serving honorably rather than by ruling honorably—doing service first to the laws, since this is service to the gods.

(Plato. *The Laws*, Book IV, 900d [Bury Trans.])

He persuades the citizens to focus on serving the city in order to show their respect to the gods so that they can have honor. Plato builds on this point by encouraging the citizens to commit to sacrificing and giving offerings to the gods as supported through this line:

That to engage in sacrifice and communion with the gods continually, by prayers and offerings and devotions of every kind, is a thing most noble and good and helpful towards the happy life.

(Plato. *The Laws*, Book IV, 716d [Bury Trans.])

By encouraging prayers and offerings, the citizens are able to feel that they are “sacrificing” or helping the gods, further extending the belief beyond imagination and social construct.

### 3.2 Confucius

Similarly, the Mandate of Heaven holds that respectful fear 敬畏 is fundamental in maintaining social order among the citizens. One account features Zhou Gong in a debate, where he mentions the ministers of Zhou in the explanation below:

[And] it was also from the determinate favor of Heaven that there were these men of firm virtue, and acting according to their knowledge of the dread majesty of Heaven.

(*Shujing*, Book V, Chapter XLIV [Legge Trans.])

The word “dread” is used to refer to the divine authority of *tian* 天 “heaven” which demonstrates the mix of awe and apprehension or fear the citizens have towards divine authority. However, it is evident that the ministers were able to spread virtue toward the king through the use of fear by proxy. Thus, respectful fear on Confucius’ side was used to encourage citizens to spread teachings of virtue in society.

However, unlike Plato, Confucius uses the Mandate of Heaven as a form of social control for the citizens. In the same example, Zhou Gong starts the debate referring to Heaven’s mandate but significantly how it is portrayed as a mandate given to the Zhou people, specifically the ministers:

Prince Shih, heaven, un pitying, sent down ruin on Yin; Yin has lost its appointment, and the princes of our Chow have received it.

(*Shujing*, Book V, Chapter XLIV [Legge Trans.])

The use of deixis “our” creates a sense of unity in the Zhou people and signifies that the Zhou people have the responsibility to uphold the mandate and prevent the king or themselves from losing it. Zhou Gong then proceeds to explain how the ministers are able to enlighten the king and lead him forward to his high distinction until his fame reaches the ears of the gods and he is given the decree. With the help of heaven, they are able to defeat the king’s enemies. Finally, the ministers make the king distinguished throughout the empire until the people universally proclaims the king’s virtue.

This example portrays the success of the Mandate of Heaven being used to maintain social order and encourage the ministers to spread virtue in society. This also raised the social status of ministers, foreshadowing the concept of meritocracy, which started to take root around the time of Confucius.

## Conclusion

Even though both Plato and Confucius come from different backgrounds and are immersed in different cultures and mindsets, divine authority plays a pivotal role in shaping each philosopher’s imagination of the ideal society. While both philosophers have different approaches to determining the ideal ruler, with Plato

leaning towards representative governance and Confucius opting for an emperor, both believe that divine authority rules society indirectly through these people. In addition, both philosophers share a common approach to maintaining social order by inducing respectful fear of divinity within the citizens. This ensures that the citizens are virtuous and believe in the gods. Nevertheless, while Plato focuses more on the citizens, Confucius focuses more on the ministers of the court.

The recurring appearance of divine authority in both of these philosophers' beliefs demonstrates its significance in the wider historical context. Both Plato's and Confucius' theories reveal that belief in something outside human capability (such as divine authority) can ensure social order in society, as questions are naturally resolved and reaffirmed by strong belief. Today, scientific and technological innovations are becoming one sort of belief that dominates the modern world, ensuring that people always have answers to their questions. In some societies, the power of divine authority continues to exert its influence in religious countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen, where divine authority is adopted into a theocracy. However, both Plato's and Confucius' societies are revealed to be too utopian and ideal in today's world. In most parts of the world, the rise of humanism encourages people to seek belief in themselves, instead of putting their lives into the hands of others. Nonetheless, whether this belief is long-lasting remains questionable.

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## 影片「霸王別姬」中的鏡頭語言： 菊仙的舊時代女性形象

Tina Shen 沈鑫銘

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### 引言

《霸王別姬》於 1992 年上映，是由陳凱歌執導，張國榮、鞏俐等著名演員主演的電影，改編自李碧華同名小說。影片主要講述民國時期名伶程蝶衣和段小樓歷經半個世紀的愛恨糾葛，將多個小人物的命運與大時代的背景捏合，折射出歷史和時代的樣貌。影片以人物風韻生動、手法精妙恰當為人稱道。國際影評人聯盟評價說：「這是中國版《亂世佳人》。」英國 BBC 評價說：「《霸王別姬》令人熱血沸騰，是取得世界性成功的藝術電影 (stylishking, 2008)。」

《電影理論》中提出，「『電影研究』的範疇包括文本研究(形式、表演、服裝、音樂)，藝術表現(構圖、色調、光線、形狀、象徵)，理論架構(經典理論、形式主義、印象派、精神分析、後結構主義、後現代主義)，文本與語境之一(馬克思主義、女性主義、同性戀、色情片、種族、身份)，文本與語境之二(歷史、社會學、文化研究、觀眾、接受美學)」(張英進, 2005)。

《霸王別姬》所達到的藝術高度一直受到學界的持續關注。現有相關電影研究主要集中於藝術表現。如，在〈主觀鏡頭

對人物內心的呈現 — 以《霸王別姬》為例〉中，作者評析了主觀鏡頭對於氛圍、情緒渲染的作用，提出其「能夠增強觀眾的參與感」(何喜珍, 2020)。又如，〈《霸王別姬》影視分析〉中作者對片段的運鏡、構圖、燈光做出了詳細的解析，對其氛圍塑造效果進行了詳細評估(早章曰堯女亞, 2018)。這類分析詳細探討了電影美學範疇手法的表現力及作用，給予讀者對電影手法的深刻理解。

關於《霸王別姬》電影形式、角色形象的分析已非常詳盡，筆者認為，若能將電影研究和人物形象探究進行融合，進行「文本與語境之一/二」類的探討，或能擺脫純美學或純文學的分析方式，提供一種全新看待銀幕角色的方式。相較程段二人，對影片中主要女性角色菊仙的相關研究較少，而此人物形象同樣經過了導演精細的考量。影片通過豐富的鏡頭語言塑造出她複雜多面的人物形象，且具有深刻的時代意義，值得進一步探究。本文將試分析影片《霸王別姬》中鏡頭語言對女性角色菊仙的塑造作用。

菊仙的身份具有多重含義：妓女、妻子、底層女性。她聰穎果敢、有勇有謀、敢愛敢恨，經歷了無數磨難，卻仍擺脫不



了被愛人背叛、懸樑自盡的悲慘命運。她的身份和命運具有普遍的時代女性特質。在〈《霸王別姬》小說與電影對女性形象的不同闡釋〉中，作者指出電影中菊仙矛盾的性格，及她盡力擺脫卻最終失敗的命運，代表了大時代下女性的普遍命運（夏玲等，2017）。〈《霸王別姬》中蝶衣與菊仙的衝突〉中作者對人物關係和隱喻進行分析，指出「『劇情上』若說程蝶衣對京戲的癡迷代表藝術生活，那麼菊仙就是世俗生活的化身，具有鮮明的時代特徵」（張傑，2008）。筆者認為，除去原作者巧妙的情節鋪排，導演亦通過精巧的鏡頭語言設計賦予了菊仙這一意義，上升了影片的討論高度。下文中，筆者將要探討的鏡頭色彩、運鏡與剪接、道具特寫等三種主要的鏡頭語言，集中體現了菊仙世俗的出身與理想、追求與阻礙、對抗與結局，並將針對電影中鏡頭語言如何對菊仙人物形象刻畫進行討論。



圖一：花滿樓朦朧紅色的背景。

## 一. 鏡頭色彩的運用

色彩是鏡頭語言的重要因素。作為表意的載體，影片色彩可以達到烘托環境、表現主題、塑造人物形象的作用，能夠加強影片表現力。在《色彩在影像敘事中的運用》一文中，作者將《霸王別姬》鏡頭

中的紅色分為正紅色和副紅色，指出了其熱烈的文化含義（郭靜，2014）。紅色作為最具視覺沖擊力的顏色之一，在影片中同樣具有豐富的含義。導演在鏡頭中採用不同飽和度紅色時有意地與人物命運做出結合，將紅色的多重含義運用於角色塑造，鮮明突出了菊仙在影片中的世俗追求和故事的時代背景。

在菊仙初次登場的鏡頭中，作者大量使用朦朧的紅色對花滿樓的場景進行佈置、打光，如紅色簾子、紅色欄桿、紅色燈籠；環境光和面部打光亦都是紅色，使得場景中人物的輪廓模糊曖昧。除造成強烈的視覺衝擊力之外，還營造了花滿樓意亂情迷的氛圍，暗示場景中女子的放蕩、俗麗，也向讀者介紹了菊仙風塵女子的身份。在這樣混沌模糊的紅色中，菊仙痛苦掙扎的神情體現了她不甘與紈袴同流合汙。此後，為擺脫身旁紈袴的糾纏，菊仙於樓上縱身一躍而下，向觀眾初次展現菊仙果決勇敢的性格和對自由的追逐，照應了對妓女身份的掙扎。

菊仙和段小樓結婚時，導演在鏡頭中採用了大量明亮、清晰的紅色。正紅色在中國傳統文化語境裏常代表熱鬧和喜慶，喜事也常以大紅為主題色。結婚一幕中，菊仙身著鮮紅嫁衣，蓋着大紅喜帕，踩着紅地毯走向段小樓，歡喜的神情體現出人物內心的雀躍和期待。與此前朦朧、晦暗的紅色不同，此處運用了清晰、明亮的紅色，表現了出嫁時菊仙對未來幸福生活的嚮往，對愛情理想實現的信心。在該鏡頭

中的正紅色代表菊仙對愛情與家庭的熱烈憧憬。



圖二：菊仙鮮紅的嫁衣。

紅色不僅代表着溫暖，也是血的顏色。在被段小樓背叛後，菊仙絕望地穿着象徵愛情的紅色嫁衣上吊，以自盡的方式完成了對愛情理想的從一而終。在昏暗燈光下紅燭、紅鞋顯得暗淡，灰色的背景突出了鏡頭中心血紅的嫁衣，暗淡的紅突出了菊仙壯烈、淒涼的結局。



圖三：菊仙穿着紅色嫁衣上吊。

總的來說，紅色貫穿了菊仙出場的鏡頭，達到了渲染環境、營造氛圍的目的，塑造了菊仙風塵女子的出身，表現了她對世俗愛情和家庭的追求，也揭示了她悲慘的結局。隨着故事發展和人物命運變化，紅色的意蘊已然不同。動蕩的年代裡無數底層人民流離失所，女子對於愛情、安穩家庭的憧憬是普遍的女性理想。儘管影片中菊仙表現出了超凡的勇敢，她的內心深

處仍如大多傳統女性將自己的幸福寄托在愛情、家庭、穩定上。但在動蕩年代的語境之下，這些願望終究面臨着巨大的阻礙，並常以悲劇結局收場。該鏡頭語言增強了影片的藝術性、時代性，形成影片特殊的風格和韻味。

## 二. 巧妙的運鏡與剪接

如果說程蝶衣是「不瘋魔不成活」的戲癡，代表了京劇藝術的部分，那麼菊仙則代表了家庭和世俗的部分。藝術與世俗的劇烈衝突成為菊仙追求幸福生活和理想過程中的重重阻礙。導演安排了巧妙的鏡頭語言來暗示菊仙是戲園——即段小樓的藝術生活的「闖入者」，凸顯其象徵意義和與藝術生活（唱戲）的對立含義，進而探討藝術與世俗的主題。例如，在(1:31:00-1:34:53)的鏡頭中，程蝶衣，段小樓面見關師父並遭到責罵，關師父欲打段小樓卻遭到菊仙阻撓。



圖四：長鏡頭。四人在一圈戲服中央，交代了人物站位、場景佈置。菊仙出現在畫面中間稍遠陰影處，程蝶衣和段小樓跪在關師父面前。



圖五：固定鏡頭。菊仙見關師父要打段小樓，挑開戲服闖入內部。



圖六。



圖七。



圖八：手搖鏡頭。菊仙和關師父在圖 2.3 中一樣大，突出暫時勢均力敵的對峙。隨後，鏡頭跟隨關師父將菊仙向鏡頭左側推着走的動作，並定格在被摠着坐下的菊仙身上。



圖九：固定鏡頭。畫面右側為師父、段小樓、程蝶衣三人，師父正要罰段小樓，程蝶衣在一旁跪着。被摠到椅子上的菊仙和給她倒茶的工人佔據畫面左側。

戲服的佈局將內部與外部隔絕，正象徵了藝術與世俗的對立：戲服圈子裏認的是喜福班的規矩，戲服外的菊仙嘗試闖入不接納她的藝術世界，以保護段小樓，追求她的家庭幸福。在第一個長鏡頭中，菊仙站在離三人稍遠的陰影中，體現了她不被接納的旁觀者身份(圖四)，也體現了她闖入戲班遇到的困境。為想辦法融入三人的討論，菊仙選擇撥開戲服堆轉身離開，並找到一條新的路重新闖入(圖六)。圖七中，手持鏡頭跟隨人物動作向左搖動，捕捉住菊仙不自在的表情和關師父的從容，體現了關師父這一角色在這圈戲服內，即戲班內的絕對權威。長鏡頭使得角色情緒得以醞釀，圖九中，畫面右側師徒在行使他們的秩序，而外人菊仙介入失敗只得旁觀。關師父高大的身影延伸到右側鏡頭外，再次強調了他在圈內絕對的權威畫面，分割突出了菊仙和戲班子的對立。此處，菊仙作為一個局外人嘗試融入戲服圍成的內部並失敗，而她和喜福班三人的矛盾正象徵着戲班外人和內人的矛盾，代表了菊仙在追求幸福過程中受到的阻礙。

畫面在兩個固定鏡頭中切換，師父每打段小樓一下，鏡頭就切到菊仙的特寫。可以清晰地看到菊仙的不安心疼，以及握不穩茶杯的細緻動作。快速的鏡頭拼貼增添了影片的緊張感。



圖十：畫面在菊仙的喝茶的特寫和段小樓挨打的近景之間來回切換。



圖十一：畫面在菊仙的喝茶的特寫和段小樓挨打的近景之間來回切換。



圖十二. 固定鏡頭。菊仙在椅子上佔據畫面中央。



圖十三：固定鏡頭。從菊仙背部捕捉程段二人的神情和動作，段小樓扇了菊仙一巴掌。



圖十四. 對菊仙委屈神情的特寫。

為保護段小樓，菊仙暗示關師父偏袒，嘗試將她和戲班、即內部和外部的矛盾轉移為戲園內部的矛盾，克服阻礙。在圖十二中，菊仙正襟危坐，似乎又找回了自己的氣勢。然而在圖十的全景鏡頭中，段小樓聽出菊仙的離間之意，快速衝上前去扇了菊仙一巴掌。這個動作乾淨利落，富有力量，段菊二人一站一坐的動作突出了菊仙的弱勢及段小樓的怒意。整段背景沒有其他配樂，全部使用現場聲，因此巴掌聲和茶杯摔碎的聲音格外刺耳。隨著這一巴掌，菊仙想要融入戲班的嘗試徹底失敗，也預示着人物始終無法克服阻礙。圖十五中，菊仙錯愕抬頭，一下子委屈地紅了眼眶，突出了她濃厚的挫折感，與圖十一中的鎮定自如產生對比。

在這一幕中，菊仙數次面對戲園內關師父的絕對權威仍挺身而出，且巧妙地試圖挑撥三人關係以讓段小樓逃過毒打，展現了出色的隨機應變能力，也表現了她對世俗家庭愛情的執著。然而，無論是段小樓、程蝶衣、還是關師父，他們所代表的藝術生活與菊仙的世俗追求格格不入。戲園子的規矩對程段二人來說不可逾越，段小樓這一次也選擇戲園而打跑了菊仙，維護了藝術生活。在之後的劇情中，菊仙和程蝶衣的對立背後同樣蘊含着這一藝術和

世俗生活的象徵，而段小樓的選擇卻在不停地變化，幫助讀者理解人物的內心變化。在影片所反映的動蕩年代裡，女性在追求幸福、追求安穩家庭時往往會遇到巨大的阻礙。儘管她們嘗試去介入，但大多仍是被動的、旁觀的，自主權非常有限，菊仙正是她們的縮影。鏡頭的運動和拼貼深化了菊仙的人物形象和象徵意義，令影片的探討高度得到升華。

### 三. 道具特寫的象徵

「破鞋」一詞據說來源於舊北京著名的八大胡同。妓女們在大門外挑掛一只繡花鞋為幌吸引客人，風吹日曬後成了「破鞋」，鞋便成為一種妓女的代稱（歷史人物事件，2017）。作為《霸王別姬》的主要角色之一，菊仙的追求是和丈夫庸常、平靜度日，但她無法擺脫的妓女身份令普通的幸福始終遙不可及。電影中，繡花鞋在菊仙鏡頭中出現特寫三次。雖然次數不多，卻貫穿始終，成為和菊仙妓女身份、處境相呼應的線索，暗示了菊仙的命運。

菊仙在花滿樓時穿的一直是鮮艷的繡花鞋。在電影 1:01:12，繡花鞋的特寫鏡頭第一次出現(圖十五)。此時的菊仙正為了嫁給段小樓贖身，把身上所有的首飾和財物都放在老鴿面前，最後將紅色繡花鞋重重放在桌子上，表現出她給自己贖身，擺脫妓女身份的決心。老鴿讀懂了這雙鞋的含義，進而譏諷：「我告訴你，那窯姐永遠是窯姐……這就是你的命！」菊仙赤腳走出花滿樓（圖十六）。此處，菊仙丟鞋的舉動可以表明自己從良，擺脫花滿樓，擺脫妓女身份的決心。



圖十五：繡花鞋第一次特寫。



圖十六：菊仙贖身，擺脫花滿樓。

繡花鞋的第二個特寫出現在 1:05:59。菊仙赤腳來找段小樓，暗示她此時已擺脫了妓女身份，以一個平常女子的身份出現，要「堂堂正正地進你段家的門」。段小樓和菊仙剛約定成婚，程蝶衣便拿了戲臺上花旦穿的繡花鞋扔到赤腳的菊仙面前，諷刺菊仙裝模作樣、「撒狗血」，也暗示菊仙無法擺脫自己的妓女身份，向觀眾明示了繡花鞋的隱藏意涵。菊仙利用戲班眾人的起哄和自己的境地打動了段小樓。段小樓礙於面子保護菊仙，最終和程蝶衣翻臉。



圖十七：繡花鞋第二次出場。



圖十八：程蝶衣羞辱菊仙。

菊仙嫁入段家後，菊仙出場時鞋子都是素色的，與在花滿樓時穿的艷色繡花鞋作區分，代表了這個階段菊仙行為上已經暫時擺脫了過去，如一個普通婦女平淡度日。

繡花鞋的第三個特寫出現在 1:05:59 (圖十九)。段小樓為了撇清與妓女關係時承認自己「沒有愛過『菊仙』」。影片多次通過臺詞、行為突出愛情和家庭對菊仙的重要，而段小樓的自私、懦弱便成了壓垮她的最後一根稻草。絕望的菊仙穿戴好嫁衣和首飾赤腳吊死在了家裏，特寫鏡頭久久定格在了一旁的繡花鞋上。菊仙最終以死亡對妓女身份做出抗爭：既赤腳來，便赤腳去。這輩子已受身份所累，只願下輩子可以清清白白做一個女子，不再受妓女身份的困擾和羞辱。菊仙不幸的命運地照應了前文老鴿所說，「那窯姐永遠是窯姐」。終此一生，哪怕傾盡全力擺脫，她仍被妓女身份所困、所辱，最終也因丈夫的出賣而最終絕望自盡，凸顯了女性在時代面前的無力。

鏡頭語言中貫穿全篇的繡花鞋象徵了菊仙想要擺脫卻無法擺脫的妓女身份。電影中三個繡花鞋的特寫鏡頭令觀眾能清晰

理解身份對於菊仙的影響，也預示了菊仙上吊的悲慘結局。妓女為舊社會的典型文化符號。在新中國成立後，妓女被稱作「四害」之一。儘管大多妓女(如菊仙)身不由己，她們仍冒犯了當時的社會道德，是被汙名化的對象。菊仙的悲慘結局也代表了她們在亂世中的悲慘命運。總的來說，影片巧妙通繡花鞋的特寫鏡頭，象徵了她想要擺脫卻無法擺脫的妓女身份，推動情節發展，深化了菊仙的人物形象。



圖十九：繡花鞋第三次出場：菊仙赤腳上吊，鏡頭定格在一旁的繡花鞋。

## 結論

綜上，影片通過鏡頭色彩、運鏡與剪接、道具特寫的鏡頭語言表現了菊仙世俗的出身與理想、追求與阻礙、對抗與結局：菊仙妓女出身，全身心地追求、信仰愛情，在無法克服阻礙後選擇了上吊自殺的結局，不僅成功完成了對菊仙人物形象的塑造、深化，還通過系統的闡述，在情節發展、主題升華中反映了深刻的歷史現實。作為一部 1992 年的電影，《霸王別姬》講述了從民國時期到文革時期中國的社會百態、京戲興衰、和平民百姓展現在觀眾眼前。實質上，菊仙的被動、無力正是大時代下底層女性地位的縮影，菊仙的命運也是大多女性命運的寫照。它從大背景上靠近了京戲和戰爭，完成了在亂世中

對伶人、對小人物的再現，同時體現了創作者自己對傳統文化、對藝術的思考。影片風格樣式鮮明，對歷史事件和人物形象的塑造十分到位，給觀眾帶來絕妙的觀賞體驗。

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# To what extent is the conception of fate in the philosophies of Zhuangzi and Plato similar?

Kathie Lau 劉嘉琳

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## Introduction

Through the ages, the question of what fate is and how it operates has puzzled countless philosophers. Zhuangzi 莊子 and Plato have surprisingly similar views regarding the subject, despite the significant cultural and historical differences in their backgrounds. They both agree about the concept of fate, insofar as both accept its existence and the benefits of following it. However, the intricate details of their philosophies differ, naturally, due to the vast differences in their historical, cultural, and ideological background. This essay will first outline the two philosophers' theories of what fate is, explain how their ideas were characterized and conceived, and then compare these two views. The ancient sources used for this comparison are taken from Zhuangzi's *Zhuangzi*, and Plato's *The Republic* and *Phaedo*. Based on their philosophies, it appears that they strongly agree and share distinct similarities in their perspective of fate.

## 1. Cultural background

### 1.1 Zhuangzi

Zhuangzi was a leading Daoist philosopher during the late 4th century BC Warring States Period. Daoism was a prominent philosophy in Ancient China that was widely adopted by rulers and subjects (Hansen).

Zhuangzi lived in a period of conflict. During the Warring States Period, seven states fought for control over China. By then, the fight for hegemony had lasted for centuries already. It is likely due to this turbulence that Zhuangzi decided to advocate Daoism, a philosophy that promoted *taiping* 太平, or "Great Peace", as interpreted by scholar Barbara Hendrischke in "The Daoist Utopia of Great Peace" (Hendrischke 61-91).

The text referred to in this essay is *Zhuangzi*. Written as a philosophical parable, characters within *Zhuangzi* engage in casual debates, ending in some form of a

question. In *Zhuangzi*, Zhuangzi the philosopher illustrates the existence of fate, its conception, and its relation to our way of living.

Prior to *Zhuangzi*, the concept of fate (represented by the Chinese character *ming* 命) was already heavily discussed. One such instance is in the *I-Ching*, written in the Western Zhou period (1000 - 750 BC). *I-Ching* divination is rooted in a core philosophy of change, which was adopted by Daoist philosophers. Change can be interpreted in this context as the fundamental idea that the universe is in constant flux, transformation, creation, and destruction (Joseph 65-75). Such is demonstrated in *Yin* and *Yang*, illustrated in the *I-Ching*, and believed by Zhuangzi. *Yin* and *Yang* are in constant transition, taking turns dominating the cycle of the world, in turn creating all that exists, referred to as *wanwu* 萬物. The *Ba Gua* 八卦 was created based on the theory of *Yin* and *Yang*, a collection of schematic representations of the state of change as believed in *Yin* and *Yang*. It was believed that by interpreting the *Ba Gua*, one could receive guidance on possible futures.

Even prior to the creation of the *I-Ching*, other methods had been used to discern fate, such as oracle-bone inscriptions in the Shang dynasty (1600 – 1040 BC). The oracle-bone inscriptions describe rituals, hopes, and administrative decisions of the Shang kings. The bone was then offered to the king's ancestors in a ritual in hopes to receive blessings in the form of cracks in the bone, which would be interpreted by the King (Keightley 143-187). One divination charge wrote 癸巳王卜貞：旬亡禍，王固曰吉，在八月，甲午翌上甲 [in the (next) ten days there will be no disasters<sup>1</sup> [Chan *et al.* trans.]]. However, people who used these oracle-bone inscriptions, unlike *Zhuangzi*, tended to seek to influence what had been predicted to happen, rather than accepting it, and therefore the act could be interpreted as making wishes, rather than

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<sup>1</sup> See Chan. *et al.* Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume 1: From Earliest Times to 1600



simply finding out about what fate had in store for them (Keightley 143-187).

With centuries of ideas built upon one another, the concept of fate was already generally accepted. Perhaps this is why Zhuangzi does not feel the need to elaborate further on some of his bolder statements.

## 1.2 Plato

Plato (428 - 347 BC) was a Greek philosopher and notably the founder of the Academy, a community for philosophers. As an avid follower of Socrates, Plato discussed many of Socrates' ideas in his work. Due to his Academy, Plato's impact was widespread, and his opinion on fate was culturally adopted by many in the western philosophical world.

In relation to fate, Plato follows the theory about the gods' role that is illustrated in Hesiod's *Theogony* (730 - 700 B.C.), where the *moirai* (commonly translated as "the Fates"), named Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who are portrayed as the "ruthless" daughters of Night who "give men at their birth both evil and good to have, and they pursue the transgressions of men and of gods: and these goddesses never cease from their dread anger until they punish the sinner with a sore penalty (Hesiod, *Theogony*. 207 [Evelyn-White trans.]).

Homer's *Iliad* (composed in 700 - 750 BC) also discusses the idea of fate. He mainly speaks of the *moirai* as a singular entity that determines the outcomes of life: "On this wise for him did mighty Fate spin with her thread at his birth (Homer, *Iliad*. 24.210-211 [Butler trans.])", demonstrating her supreme power over humanity. Therefore it is important to note that in Ancient Greece, interpretations of the *moirai* varied across geographic regions, due to them being conceived at different time periods and by different people. Some are portrayed as the literal divinity of fate while others are a metaphorical allegory of human life (Raphals).

Plato's main works discussed in this essay, *The Republic* (375 BC) and *Phaedo* (360 BC), illustrate his ideas on the soul and various other topics. *The Republic* mainly focuses on justice and the city-state, though his ideas of the soul contribute to his central theme of an ideal person. *Phaedo* contains Plato's views on the human psyche and the distinction between the body and soul.

## 2. Conceptualizing the existence of fate

### 2.1 Source of fate

Zhuangzi believed that fate was determined by *tian* 天, commonly translated as "heaven" in scholastic papers. He writes that (「無意志的自然之道」) [heaven is the way of nature that is without consciousness [Legge trans.]] and thinks that "heaven" is omnibenevolent and the ultimate source of value 「純粹的至善...最高的價值」. According to Professor David Hsu of the Department of Chinese Literature in the National Taiwan University, the term *tian* was often used by Zhuangzi as well as other Ancient Chinese philosophers to describe the source of divine power that determines what happens in the universe 「宇宙萬物」(徐富昌).

The Chinese term for "fate", *ming*, is sometimes translated as "lifespan" in English, perhaps implying that fate determines how long one lives (Raphals). This relationship between lifespan and fate is reinforced by Zhuangzi's remark that 「死生命也」 [life and death are decreed by fate [Legge trans.]]. In addition, Zhuangzi writes 「復命搖作而以天為師，人則從而命之也。」 [In fulfilling (The sage's) constitution, as acted on and acting, he simply follows the direction of Heaven; and it is in consequence of this that men style him a sage [Legge trans.]]. Hsu interprets Zhuangzi's claim to mean that man cannot defy fate but may only accept it with a calm mindset 「人只能安心順命，全盤接收」(徐富昌).

Similarly, Plato adopts the belief that fate is divinely determined by the *moirai*. However, according to the description that Plato provides in the *Republic*, the *moirai* themselves are gods. Plato differs from Zhuangzi by telling detailed stories of how the *moirai* work together to allocate fate to individuals. The *moirai* do so with the help of the *daemon* - geniuses working as guardians of mankind - who bind the allocated fates to each individual before they begin their life on Earth (Raphals).

### 2.2 The mechanisms of fate

It is worth noting that in Zhuangzi's theory, there are in fact two possible sources of fate - "heaven" and "earth". He writes:

受命於地，唯松柏獨也在，冬夏青青；受命於天，唯舜獨也正。

Of things which are what they are by the influence of the earth, it is only the pine and cypress which are the best instances - in winter as in summer brightly green. Of those which were what they were by the influence of Heaven, the most correct example was Shun.

(莊子 Zhuangzi, 德充符 Seal of Virtue Complete [Legge Trans.])

A brief summary of this quotation would be that the fate of lesser existence, such as trees, is determined by “the influence of the earth”, while the fate of more important beings, such as kings, is determined by “the influence of Heaven”. One specific king is mentioned in the text, Shun, who is known for his greatness.

While Plato similarly maintains that the fate of mortals is determined by divine power, his narrative as to the mechanism of it is rather different. In the *Republic* he uses the Myth of Er in the *Republic* describing that, in order to receive our fate our souls must be guided by a *daemon* (“genius”):

But when, to conclude, all the souls had chosen their lives in the order of their lots, they were marshaled and went before Lachesis. And she (Lachesis) sent with each, as the guardian of his life and the fulfiller of his choice, the genius that he had chosen, and this divinity led the soul first to Clotho, under her hand and her turning of the spindle to ratify the destiny of his lot and choice; and after contact with her the genius again led the soul to the spinning of Atropos to make the web of its destiny irreversible, and then without a backward look it passed beneath the throne of Necessity.

(Plato, *Republic*. 10.620 [Shorey Trans.])

Plato lists the choices made by Ancient Greek heroes, for instance Odysseus:

The soul of Odysseus... from memory of its former toils having flung away ambition, went about for a long time in quest of the life of an ordinary citizen who minded his own business.

(Plato, *Republic*. 10.620 [Shorey Trans.])

Therefore, Plato’s narrative clearly provides more detail as to the mechanism of how the fate of each person is determined and make his theory very different from Zhuangzi’s. For one, there is a lot of anthropomorphism of the *moirai* in Plato’s theory and virtually none in Zhuangzi’s. The description of the *moirai* includes a “throne”, “white vestments with filleted heads”, and other human things. The way they

determine fate is also somewhat unemotional. Atropos weaves fate “without a backward look” because the three *moirai* are not concerned about the human lives that they are determining. Despite their importance to human life, the three deities are perceived to be disconnected and apathetic. In contrast, “heaven” and “earth” in Zhuangzi’s philosophy are not personified at all.

Nevertheless, in terms of similarities, Zhuangzi and Plato converge in the sense that they both believe that fate is decided by a higher, divine power, be it “heaven” and “earth”, or the *moirai*. At the same time, both believe that fate is the embodiment of life and death. In the dramatic words of Lachesis, the maiden daughter of Necessity, “now is the beginning of another cycle of mortal generation where birth is the beacon of death (Plato, *Republic*. 10.617 [Shorey trans.])”

### 3. Changeability of fate

#### 3.1 The human capacity to challenge fate

Zhuangzi does not advocate hard determinism. He states:

烏足之根為蟻蟻，其葉為蝴蝶。蝴蝶胥也化而為蟲，生於灶下，其狀若脫，其名為鵠掇...人又反入於機。萬物皆出於機，皆入於機。

The roots of the crow's foot become grubs, and its leaves, butterflies. This butterfly, known by the name of xu, is changed into an insect, and comes to life under a furnace. Then it has the form of a moth, and is named the Qu-duo... Man then again enters into the great Machinery (of Evolution), from which all things come forth (at birth), and which they enter at death.

(莊子 Zhuangzi, 至樂 Perfect Enjoyment [Legge Trans.])

Though this may appear to be a simple narrative of a part of the ecosystem, Zhuangzi in fact hints at the unpredictable opportunities involved in the cycle of life as one event triggers another. Hsu explains that the character *ji* 機 in the quotation embodies both the meaning of chance and opportunity and that it demonstrates how Zhuangzi believes all living creatures have a capacity to change and determine some parts of their lives, as long as they seize the opportunities given to them. For humans, it means that one should not sit back and do nothing because of the thought that fate is already determined. One should

still work hard to seize the opportunities that they come across to make their lives better (徐富昌).

Therefore, although fate has determined the most important aspects of one's life, there are still elements within that can be influenced. This is where free will comes into the story. Zhuangzi states:

死生存亡，窮達貧富，賢與不肖，毀譽、飢渴、寒暑，是事之變，命之行也。

Death and life, preservation and ruin, failure and success, poverty and wealth, superiority and inferiority, blame and praise, hunger and thirst, cold and heat; these are the changes of circumstances, the operation of our appointed lot.

(莊子 Zhuangzi, 至樂 Perfect Enjoyment [Legge Trans.])

Hsu explains that such “changes of circumstances” are a combination of natural events and events that are influenced by human beings 「其中『事之變』之『事』不單指自然之事，也有人事的意思」(徐富昌). Therefore, a person's “poverty and wealth, superiority and inferiority” are partly determined by their own actions, rather than just fate. An example used by Hsu to illustrate this point is that a person may not have been born as clever as others, but they could succeed through hard work 「天生才智不如人的人，也可能藉著後天的努力而獲得成功。」. It is therefore a combination of fate and human effort that determines the end result. While fate determines how lives begin, the human effort may have more influence over how one's lives turn out 「因為天命自有變因在，命只是註定好的開始，並無法註定未來的結局」(徐富昌).

Similarly, Plato discusses free will in the *Republic* as part of the fate selection process itself. Preferences are taken into account as one makes their choice in picking a lot based on past experiences, preferences, and memories. For example, “the soul of Ajax, the son of Telamon” who remembered “the adjudication of the arms of Achilles” was “unwilling to become a man” when it was his turn to choose his lot for his next life (Plato, *Republic* Rep. 10.620b [Shorey trans.]). It is apparent that human souls therefore exercise some degree of free will in choosing their fate before the fate is woven by the *moirai*. Even after the weaving is done, one may change their mind and resist it. In the *Republic*, Plato describes how one is able to be free from their fate: a soul “after much resistance and many sufferings, is led away with violence and with difficulty by its appointed genius (Plato, *Phaedo*. 108 [Fowler trans.]).” As the “genius” i.e. daemon is responsible for attaching fates to each soul, this

description seems to suggest that one can refuse to accept the fate woven for them by resisting the *daemon*.

### 3.2 Limitations on free will

Though a supporter of the existence of free will or the choice for action, Zhuangzi maintains that it is limited by the predetermined parts of fate. He says 「性不可易，命不可變」 [The nature cannot be altered; fate cannot be changed [Legge trans.]]. In *Seal of Virtue* (德充符), he elaborates with some examples of the parts of fate that one cannot change: 「日夜相代乎前，而知不能規乎其始者也。」 [Day and night they succeed to one another before us, but there is no wisdom able to discover to what they owe their origination [Legge trans.]] Just as humans do not possess the wisdom to understand the origin of day and night, humans do not possess the wisdom to change our fate.

Having established the limitation on free will, Zhuangzi further informs us of how one should come to terms with this truth (Zhang). In the *Seal of Virtue*, he expresses the view that one should be content with whatever fate one is given: 「知不可奈何而安之若命，唯有德者能之」 [They are only the virtuous who know that such a calamity was unavoidable, and therefore rest in it as what was appointed for them. [Legge trans.]] He discusses death using the story of someone crying at his wife's funeral and disagrees with the sadness that they felt towards another person's death. Even though it was Zhuangzi's own wife who had died, he states that he did not feel sad because he saw death as the inescapable end. Because he understood this, he did not grieve, stating: 「故止也。」 [I therefore restrained myself! [Legge trans.]] Humans are unable to challenge the laws of nature, and thus the best way to live is to simply acknowledge this fact (Zhang).

Like Zhuangzi, Plato also approves of accepting the fate woven for one. Although each soul may resist the fate offered by their daemon, those who alter their fate are impure:

Now the orderly and wise soul follows its guide and understands its circumstances; but the soul that is desirous of the body .... after much resistance and many sufferings is led away with violence and with difficulty by its appointed genius...the soul which is impure and has done wrong, by committing wicked murders or other deeds akin to those and the works of kindred souls, is avoided and shunned by all, and no one is willing to be its companion or its guide, but it wanders about alone in utter bewilderment.

(Plato, *Phaedo*. 108 [Fowler Trans.])

By juxtaposing the fortune of an “orderly and wise soul” and “the soul that is desirous of the body”, Plato clearly argues for people to follow their own fate. For one, the soul who follows fate is described with complimentary epithets such as ‘wise’, while the soul who does not follow fate is “avoided and shunned” and “wicked.” Secondly, the future of the souls who follow their fate differs from the future of those who stray from fate; the latter would “suffer” and remain “alone.” Through this juxtaposition, Plato shows that straying from fate appears to lead to a comparatively disastrous result. While Plato criticizes people who try to resist their given fates and Zhuangzi does not, both agree that people would fare better by complying with their given fates.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the two philosophers agree on the conception of fate and the degree of free will to a large extent, insofar that both accept its existence and the benefits of following it. Both believe that divine powers are responsible for fate, the existence of free will, and the changeability of fate, and how it is inadvisable to go against fate. Such similarities appear surprising, considering their vastly different historical backgrounds and how their philosophies advocate for completely different ideals, with Zhuangzi maintaining that people should live in harmony with the way of nature, and Plato advocating harmony within a structured society.

From a historical perspective, the similarities in their cultural backgrounds could explain the similarities in their philosophies. Both individuals’ cultures believed in the existence of the divine. Therefore, the concept of divine power over human lives was already ingrained in their societies. Further, the common goal of peace and stability in their philosophies could be the root of their acceptance of fate. These may be the reasons that both philosophers have raised similar arguments and views toward fate.

In the increasingly individualized world, it is becoming more common to find individuals who argue for defying fate. If people considered accepting their fate instead, perhaps the world would take a step closer to the ideal peace that Zhuangzi and Plato intended to achieve. Or, perhaps there is a higher gain in challenging fate to attain personal goals. With the blend of arguments from ancient philosophers and newer ideas, one can truly gain new perspectives in addressing what fate is, how it operates, and the value of human behavior in achieving one’s goals.

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# Human Nature and ‘*Fa* 法’: was Xunzi a ‘Confucian’ or a ‘Legalist’?

Cheuk Yan Athena Wong 黃卓欣

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## Introduction

Xunzi, full name Xun Kuang (310-238BCE, Warring States period), is commonly regarded as one of the three great classical pre-Qin Confucian philosophers, the other two being Confucius and Mencius. His approach to human nature and *fa* varies from Confucius and Mencius (Fung, 144-146), and bears some similarity to Legalist ideas of human nature. Thus, an investigation into the philosophy of Xunzi is a window to a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between the fundamental values of the so-called Confucian and Legalist ideologies.

Confucianism is a school of thought that is associated with the philosophy of Confucius, which is focused on virtue, personal ethics and morality. It is a system of philosophical and ethical teachings that put emphasis on ritual, cultivating oneself, and teaching (Wong, 2021). Legalism is a school of thought that emphasized law and punishments for maintaining social order. The *Book of Lord Shang* cites that “the disposition of the people is to like ranks and emoluments and to dislike punishments and penalties. The ruler sets up the two in order to guide the people’s will and to establish whatever he desires (*Shang Jun Shu* 9: 65; *Book of Lord Shang* 9.3)”. Key representative Legalist philosophers include Han Feizi and Shang Yang. However, terms such as ‘Confucian’ and ‘Legalist’ did not exist formally during Xunzi’s time. Philosophers at the time would only later come to be regarded as a part of certain philosophical traditions. The anachronistic nature of these terms in grouping together philosophers raises room for debate on the accuracy of such classifications. For example, the accuracy of the term “Legalist” in defining *fa jia* has raised discussion. Goldin describes that “‘Legalism’ is an inadequate translation of *fajia*; that *fajia* is itself a partisan and anachronistic term” (p. 100, 2011). This raises the interesting question of whether there is a clear boundary between different

philosophies as defined by modern terms, such as “Confucian” and “Legalist”. This paper aims to look at how Xunzi’s conception of human nature and *fa* relate to both terms, and whether it is always possible to completely distinguish “Confucianism” and “Legalism”.

Many have investigated Xunzi’s approach to human nature. A study by Winnie Sung in 2016 proposes that the main difference between Xunzi and Mencius’s conceptions of *xing* lies in their different conceptions of the heart/mind (*xin* 心) (638). Xunzi was also referred to as “the realistic wing of Confucianism” by Fung Yu-lan in 1986 (143), who states that Xunzi agrees with Mencius that it is possible for every man to become a sage, but stands by the idea that humans need some form of social organization, which includes rules of conduct along with ritual and cultivation. These views of human nature and social conduct seem much less idealistic than that of Mencius, suggesting that although both philosophers are considered to be Confucian philosophers, their interpretations of human nature differ. There is still room for debate on how Xunzi’s conceptions of human nature influenced his views on the functioning of society. This paper aims to explore the relationship between the beliefs of Xunzi and the two philosophies, Confucianism and Legalism, through investigating the relationships between human nature, law, and society as envisaged by Xunzi.

*Fa* (法) is defined as law, rule, and standard. Some words associated with *fa* include *fazhi* 法治 (rule of law), *fali* 法律 (laws and edicts), *xingfa* 刑法 (criminal law), and *shifa* 師法 (teachings and guidance). With the establishment of law, there are consequences of disobeying the law, defined as *fa* (罰), meaning punishment. These all relate to the ruling and management of society. Philosophical debates associated with *fa* include questions of whether one should rule a society using punishments (*xingfa*) and

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rewards, or through education and teachings (*shifa*) of ethics to its people, or both. It also concerns the different kinds of laws (*faliu*) that should be in place, as well as the level of punishments administered for those who disobey them. In this study, the term *fa* will be used to cover law, punishment, ritual, and social order.

Confucian texts referenced in this study include the *Analects*, *Li Ji*, and *Mengzi* (translated by James Legge). The main legalist text referenced in this study is the *Book of Lord Shang*, translated by Yuri Pines.

## 1. The relationship between human nature and “Fa”

Human nature is a concept that covers the fundamental characteristics and dispositions in people at birth. It is important to cover the topic of human nature in a discussion about *fa* because one’s understanding of humans will directly influence how one thinks humans should act (norms and ritual), and how to rule a society (laws, punishments, and social order). Having a conception of human nature is key to understanding how they would naturally behave and respond to stimuli.

In their study of social psychology in court, Saks and Hastie wrote that “Every law and every institution is based on assumptions about human nature and the manner in which human behavior is determined” (1978). Understanding of human nature is influential in one’s perspective of what limits and guidelines should be placed on human behavior, since maintenance of social order is achieved by regulating the behavior of citizens in a society. Yarmey wrote that “both psychology and the courts are concerned with predicting, explaining, and controlling behavior” (1979), asserting that the human mind is very closely related to law enforcement. By extension, human nature, which is closely related to the human mind, would also be very important in understanding *fa*. Thus, the understanding of human nature and behavior directly influences the approach one takes to *fa*.

The Chinese term used to describe human nature is *xing* (性), which is defined as the following in the *Li Ji*:

“What Heaven has conferred is called The Nature (*xing*); an accordance with this nature is called The Path of duty; the regulation of this path is called Instruction.”

(*Li Ji*, Zhong Yong, 1)

Here, human nature (*xing*) is mentioned in parallel with “the way of Heaven”, which translates to nature in Confucian philosophies.

## 2. Confucian and legalist approaches to “Fa”

### 2.1 Human nature

The *Analects* does not directly address whether human nature is “good” or “bad”. Instead, it mentions that humans are born for justice and uprightness (*zhi* 直).

“By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.”

(*Analects* 17.2)

“Humans are born for uprightness. If a man loses his uprightness, and yet lives, his escape from death is the effect of mere good fortune.”

(*Analects*, Yong Ye, 6.19)

These passages show that according to Confucius, humans have a shared nature, however by action and practice, they become different from each other. There is no explicit account as to whether “practice” leads to a change of nature or a change of behavior. However, as mentioned previously, *Li Ji* documents human nature as what is given by the heavens, which cannot be changed through practice. This can be seen through the Confucian approach to self-cultivation (脩 *xiu*, meaning to build or improve in the Warring States period; the current equivalent of this word [in the context of self-cultivation] in modern Chinese is 修 *xiu*), *i.e.*, by developing a sense of the good and the shameful to guide their practices to bring peace and kindness to others. This thought of bringing peace to others is expressed clearly in the following passage:

“Zi Lu asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said, ‘The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness.’ ‘And is this all?’ said Zi Lu. ‘He cultivates himself so as to give rest to others.’”

(*Analects*, Xian Wen, 42)

Mencius provides a more explicit and clear theory on human nature: human nature is good (*shan* 善).

“Water indeed will flow indifferently to the east or west, but will it flow indifferently up or down? The tendency of man's nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to good, just as all water flows downwards.”

(*Mengzi*, Gao Zi Shang, 2)

He also says that any action that is “not good” is against human nature.

“In your kitchen there is fat meat; in your stables there are fat horses. But your people have the look of hunger, and on the wilds there are those who have died of famine. This is leading on beasts to devour men. Beasts devour one another, and men hate them for doing so.”

(*Mengzi*, Liang Hui Wang I, 4)

“The feeling of commiseration is the principle of benevolence. The feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness. The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety. The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge. Men have these four principles just as they have their four limbs. When men, having these four principles, yet say of themselves that they cannot develop them, they play the thief with themselves, and he who says of his prince that he cannot develop them plays the thief with his prince.”

(*Mengzi*, Gong Sun Chou I, 6)

The two quotes above describe examples of actions that are “not good”, or against human nature in *Mengzi*. The first quote describes selfishness and mismanagement by “a prince, being the parent of his people”. Prince (*jun* 君) in this context refers to the ruler or the ruling class. The second quote describes the loss of principle in people, suggesting that humans are born with the principles of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge, and those who do not develop these virtues are “playing the thief”, being dishonest and harmful with themselves and to the “prince”.

He states that “bad” actions are the consequence of another force that drives them to act against their nature.

“Now by striking water and causing it to leap up, you may make it go over your forehead, and, by damming and leading it you may force it up a hill - but are such movements according to the nature of water? It is the force applied which causes them.”

(*Mengzi*, Gao Zi Shang, 2)

Mencius also gives a clearer description of the scope he considers to be human nature: the four components of heart and mind are compassion (*ce yin* 惻隱), respect (*ci rang* 辭讓), shame (*xiu e* 羞惡), and right and wrong (*shi fei* 是非) (*Mengzi*, Gong Sun Chou I, 6). Mencius says: “All men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others.” (*Mengzi*, Gong Sun Chou I, 6), further confirming his theory that human nature is inherently good.

Legalists, on the other hand, believe that human nature is selfish.

“It is people's nature, when measuring, to take the longest part, when weighing, to take the heaviest, when adjusting the scales, to seek profit.”

(Book of Lord Shang, Calculation of Land, 10)

“The people follow after benefit as water flows downward.”

(*Shang Jun Shu* 23:131; *Book of Lord Shang* 23.2)

Just like Mencius, Shang Yang used the analogy of water flowing downwards to explain his philosophy on human nature. However, instead of using the analogy to argue that human nature is good, he states that “the people follow after benefit”, and that human nature is bad, which cannot be changed; just as how water flows downward. This shows the belief that it is human nature to look for things for their own gain - implying selfishness.

## 2.2 Law, ritual, and punishments

Confucians value ritual (*li* 禮) above law and punishment (*fa* 法/罰). They believe that ritual and self-cultivation should be used to guide the people, and that laws and punishments are not effective in maintaining social order. They believe that putting strong regulations in place will make people evasive and irresponsible.

“If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations (*zheng*) and keep them in line with punishments (*xing*), the common people will become evasive and will have no sense of shame (*chi*). If, however, you guide them with virtue (*de*), and keep them in line by means of ritual, the people will have a sense of shame and will rectify themselves.”

(*Analects* 2.3)

This is reflected in the way Confucian philosophers view human nature. Mencius believed that human nature is good, and therefore focuses strongly on cultivating the virtue of people, and believes that through self-cultivation, people will be able to achieve social order.

Legalists take a contrary approach. They advocated the use of laws and punishments to control its citizens and to maintain social order.

“The state should tightly control its subjects: the system of mandatory registration of the population and creation of mutual responsibility groups among the populace will ensure that every crime is denounced and the criminal—particularly those who abscond from the battlefield—will know that ‘there is no place to flee from the army ranks, and migrants can find no refuge.’”

(*Shang Jun Shu* 18: 108; *Shang Jun Shu* 18.3)

Since Legalist philosophy is founded on the belief that human nature is inherently bad and selfish, and that self-cultivation will not be able to change this nature, it prioritized giving incentive for its citizens to follow the laws set by the government.

“The disposition of the people is to like ranks and emoluments and to dislike punishments and penalties. The ruler sets up the two in order to guide the people’s will and to establish whatever he desires.”

(*Shang Jun Shu* 9: 65; *Book of Lord Shang* 9.3)

The two philosophies focus on different interpretations of human nature, and thus take different approaches.

### 3. Xunzi’s approach to “*Fa*”

#### 3.1 Human nature

In contrast to how Mencius approached human nature, Xunzi makes a completely opposite statement: “People’s nature is bad. Their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort.” (*Xunzi*, Human Nature Is Bad, 248). Mencius and Xunzi have very different interpretations of human nature, although they are both considered Confucian thinkers by modern scholars.

“Now people’s nature is such that they are born with a fondness for profit in them.”

(*Xunzi*, Human Nature Is Bad, 248)

Xunzi believed that humans are born selfish and naturally attracted to profit and self-gain. This aligns with the Legalist point of view, that humans have an inborn desire for benefit. Although they stand differently on human nature, the philosophy of Xunzi and Mencius found common ground on the importance of self-cultivation.

“They began by changing their original substance and perfected themselves through cultivation. Cultivation is such that one must await its culmination and only then is one complete. By birth, people are originally petty people. Without a teacher or the proper model, they will seek only benefit.”

(*Xunzi*, On Honour and Disgrace, 28)

In this quote, Xunzi reinforces his belief that humans seek benefit and self-gain. However, he also says that cultivation can change their “original substance” (*xing*) and complete a person. This aligns with the Confucian point of view, that one can improve oneself through ritual and self-cultivation.

Xunzi’s understanding of human nature, what he thinks humans are born with, aligns more with Legalism; but his approach to human nature, how he thinks one should maintain social order and cultivate oneself aligns more with Confucianism. Homer H. Dubs has mentioned in his study that “Hsintze (Xunzi) asserted that human nature is infinitely improvable; by proper training the man on the street may become as good as the great sage” (p.236, 1930). This point of view can be seen throughout Xunzi’s quotes on human nature and self cultivation, which shows a middle ground between Mencius and Legalist interpretations of human nature. The key difference in Legalist philosophy and the philosophy of Xunzi is that Xunzi



believed self-cultivation can be used to change *xing* (human nature); and the key difference between Xunzi and Mencius is that Xunzi believed that humans have an inborn desire for selfish gain, and that this makes their nature bad.

However, Xunzi may not be so different from Mencius after all. As the *Analects* does not explicitly mention whether human nature is positive or negative, Mencius and Xunzi can be seen as opposite interpretations of the description of human nature in the *Analects*, almost like “two sides of the same coin”. Humans are born for uprightness, having a similar nature. Mencius may have interpreted this as: since people are born for uprightness, they have uprightness and good within themselves. However, Xunzi may have interpreted the *Analects* differently. Just because someone is born with the capacity for uprightness, does not mean that they are born upright. If humans are born bad, they could spend their time cultivating themselves and learning ritual and *yi* 義 in order to achieve uprightness, and uprightness can be seen as a goal for humans to achieve. *Yi* refers to righteousness, justice, and the moral disposition to do good. When someone says that one needs to obtain ritual and *yi*, it would mean to have propriety and righteousness. And this could be the key reason as to why Xunzi believed that self-cultivation can be used to improve human nature - because it was based on the statement that people are born for uprightness (see section 2.1 for original text).

### 3.2 Law, ritual, and punishments

Due to his pessimistic view of human nature, Xunzi is very focused on using teachings, ritual, and *yi* as a core part of discipline and social order. Whilst Legalist philosophy also has a pessimistic view of human nature, they do not emphasize the idea that any man could become a sage if they wish.

“Where does learning begin? Where does learning end? I say: Its order begins with reciting the classics, and ends with studying ritual. Its purpose begins with becoming a well-bred man, and ends with becoming a sage. If you truly accumulate effort for a long time, then you will advance.”

(*Xunzi*, An Exhortation to Learning, 5)

From the quote above it can be seen that Xunzi emphasizes the goal of becoming a sage, and the importance of teaching and ritual as part of this process. In the introduction of Eric Hutton’s translation of *Xunzi*, the sage is described as the

following: “the sage king as Xunzi portrays him is someone who not only strives for utmost virtue in himself, but also aims to teach his people and reform their bad natures.” (28). Therefore although Xunzi has a pessimistic view of human nature, he still believes that humans can learn to become a person who strives for virtue and that bad nature can be reformed.

The following quote describes Xunzi’s view on ritual and *yi* as part of reforming the bad and selfishness in human nature.

“Now since people’s nature is bad, they must await teachers and proper models, and only then do they become correct. They must obtain ritual and *yi*, and only then do they become well ordered.”

(*Xunzi*, Human Nature Is Bad, 248)

This quote shows that the manner by which Xunzi approached ritual is based on the belief that human nature is bad. However, this also shows the belief that through self-cultivation and learning, human nature can be changed and people can become well ordered. Thus, Xunzi put emphasis on ritual and *yi* because he believed that there was a need to change human nature.

“So, it is necessary to await the transforming influence of teachers and models and the guidance of ritual and *yi*, and only then will they come to yielding and deference, turn to proper form and order, and end up becoming controlled.”

(*Xunzi*, Human Nature Is Bad, 248)

Above, Xunzi states that with the influence and guidance of teachers (*shifa* 師法), people will become ordered. This shows Xunzi’s belief in the use of ritual and teachings as an important part of maintaining *fazhi*, the rule of law, and social order.

“The hegemon is inferior, he thinks, because the hegemon is not committed to moral cultivation of himself or those he rules, and without such cultivation, the kind of relationship between ruler and ruled will be neither as strong nor as stable as that which obtains in the case of a sage king.”

(*Xunzi*, Introduction, 28)

The above quote highlights the importance of moral cultivation in the philosophy of Xunzi, especially in terms of the rule of a state and standard of a ruler. As ancient Chinese dynasties were ruled by a monarchy, the philosophy of a ruler would then influence social order and law of a country. This is a Confucian

approach to ruling - being focused and committed to cultivation, teaching, and morals. Or in the words of Lassi in 2018,

“The Confucians considered self-cultivation and education the key to a healthy and well-adjusted family. ... The Confucians theorized that the family is the root of social harmony, and when children are uneducated or morally underdeveloped, because of a lack of particular kinds of education, the social system breaks down and disorder ensues” (p. 272). Meanwhile, Xunzi does not forget the importance of law and punishment:

“On the great division to be made in judging government affairs: If you use ritual to treat those who come bearing goodness, and use punishment to treat those who come bearing badness, then the worthy and unworthy will not be jumbled up, and what is right and what is wrong will not be confused. If the worthy and unworthy are not jumbled up, then heroes and outstanding men will come.”

(*Xunzi*, The Rule of a True King, 68)

This shows the balance of ritual and law enforcement that Xunzi prefers in social control. He takes an approach that utilizes both ritual and self-cultivation (Confucian principles), and law and punishment (Legalist approach) on the topic of social order. It also shows that how Xunzi approached social order and law cannot fit into a single box of Confucianism or Legalism, because he incorporates characteristics of both.

Furthermore, this quote also shows the ideals of a society for Xunzi. He believes that those who are capable of being “good”, well-ordered and kind should continue cultivating themselves and practicing morals, while those who do not come in peace will be punished accordingly. Thus, he takes a Legalist approach to those who adhere to their selfish nature, because the Legalist approach is based on the philosophy that humans are born bad, which with Xunzi agrees partly. One of the key differences between Xunzi’s interpretation of human nature and the Legalist philosophy is that he takes the view that even though humans are born bad, they are not incorrigible and instead have the capacity for cultivation. This is seen in his approach to *fa*: he takes a Confucian approach to those who are able to change their behavior and be kind. He emphasizes ritual and self-cultivation because the Confucian approach is based on the idea that humans are born good. His approach to *fa* is based

on his interpretation of human nature - that it is bad, but can be changed and cultivated through ritual.

## Conclusion

The *Analects* was more focused on self-cultivation and principles of the sage. Xunzi, however, gives a more detailed and realistic account of how the “bad” should be dealt with. This is partly due to his approach to human nature, which is more pessimistic than Mencius’. As he believes that humans are born evil, he focuses more on the possibility of people acting in self-interest and not for the good of society, and how to address it when it happens. He still takes a Confucian approach to self-cultivation because he believes that humans can change their nature and become good, and he therefore attempts to change their nature through teachings and rituals. This further enforces the idea that one’s approach to *fa* is heavily based on how one views human nature - how Confucian philosophers, Legalist philosophers and Xunzi approached *fa* can all be traced back to their philosophy of human nature.

Xunzi’s approach to *fa* incorporates both Confucian and Legalist ideals, highlighting how there is not always a clear boundary between the two classifications. The terms ‘Confucian’ and ‘Legalist’ are terms that beg questions themselves— using ‘Confucian’ or ‘Legalist’ to group philosophers together is anachronistic in nature, and is not always an accurate representation of their beliefs as these labels did not exist during their time.

It is also interesting to note that the reward-punishment law enforcement system emphasized in Legalist thought, as well as education and teaching, emphasized in Confucianism, both became important components of society, in both historical and present day societies. An example of this in modern day China would be the nine year compulsory education system in place, as well as laws and regulations on citizen behavior. Some countries also have official state religions, which have certain moral beliefs and guidelines on human behavior. However, these countries will still have a legal system in place. This shows the importance of bringing different philosophies together in creating a system to maintain social order. Xunzi’s approach to human nature and *fa* seems to be reflected in how modern societies approach human nature and *fa*.

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## 論雲間三子及柳如是詞中的「楊花」意象

Pui Lam 顏沛琳

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### 引言

「柳」這個意象出現在中國最早的詩歌總集《詩經》中的《小雅·采薇》：「昔我往矣，楊柳依依。今我來思，雨雪霏霏。」<sup>1</sup>。「柳」被賦有多種象徵意義：代表春天、象徵送別、被比擬歌女。在古典詩詞中，「楊花」、「柳花」意象都指「柳絮」。咏楊花的早期著名詞作為北宋蘇軾的《水龍吟·次韻章質夫楊花詞》，詞中楊花飄蕩的處境以及神態被描寫得淋漓盡致，詞人將人情和楊花的物性融合起來，借物抒情，體現了蘇軾詞婉約的一面。

「雲間三子」分別為生活在明末清初時代的陳子龍、李雯及宋徵輿，「雲間」即今上海松江，三人皆為松江華亭人。被稱為「秦淮八艷」之首的柳如是，號河東君，原名楊愛，「如是」之名來自宋代詞人辛棄疾的《賀新郎》：「我見青山多嫵媚，料青山、見我應如是。」<sup>2</sup>故自號「如是」。柳如是是明末著名的歌妓，風華絕代的她情路坎坷，與雲間三子先後有不少感情糾葛：陳子龍被譽為「明末第一詞人」，以婉約詞著名，才華橫溢的他受柳如是欽慕，兩人一見如故迅速相戀；才識過人的李雯，在明末也曾如癡如醉地愛

慕柳如是；雲間詞派的最早的填詞人宋徵輿，十六歲與柳如是相戀，在家人干涉之下，兩人被無情拆散，斷絕聯繫。而柳如是原名為「楊愛」，後又改姓「柳」。「楊」、「柳」都與柳樹有關，因此，雲間三子及柳如是都曾寫作大量的詠「楊花」的詞作。自蘇軾後，雖也有不少詞人詠「楊花」，但雲間三子和柳如是將自身經歷融入到楊花的特點，繼承了不少的傳統，同時也拓展、加深了詞史上「楊花」意象的象徵意義。

### 一. 飛向「天涯」的楊花：一生漂泊的歌女

雲間詞人在詠楊花的詞中，常常呈現楊花隨處飄蕩的特點，由此帶出歌女坎坷的命運。陳子龍在《浣溪沙·楊花》裡寫道：

百尺章台撩亂飛，重重簾幕弄春暉，  
憐他漂泊奈他飛。

澹日滾殘花影下，軟風吹送玉樓西，  
天涯心事少人知。<sup>3</sup>

這首詞的上闕表現出楊花四處飄蕩的特點。表面上，這裡寫的是楊柳，實則是反映了柳如是身為一名歌女的生活處境。柳如是在青樓的名氣很高，地位和待遇非

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<sup>1</sup> <小雅·采薇>，徐中玉主編：《詩經與楚辭》（上海：上海人民出版社，2017年），第179-181頁。

<sup>2</sup> 辛棄疾：<賀新郎>，葉嘉瑩主編：《辛棄疾詞：新釋輯評（下）》（北京：中國書店，2006年），第1361頁。

<sup>3</sup> 陳子龍：<浣溪沙·楊花>，【明】陳子龍、李雯、宋徵輿撰：《幽蘭草》（瀋陽：遼寧教育出版社，2000年），第25頁。

凡，但她在年幼的時候就已經開始了這種靠賣藝、去服侍他人的工作來維持生計。通過描述「楊花」在外漂泊「撩亂飛」，是柳如是身為一名歌女漂泊無定的悲慘生活寫照，「憐他漂泊奈他飛」則表達了詞人陳子龍對柳如是這種人生境遇的憐惜。柳如是在《金明池·咏寒柳》中寫道：

有悵寒潮，無情殘照，正是蕭蕭南浦。更吹起，霜條孤影，還記得，舊時飛絮。況晚來，煙浪斜陽，見行客，特地瘦腰如舞。總一種淒涼，十分憔悴，尚有燕臺佳句。

春日釀成秋日雨。念疇昔風流，暗傷如許。縱饒有，繞堤畫舸，冷落盡，水雲猶故。憶從前，一點東風，幾隔着重簾，眉兒愁苦。待約個梅魂，黃昏月淡，與伊深憐低語。<sup>4</sup>

歌妓在封建社會中是命運悲慘的女性群體，「念疇昔風流，暗傷如許」，詞人回憶昔日的風光、富貴年華，對比如今注定無依無靠的漂泊生活。「更吹起，霜條孤影，還記得，舊時飛絮。」柳如是年紀輕輕就四處漂泊的坎坷命運，就如同隨處飄浮的楊花一般。此處繼承了宋代詞人蘇軾《水龍吟·次韻章質夫楊花詞》中的「似花還非似花，也無人惜從教墜。」<sup>5</sup>詞中的楊花無人憐惜而飄蕩、看似無情卻蕩漾著情思，這首詞中楊花飄蕩的特點，被雲間詞人與柳如是所繼承，並賦予了深意，顯現出柳如是的孤苦身世和命運。

## 二. 「踏入沙間」的楊花：自傷失節的文人

除了以飄蕩的特點象徵歌女的漂泊，雲間三子中的李雯，在其咏楊花的詞中通過描寫「楊花」飄蕩、墜落的情形，表達出詞人的自傷失節之情。李雯在明亡後為新入主的清廷服務，雖然有被迫的成分，但是他年紀輕輕便才高學深，在明末時期成為舉人，卻一直沒有獲得官職，這也可能是明亡後的他在清廷作官的原因之一。但另一方面，由於他從小便接受儒家「忠君報國」的傳統教育，此等背叛故國的行為，對他也是一個沈重的精神負擔。他借詠「楊花」來敘寫自己身處亂世及自傷失節的愧疚，他在《浪淘沙·楊花》中寫道：

金縷曉風殘，素雪晴翻，為誰飛上玉雕闌？可惜章台新雨後，踏入沙間。

沾惹忒無端，青鳥空銜，一春幽夢綠萍間。暗處銷魂羅袖薄，與淚輕彈。<sup>6</sup>

此詞收入李雯的《蓼齋後集》，作於明亡後清初時期。詞人使用了「素雪」來形容楊花的潔白，為後來「踏入沙間」被污而自傷身世做出強烈對比。詞的上闕楊花在天晴的時候隨風飄舞，下雨後卻被埋沒於沙土之中任人踐踏，楊花處境的前後對比，正正反映出了詞人的遭遇，「楊花」落地被污，不禁讓詞人聯想到自己也氣節、名譽的喪失。詞人身為明末的才子，經歷了國家衰敗、朝代更替，因國家變故

<sup>4</sup> 柳如是：〈金明池·咏寒柳〉，【明】柳如是撰、谷輝之輯：《柳如是詩文集》（上海：上海古籍出版社，2000年），第214頁。

<sup>5</sup> 蘇軾：〈水龍吟·和章質夫楊花韻〉，【清】朱彝尊、汪森編：《詞綜》（上海：上海古籍出版社，2014年），第116頁。

<sup>6</sup> 李雯：〈浪淘沙·楊花〉，【明】李雯：《蓼齋後集》，清順治十四年（1657）刻本，卷四。

被迫降清，清軍入關之後被清廷大臣推薦給了朝廷，讓他在大清當官。雖然清廷看中他的才華，但他卻覺得自己是個背叛故國的罪人。人生中的跌宕起伏，使他看到春景時產生了強烈的傷春之感，通過營造「楊花」在一場春雨之後飄落一地、被踏入污泥的淒涼情形，借咏楊花自傷身世，講述自己的悲慘遭遇。

蘇軾《水龍吟·次韻章質夫楊花詞》中曾寫楊花「拋家傍路，思量卻是，無情有思」<sup>7</sup>，同樣寄託詞人出任外官而離家漂泊遠行，但一為被貶，一為被迫失節出仕新朝，後者的情感基調是更為深沉的。

### 三. 「送他如客」：楊花與家國情懷

雲間三子生活在明末清初的亂世，也常用「楊花」寄託家國之思，以「楊花」象徵故國、南明。

明朝滅亡後，陳子龍極力抗清，但仍是「復明」不成。在反清的過程中不慎暴露住處，以致被捕並押往南京。他趁人不備，突然投水自殺，氣絕後還被清軍殘暴的斬首，棄屍水中。他有著不屈的精神，寧願赴死也不願違背良心投靠清廷。他在《憶秦娥·楊花》中寫道：

春漠漠，香雲吹斷紅文幕。紅文幕，一簾殘夢，任他漂泊。

輕狂無奈春風惡，蜂黃蝶粉同零落。同零落，滿地萍水，夕陽樓閣。<sup>8</sup>

此詞收入刊刻於順治初年的《倡和詩餘》，為其明亡後的作品。這首詞將一切本為美好的事物都寫成「同零落」的下場，楊花也被「吹斷」而「任他漂泊」，不由讓人想到當時不斷南遷、漂泊的南明小朝廷。他不但以「楊花」意象來象徵自己在明亡後的漂泊，還暗示了對南明漂泊的無可奈何。

與此相反，宋徵輿在明朝滅亡後，先後考中了清朝的舉人和進士，開始仕清，且官至副都御史。宋徵輿寫下同名為《憶秦娥·楊花》的詞，是與陳子龍的唱和之作，也一同被收入明亡後刊刻的《倡和詩餘》中。宋徵輿以楊花為題，來表達其不同於陳子龍的複雜的心情，他在詞中寫道：

黃金陌，茫茫十里春雲白。春雲白，迷離滿眼，江南江北。

來時無奈珠簾隔，去時著盡東風力。東風力，留他如夢，送他如客。<sup>9</sup>

可見，「楊花」作為詞牌名和核心意象貫穿了整首詞，「春雲白」、「他」都是在形容楊花。「雲白」色的楊花隨風飄動，毫無依託的跨越江南江北，楊花像夢一樣留在詞人的腦海裡，但詞人對於楊花的漂泊，則如同送客一般送「他」離開。通過這首詞，能夠看出詞人對明亡的寄託，其態度看似無奈，實則接受這個事實。

<sup>7</sup> 蘇軾：〈水龍吟·和章質夫楊花韻〉，【清】朱彝尊、汪森編：《詞綜》（上海：上海古籍出版社，2014年），第116頁。

<sup>8</sup> 陳子龍：〈憶秦娥·楊花〉，【明】陳子龍、宋存標等撰：《倡和詩餘》（瀋陽：遼寧教育出版社，2000年），第38頁。

<sup>9</sup> 宋徵輿：〈憶秦娥·楊花〉，收入【明】陳子龍、宋存標等撰，《倡和詩餘》（瀋陽：遼寧教育出版社，2000年），第21頁。

從陳子龍與宋徵輿的兩首同名詞來看，陳子龍對明朝的忠心至死不渝，他對於「楊花」漂泊感到沈痛，以致他抗清自殺的結局；相比之下，宋徵輿對「楊花」的漂泊並沒有那麼執著，反而在明亡後參加了清廷科舉，並接受了明亡後的生活。由此可見雲間派的兩位詞人對於故國的不同態度。

## 結論

括而言之，楊花意象在中國文學史上常常象徵飄零之感和離別之痛，而「楊花」作為雲間三子與柳如是詞中的核心意象，則被他們用來象徵歌女的坎坷命運、詞人自身的失節，並包含了家國情懷的寄託。在蘇軾以婉約風格咏楊花的基礎上，雲間三子和柳如是更多的將自身經歷融入到「楊花」這個並非常見的意象來抒發情感，以此加深了詞中楊花意象的象徵含義，顯示出他們在明末清初詞壇上的獨特造詣。

## 資料來源

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# How does Aristotle's and Confucius's conceptualization of the self differ, and what does that reveal of the self?

Ingrid Yeung 楊子柔

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## Introduction

The conceptualization of the self is the method in which the self is conceived and how the self comes to be. As the self is unique to each individual, the conceptual understanding of it is difficult to grasp. The exploration and comparison of the conceptualization of the self in Ancient Western and Chinese philosophies further extends the difficulty of this topic.

The self is conceptualized in different ways in Ancient Western and Chinese Philosophy. In Ancient Western philosophy, the notion of self is often categorized in the metaphysical branch of the philosophy of identity. Metaphysics is the study of the nature of reality. However, in Ancient Chinese philosophy, the notion of self is regarded in a moral sense. Moral philosophy is the branch of philosophy which addresses ethics, what is right and wrong, and how people should live in relation to others.

These principles are reflected in the comparison of the conceptualization of the self in Aristotle and Confucius. Aristotle focuses on the metaphysical and independent nature of the self, whilst Confucius focuses on the moral and relational aspects of the self. By examining and comparing the works of these two philosophers, we can discover how the self differs in different cultural contexts, and what this difference reveals about the conceptualization of the self.

I must justify the methodology of this paper, which might be viewed as philosophically ignorant. Similar to Confucius, Aristotle does explore the self from a moral lens, as exemplified through his contemplation of ethical self-cultivation in *Nicomachean Ethics*. However, this paper aims to focus on the fundamentals of what constitutes the self and how the self comes into existence as an intellectual entity. It will not deal with what the self entails after it is deemed as an existing entity. Due to the limited scope of this essay, Aristotle's theories of self-cultivation will be omitted.

## 1. What is the self

To understand the conceptualization of the self, we must first determine the portrayal of the self in both Aristotle and Confucius. I will examine Aristotle's *De Anima* and Confucius's *The Analect*. Both philosophers extensively refer to the self in these selected works, from which we can discover their portrayal of the self.

### 1.1 Aristotle's conception of the self

Aristotle portrays the self as a metaphysical being composed of two primary facilities, that are the soul and the body (Calogero 1). To understand the self, one must first understand the functions of its facilities. Aristotle defines the soul as "the first actuality of a natural body which potentially has life" (Aristotle, *De Anima* 157). The first actuality is the body's potential of engaging in activity. When this potential is enacted upon, it becomes the second actuality that is the body's act of actively engaging in activity (Cohen, 2014). The potential of the soul in relation to the second actuality can be compared to potential and kinetic energy in an object. The soul is the potential of the body as potential energy is to an object. When this potential is acted upon, the body actively engages in activity, just as kinetic energy enables the movement of an object. Therefore, the soul is the capacity of the physical body to engage in activity.

As the facilities that compose of the self are abstract concepts, Aristotle uses an analogy to allow the reader to better understand them: "so just as the pupil and sight are the eye, so, in our case, [the] soul and body are the animal" (Aristotle, *De Anima* 158). The eye is a tangible, familiar object to the reader. By using the analogy of the pupil and sight as the eye, Aristotle helps the reader visualize how the soul and body function as the main building blocks of the self. Aristotle further emphasizes that "it is quite clear then that the soul is not separable from the body, or that



some parts of it are not, if it is its nature to have parts” (Aristotle, *De Anima* 158). Here, Aristotle accentuates how crucial the union of these two facilities are to the composition of the self.

According to Aristotle, in addition to the soul and body, the mind is another facility of the self. It is “the part of the soul that ... thinks and supposes” (Aristotle, *De Anima* 202). The mind that is part of the soul is responsible for the cognitive processes thinking and supposing. By highlighting the function of the mind, Aristotle establishes a clear differentiation between the mind, soul, and body. His differentiation gives insight into how different facilities that serve a variety of purposes constitute the self as a whole.

Despite his emphasis on the facilities, Aristotle clarifies that it is the possessor of these facilities, namely the person and the rational agent itself, who is the self and who thinks and acts, and not the facilities themselves. As he argues, “thinking and loving or hating are not affections of the mind but of the visible possessor of the part insofar as he possesses it” (Aristotle, *De Anima* 146). Although the soul, mind and body are components that make up the self, it is the person who possesses them all that qualifies as the self and not the facilities on their own. It is only the union of these facilities and their functioning together that composes the self as an independent existence in the metaphysical sense.

## 1.2 Confucius’ conception of the Self

Confucius’ depiction of the self is rather different. Instead of regarding the self as a metaphysical and independent existence like Aristotle, Confucius considers the self from a moral standpoint. He claims that the self is a rational agent who initiates and responds to their own inner reflection in accordance to rites and virtues. He states, “What the gentleman seeks, he seeks within himself” (*The Analects* 15:21). In Confucianism, *jun zi* 君子 or “the gentleman” is the ideal man who strives for excellence in his morals and way of life. The emphasis on “within himself” in this line indicates that the qualities the gentleman seeks to attain the moral ideal can be found within himself. “Within himself” therefore implies how the self is the essential locus of moral reflection and development.

Confucius’ depiction of the self as the locus of moral reflection and development is further extended as he claims that “the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, and not on others,” (*The Analects* 12.1). By writing “oneself alone”, Confucius stresses how the practice of benevolence, which is a type of moral

behavior, does not depend on others but instead holds the self as the sole agent responsible for one’s moral action. Such an emphasis highlights that the self is a rational agent who is primarily guided by their own inner virtue.

Although Confucius holds the self as the sole agent responsible for moral development, the self is also regarded in moral relation to others. He argues, “virtue never stands alone. It is bound to have neighbors” (*The Analects* 4:25). For Confucius, the self’s individual identity must be considered in relation to other people’s existence. Without other people to exert one’s moral behavior upon, how can good or bad actions be defined? How can the gentleman be a gentleman when there are no others or a referenceable moral code to compare oneself to? And if the self is an existence that is independent, then the self in Confucius must not exist, as moral development can not occur without others. The locus of moral development, that is the self, must have neighbors to act as benchmarks of moral growth. Therefore, the self in Confucius must be regarded in moral relation to others.

## 1.3 Comparison

The depiction of the self in Aristotle is different from the one of Confucius. They both hold the belief that the self is an agent who possesses the ability of thought and action, but the way they portray the self is different. The self in Aristotle is regarded as an independent entity composed of different facilities, whilst the self in Confucius is portrayed as the locus of moral behavior and must be regarded in moral relation with rites, virtues, and other individual agents. The fundamental difference between these two portrayals lies in their consideration of philosophical branches: Aristotle considers the self in through the metaphysical lens, and Confucius considers the self through the moral lens.

## 2. Self-actualization

Self-actualization refers to the method of how the self comes to be. It is “the complete realization of one’s potential, and the full development of one’s abilities and appreciation for life” (Perera). This reflective process of realization and inner development of the self allows the internal and intangible qualities of the self, such as thoughts and feelings, to come into existence. Aristotle looks at self-actualization through the method of self-awareness, whilst Confucius looks at self-actualization through the method of self-cultivation.

## 2.1 Self-actualization in Aristotle

Aristotle looks at self-actualization primarily through the method of self-awareness (Smith). Self-awareness is the act of being aware of one's existence. Aristotle claimed that "to be conscious that we are perceiving or thinking is to be conscious of our own existence" (Aristotle, *De Sensu* 7.448a). He implies that a person must perceive their own existence when they perceive external and sensible things. The awareness of oneself and the perception of external sensible things occur concomitantly (Owens 707). As the human cognition perceives external sensible things, this process points to the existence of a perceiver who is a being that exists in time and space. For something to be perceived, there must be a perceiver. From this concomitant relationship between the perception of external things and the perception of oneself, self-awareness of the perceiver as the self arises, and so the self is actualized.

Self-awareness arises in this concomitant relationship between the perceiver and the perceived through the facilities of the self, specifically via the intellect. Aristotle argues, "when the intellect becomes each thing in the way that the actualized knower is said to be, which happens wherever it is capable of being in activity through itself, ... it is then itself capable through itself of thinking" (Aristotle, *De Anima* 202). When perceiving external sensible objects, the idea of such objects are formed in the intellect of the perceiver. The intellect's ability to perceive external surroundings allows the whole self to be aware of its surroundings. The perception of external surroundings triggers the simultaneous related perception of the self, which gives rise to self-awareness. Such a method of self-actualization is a metaphysical approach and relies on only the perceiver, that is the self, and the facilities it possesses.

## 2.2 Self-actualization in Confucius

On the other hand, Confucius describes self-actualization as a process that comes about through self-cultivation. Self-cultivation is the development of one's mind, capacities, and morals through one's own effort ("Self-Cultivation Definition & Meaning"). It is the process of "enhancing and endless polishing of a person's capacities and potentials" (Cohen et al.). Confucius principles on self-cultivation often serve as guidance as to how to become a better person morally so that people may become that ideal. They focus on the methods of becoming a gentleman. Confucius looks at self-cultivation specifically in relation to other people in many of his principles. He states, "when you meet someone better than yourself, turn your thoughts

to becoming his equal. When you meet someone not as good as you are, look within and examine your own self" (*The Analects* 4:17). In this particular principle, he uses other people as an inspiration for oneself to initiate inner reflection to the extent of "examining your own self". As such, self-cultivation in Confucius relies not only on the self's inner reflection, but on others as well to initiate moral development in the self. Such a method of dependent self-cultivation reflects Confucius' focus on the relational nature of the self in contrast to Aristotle's focus on the independent nature of the self.

Confucius also asserts how oneself should behave to others in accordance to one self's own desire. He writes, "do not impose on others what you yourself do not deserve" (*The Analects* 15:24). This principle encourages agents to treat others the way they themselves would want to be treated. The outlined relationship between the inner reflection of the self and others is two-way: it is both inspired by oneself, and also by others. The focus on the relational nature of the self in Confucius is highlighted here once again.

## 2.3 Comparison

The different methods of self-actualization in Aristotle and Confucius reflect their respective focus and values of the conceptualization of the self. Through reference to self-awareness, Aristotle establishes that self-actualization can be achieved independently by the self alone. Meanwhile, Confucius focuses on relational self-cultivation and attributes the possibility of self-actualization to a dependence on other people. Such a difference reflects how Aristotle focuses on the self in itself, whilst Confucius focuses on the relational nature of the self. In Aristotle's case, self-awareness is a metaphysical method, as it relies on perception and knowledge of external sensible things. However, in Confucius's case, self-cultivation is discussed as a method relating to morals. The two philosopher's contrasting values regarding the conceptualization of the self are made clear in their methods of self-actualization.

## Conclusion

The self as an agent exists in the works of Aristotle and Confucius, yet their focus and values regarding the conceptualization of the self ultimately differ from each other. Aristotle's depiction of the self as a possessor of the facilities, namely the soul, mind, and body, and his theories of self-awareness revealed his view of the self as a metaphysical, independent existence in time and space. Opposing Aristotle's

metaphysical approach, Confucius's depiction of the self as the locus of moral development and his principles of self-cultivation indicate a focus on considering the self as a moral, relational agent.

The differences in the values of these two philosophers possibly reflect the values of their respective cultures. The philosophy of self - by extension the philosophy of identity - is often regarded as part of the branch of metaphysics in Ancient Greek philosophy. Although Ancient Chinese philosophy does focus on metaphysics, it heavily emphasizes on the importance of morals, especially in relation to others. It is thereby no surprise that Ancient Chinese philosophy conceptualizes the self in the moral sense. As philosophy professor Xinzhong Yao acknowledges, "in contrast to the metaphysical, epistemological and psychological understandings of the self ... considered in the West, the self in Confucianism is essentially an ethical concept, representing a holistic view of humanhood and a continually constructive process driven by self-cultivation and moral orientations" (Yao 179). Therefore, Aristotle and Confucius theories of conceptualisation of the self are influenced by the kind of society and circumstances they are in.

Now that we have established the difference between Aristotle and Confucius' depiction of the self, what does this difference reveal of the self? Both Aristotle and Confucius focus on the internal cognitive processes of the self, whether it be self-awareness of moral self-cultivation. Despite the emphasis on the internal, both philosophers also consider the conceptualization of the self in relation to the external surroundings of the self. Aristotle's method of self-awareness entails that perception of the self's external environment must happen for the simultaneous realization of the existence of the perceiver. Confucius' idea of the self as the starting point of moral behavior and his method of self-cultivation emphasizes on the relational nature of the self. Therefore, in both philosopher's depiction of the self, the self must exist in an environment external to itself.

Besides the differences in Aristotle's and Confucius' approach of the same topic and how their thoughts likely represent the dominant ideas of their time, another discovery from this exploration is the realization of their philosophies' timelessness. Although both philosophers existed more than 2000 years ago, their theories and ideas are still very prominent and relevant in modern times.

Aristotle's portrayal of the self as composed of a soul and a body relates to the philosophy of the mind, a

topic which is becoming increasingly popular in modern philosophy. 20th century philosopher Gilbert Ryle addresses the "mind-body problem" in his essay *The Ghost in the Machine* (Cahn and Ryle 133-137), a central issue in modern metaphysics regarding the mind. The distinction of the mind and the body that is outlined by philosophers such as Aristotle raises the question of how these facilities are connected to form one person with a single identity (Cahn and Ryle 133), which makes the mind-body dualism worthy of contemplation as evident in Ryle's work.

Aristotle's theories on self-awareness can also be compared to 17th century philosopher René Descartes's mind-body dualism. In his *First Meditations*, Descartes dismantles his fundamental beliefs in hopes of reaching clarity of his existence (Cahn and Descartes 173-178). Similarly to Aristotle, he realizes that for these thoughts to appear in his mind, there must be a thinker. Therefore, Descartes concludes that "*cogito ergo sum*" (I think therefore I am).

Through a more practical lens, theories of philosophy of the mind are also linked to the advancement of technology. The development of artificial intelligence gives rise to the question of whether computers have the ability to think as a human mind does, and by extension whether they can become a "self" if they had the capacity to think. Philosophers such as Alan Turing and John Searle have taken upon this topic, using metaphors such as "the imitation game" and "the Chinese room argument" in response to this question (Cahn 2018). Such thought experiments demonstrate that the philosophy of the mind closely relates to society's future and is therefore still worthy of exploration.

Similar to Aristotle's theories, Confucius' conceptualization of the self can be traced in recent philosophy. Confucius's theories of the relational nature of the self can be compared to 20th century existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy. Sartre's existentialist philosophy asserts that each individual has the capability to determine their purpose in life. In other words, they have free will. He argues that there is an element of individual subjectivism to one's existence, because one must be aware of oneself, live, and go through their own experience to actualize themselves (Sartre and Mairat 46). However, "the man who discovers themselves through the *cogito* also discovers others, and discovers them as the condition of his own existence... [one] cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through the mediation of another" (Sartre and

Mairet 45). One can only self-actualize by acknowledging that others' existence is as complex as our own and other people's judgment of ourselves. Similar to Confucius, Sartre looks at others as a reflection of one's identity and proof of one's existence.

Confucius' theories of self-cultivation are still crucial to present Chinese values. Parents often quote *The Analects* to teach their children how to become a better person. His theory of regarding the self as the sole agent responsible for one's own actions is also pertinent to how people are held morally responsible in society, specifically in justice systems around the world.

The comparison of the conceptualization of the self in both Aristotle and Confucius reveals how their portrayal of the self contributes to our understanding of the self as an existence. It also discloses the difference in values of Ancient Greek and Ancient Chinese philosophy. I find it overwhelming yet fascinating that an existence as miniscule as the self, as a single being, can be explored in various perspectives through the lens of philosophy. Such a revelation reveals the complexity of the self, which enables us to acknowledge that there is much more to ourselves than there appears to be.

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# Jing Ke: a hero or a villain?

## A comparison of ancient and contemporary portrayals

Echo Sheng 盛瑞伊

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### Introduction

During the Warring States Period 戰國時期 (453 BC – 221 BC) in Ancient China, there was a mundane man named Jing Ke, later known as Jing Qing 荊卿 [Sir Jing], who became renowned for his failed assassination attempt. He was arguably the most famous assassin in Chinese history, his story recorded in Sima Qian's *Shiji*. His profound fame largely came from the one he attempted to assassinate, who later became the first emperor of China - Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇.

Despite Jing Ke's failed assassination attempt, his legacy is still remembered to this day. In records as early as the Han dynasty, such as the *Shiji*, he was glorified as a brave hero, sacrificing himself for the greater good. Modern interpretations of his legacy in the form of films similarly portray his actions in a positive light. An undeniable cause of his fame came from the reputation of his victim - the King of Qin, later, Qin Shi Huang, who, similar to Jing Ke, is also frequently depicted alternatively as a hero or villain in Chinese history. He is often either portrayed as the proud creator of an empire, unifying all the Warring States, or the reviled tyrant who burned books and forced brutal laws onto the people (Pines 227). The image of Jing Ke in Sima Qian's *Shiji* is intricately connected to the portrayal of Qin Shi Huang in the same source, so whether Jing Ke is a villain or a hero is contingent upon whether he was regarded as doing something honorable or despicable.

To assess whether Jing Ke was a hero or villain, the definitions of these terms are crucial. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'Hero' is defined as: "a person who is admired by many people for doing something brave or good". On the other hand, a villain is defined as "a person who is morally bad or responsible for causing *trouble or harm*". Keeping these definitions in mind, I will analyze ancient and

contemporary sources to compare and contrast how Jing Ke was portrayed in different sources, and then form a conclusion. The extent of my inquiry will be focused on the early and modern sources of depiction, with sources from the Han Dynasty including the *Shiji* and paintings from the Wu Liang Shrine, as well as contemporary films from modern directors Chen Kaige 陳凱歌 and Zhang Yimou 張藝謀. The goal of my research is to provide insight into the different perspectives of Jing Ke's legacy through analyzing a variety of sources ranging from different time periods.

### 1. Historical background

In order to understand why Jing Ke was sent on a mission to assassinate the King of Qin, a brief introduction to the historical background of the Warring States is required.

During the Warring States period, China was split into seven spheres of influence, also known as seven states. Each state had its own king, but unions were common among weaker states in hope of averting imminent conquest by stronger states. Sima Qian's *Basic Annals of Qin* 秦本紀 tells a story of Qin's territorial expansion. Under Shang Yang's 衛鞅 reforms, Qin's war and agriculture grew rapidly. Shang Yang led Qin armies in an important victory over the neighboring, powerful state of Wei 魏 which allowed Qin to further expand their empire and eventually conquer all the other warring states (Pines 19). The unification of all the warring states was achieved within 12 years. Between 247 and 221 BC, the state of Qin was rapidly gaining in power, emerging as one of the most powerful states. The Qin army was unstoppable after victory against Han 韓 in 230 BC, taking over Zhao 趙 in 228 BC, Wei 魏 in 225 BC, and the capitulation of Chu 楚 in 223 BC. Thus, the remaining states grew weary and were in constant fear that they would be Qin's next target, with the state of Yan 燕 being one of them. Hence, in the year 227 BC, Jing Ke was sent

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by Prince Dan of Yan 燕太子丹 to assassinate the King of Qin. Ultimately, Jing Ke was unsuccessful, which led to the destruction and obliteration of Yan in 222 BC. In 221 BC, China was a unified empire at last, with the King of Qin 嬴政 granting himself the title of Shi Huangdi 始皇帝 or 'First Emperor'.

The first documentation of Jing Ke's attempted assassination appeared in Sima Qian's *Shiji* under the Biographies of Assassins (*Cike liezhuan* 刺客列傳) chapter. The concept of *cike* 刺客 was introduced during the Eastern Zhou period; however, it was only properly defined in the Han dynasty as part of the “*ke*” system and was first documented in Sima Qian's *Shiji*. “*Ke*”, translated as “retainer”, are men who possessed outstanding skills in specific areas and were hired by lords to work for them. These men did not necessarily have any official status, some were even fugitives from other states. They lived in their lords' manors and were provided with lots of luxuries, ranging from women to properties to money. In exchange, they would use their skills to their lords' benefit, for example, enabling lords to escape from danger, manipulating political situations in their favor, and sometimes even killing those who stood in the way. “*C*” 刺 literally stands for “stab” and “*Ke*” 客 on the other hand is translated as “retainer”, as mentioned before, it stands for one that works for his lord. Put simply, the term *cike* stands for someone who assassinates rivals for their lords. Different from other retainers, they would usually finish the job at the cost of their lives, being both killers and victims of political rivalry (Xu 16). In other words, they were assassins.

Records related to assassins in early China were not uncommon. In *Zuozhuan* 左傳; the most common assassination was the act of killing the lord. However, the names of these assassins were not recorded and remained unknown; they were simply called “*zei*” 賊 or ‘traitors’ in English. This phenomenon shows that the assassins were not deemed heroic or worthy of respect; they were regarded as a tool in early Chinese culture, as most merely killed out of spite, selfishness, or for materialistic goods such as money or other luxuries. Yet, Sima Qian's *Shiji* documents these assassins in a different light. The Biographies of Assassins chapter collects narrative stories of five assassins — Cao Mo 曹沫、Zhuan Zhu 專諸、Yu Rang 豫讓、Nie Zheng 聶政、Jing Ke 荊軻. In the epitome of each chapter, Sima Qian reveals his admiration for these assassins. Unlike previous historical records, he believes that their stories reveal praiseworthy inner qualities of bravery and benevolence 仁義精神, and thus are good role models

in illustrating the power an individual holds in potentially changing the fate of an entire state (Xu 7).

## 2. Historical accounts — one man, two identities

Jing Ke was a victim of political unrest, a friend, a hero, and a villain. His tale was made famous in large part due to Sima Qian's *Shiji*. According to the *Shiji*, Jing Ke was from the state of Wei with Qi ancestors and ‘loved to read books and practice swordsmanship’ (Qian 167). He was rejected by many lords and reacted cowardly in these instances. Nevertheless, he never gave up and traveled from one state to another. When he entered the state of Yan, he soon became friends with the dog butcher Gao Jianli 高漸離, and a retired knight, Tian Guang 田光, who treated him kindly, realizing Jing Ke was no ordinary man (Qian 168). Hence, at Tian Guang's recommendation, he became a *cike* for the Prince of Yan.

The Crown Prince Dan of Yan was agitated by Qin's rise in power and held personal grudges against the King of Qin. He sought out immediate revenge in the form of hiring an assassin retainer. It can be argued that Jing Ke was unique among assassins in the biographies in the sense that he did not uphold Prince Dan of Yan's values, rather, he respected and valued Tian Guang's actions and their friendship, which was ultimately the reason why he agreed to carry out this mission on behalf of Yan.

In order to approach the King of Qin, Jing Ke collected the head of a fugitive Qin general, Fan Yuqi 樊於期, and a map of Yan as ‘presents’ to be presented personally. Jing Ke would then seize this opportunity to assassinate the King. He was accompanied by Qin Wuyang 秦舞陽, who was rumored to have killed a person at the age of 13. After numerous sacrifices and preparations, Jing Ke left the state of Yan, with the intention to never return.

Upon arriving at the Qin palace, matters soon became out of hand. Qin Wuyang became fear-stricken, and suspicions soon arose among the Qin generals. Although Jing Ke was quick to explain on Qin Wuyang's behalf, the King grew cautious. Jing Ke continued as planned, and soon he unveiled the dagger hidden in a map and struck the King of Qin. The King dodged but was unable to pull out his sword to strike Jing Ke, and as Sima Qian tells the story, the two men ended up pursuing each other around a column in the audience chamber, until the king was finally able to draw his sword. He wounded Jing Ke, who was then subdued by surrounding guards, not before a final

desperate effort to kill the king, hurling his dagger at the king which struck the bronze pillar in the hall. Overpowered, Jing Ke was soon met with his death (Qian 175-176).

Above was a brief summary of events documented in the *Shiji* regarding Jing Ke's assassination attempt. The *Shiji* portrays Jing Ke as someone who is a loyal friend, a risk-taker who is willing to sacrifice himself in order to fulfill a promise.

## 2.1 Hero

Jing Ke, unlike others in Sima Qian's Biographies of Assassins is not only "a knight who dies for the one who really understands him", or "a hero who resists the cruel government", his righteousness went beyond the moral scope of "death for another's sake" 為知己者死 and had a broader moral connotation of rescuing all the warring states (Xu 10). We can gain a better understanding of Jing Ke's motives, perceived by Sima Qian from a broader perspective through analyzing the order in which he arranges the chapters in the *Shiji*. Jing Ke's biography is followed by the Biography of Lisi 李斯列傳, which marked the start of Qin's biographies. From this timeline, it can be interpreted that Sima Qian uses Jing Ke's biography to mark the end of the Warring States period, and his mission to uphold peace within the Warring States is portrayed by his determination throughout the assassination attempt which all comes to a close as Qin unites all seven states. Furthermore, the Biographies of Assassins is placed between the Biography of Lu Buwei 呂不韋列傳 and the Biography of Lisi, both named after ministers of Qin that held huge influence on the foundation of the Qin empire. Thus, placing the Biographies of Assassins between these ministers shows that Sima Qian believed the role of assassins to be comparable to that of ministers, as both can change the political situation (Xu 96).

In the *Shiji*, Jing Ke is portrayed as a loyal friend, his loyalty being one factor in his perceived heroism. According to the *Shiji*, Jing Ke agreed to meet the prince of Yan upon Tian Guang's request and sacrifice, where Tian Guang explained: "The crown prince...has told me that Yan and Qin cannot continue to exist side by side and begged me to devote my mind to the problem. Rather than refuse his request, I took the liberty of mentioning your name..." Tian Guang had decided to commit suicide in order to spur Jing Ke to action, and he continued: "I want you to go at once and visit the prince. Tell him I am already dead, so he will know that I have not betrayed the secret!" (Qian 170). Tian Guang committed suicide to show his

loyalty and to give Jing Ke the incentive to offer his assistance to the Prince of Yan. Although Prince Dan's request was a challenging one, Jing Ke, after some hesitation, accepted the prince's pleading and set on a difficult journey driven by desire for revenge for Tian Guang, which can highlight Jing Ke's loyalty towards his friend. Moreover, Jing Ke's determination throughout his mission showed a clear contrast and change in his personality from the previous text. In the beginning, Jing Ke was cowardly and lacked courage, he would leave because of an angry glare or if someone shouted at him. However, when Jing Ke met with the King of Qin, he showed no hesitation even in the face of death. Even when he was wounded and knew that his mission would not succeed, he cursed the King of Qin with his words: "I failed because I tried to threaten you without actually killing you and exact a promise that I could take back to the crown prince!" (Qian 176). Jing Ke's change in personality can be considered a result of his relationship with Gao Jianli and Tian Guang. It was in Gao Jianli where Jing Ke found his soulmate 知己, and according to the *Shiji*, they often drank in the marketplace of the Yan capital and: "In the middle of the crowded market place they would happily amuse themselves, or if their mood changed they would break into tears, exactly as though there were no one else about." (Qian 168). On the other hand, Tian Guang accepted Jing Ke, saw his potential, and "treated him very kindly" unlike other lords. For these two beings who truly understood him, Jing Ke was willing to sacrifice himself for them.

Through Jing Ke's biography, Sima Qian hopes to inspire future generations to pursue qualities such as unwavering courage and loyalty, which Jing Ke possesses (Zhang 127). He ends the Biographies of Assassins chapter by stating that "Of these five men, from Cao Mei to Jing Ke, some succeeded in carrying out their duty and some did not. But it is perfectly clear that they had all determined upon the deed. They were not false to their intentions. Is it not right, then, that their names should be handed down to later ages?" (Qian 178). His words suggest that Jing Ke was true to his intentions and portrays him in a positive light. Sima Qian's rhetorical question suggests that the names and actions of the assassins deserve to be praised and serve as a role models to future generations.

Jing Ke's legacy can be reflected in other kinds of historical sources, such as the stone rubbings from the shrine of Wu Rong at the Wu Family Shrines, Jiaxiang, Shandong from the Eastern Han Dynasty. The stone rubbing depicts the story of Jing Ke and Qin Wuyang's failed assassination attempt to kill Ying Zheng [the King of Qin].



**Figure 1.** Jing Ke's court scene depicted in stone rubbing of the Wu Family Shrines

In this rubbing, officers are seen riding in horse-drawn vehicles, and Jing Ke can be seen chasing the King around pillars. According to the inscriptions at the site, the Wu Family held positions in the government. These rubbings can be seen as manifestations of loyalty to the Han dynasty, where the First Emperor is presented as a tyrant who had lost the mandate to rule. The stone shrine and its rubbings are one of the few surviving examples of Han pictorial style, and carving skills, as well as evidence of their burial practices (Seattle Art Museum). To carve such a scene on one's burial site shows the fame and respect Jing Ke possessed posthumously. It further shows how Jing Ke exemplifies relations of righteousness and faithfulness between two soulmates, where one is willing to sacrifice himself for the other.

## 2.1 Villain

Criticism towards Jing Ke arose at the same time as praise. Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 BC), a loyal supporter of political unification, expressed how he opposed the

idea of Jing Ke as a 'freedom fighter', and rather viewed his mission as an 'example of a clandestine activity that endangers the legitimate ruler'. To him, Jing Ke symbolized forces of political disintegration, and his actions were unlawful; he took action out of gratitude towards a friend instead of justice for his people (Pines 17-18). This critical reevaluation is exemplified over a thousand years later by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) as he writes, after telling the story of the failed plot and of the resultant elimination of the state of Yan: "[Prince] Dan of Yan was unable to overcome anger...his thinking was shallow, his planning superficial; he induced resentment and hastened the disaster; he caused a sudden cessation of the sacrifices to [the King of Yan]...Which crime can be greater than that? ". By describing the Prince's assassination plot as "superficial" and "hastening disaster", Sima Guang questions the legitimacy of the plot and considers it a "crime". This statement demonstrates that Sima Guang did not consider Qin's wrongdoings as a justification for a plotted assassination attempt. Subsequently, he writes that "Jing Ke cared only for his private [interest] of being fed and nourished...he wanted to use an eight-chi long dagger to strengthen Yan and weaken Qin. Is it not stupid?" Sima Guang further illustrates Jing Ke and prince Dan in a negative light and highlights their foolishness by stressing the fact they used "an eight-chi long dagger", making the attempt seem absurd and imprudent (Pines 19-20).

Lastly, from a modern perspective, it can be argued Jing Ke is a criminal. His actions are considered homicide in today's society. Jing Ke did not hold any personal grudge against the one he attempted to assassinate – the King of Qin, therefore, he planned and attempted to commit this assassination merely under the influence of political folly and sympathetic feelings towards his associates.

## 3. Contemporary portrayals

In modern cinematic screens, Jing Ke is often glorified and portrayed as a hero. He is a warrior who is brave, loyal, and courageous, and sacrifices himself to uphold his beliefs. Jing Ke's portrayal in both Zhang Yimou's *Hero* 英雄 and Chen Kaige's *The Emperor and The Assassin* 荆軻刺秦王 draws sympathy and empathy from audiences around the world.

### 3.1 Chen Kaige's *The Emperor and The Assassin*

*The Emperor and The Assassin* is a 1998 film directed by Chen Kaige. The film is split into two parts: Part 1



King of Qin and Part 2 The Assassin. It had been described as one of the ‘*most historically engaged cinema versions of the tale in recent years*’ (Von Tunzelmann).

Chen Kaige depicts Jing Ke as a kind man who had no choice but to assassinate for survival. To justify Jing Ke’s assassination attempt, Chen portrays the King of Qin in a malicious manner. He places emphasis on scenes where the king forced fugitives to burn words onto their faces, command a massive suicide of the children of Zhao, and even included an ahistorical story of the emperor becoming a father-killer. These heinous acts are then interpreted as a justification for Jing Ke’s assassination. In stark contrast, Chen portrays Jing Ke as a remorseful assassin, traumatized and guilty of his every assassination, upon which he swore to never assassinate another person. This scene showcases his moral values and depicts him in a positive light. Even though it was not documented in historical records, it highlights Jing Ke’s persona and draws empathy from the audience.

### 3.2 Zhang Yimou’s *Hero*

Director Zhang Yimou’s *Hero* portrays Jing Ke as an anonymous hero from Zhao who attempts to assassinate the King of Qin in the hope of averting the imminent conquest of Zhao by Qin.

In *Hero*, details of Jing Ke’s identity are glorified in contrast to what is documented in Sima Qian’s *Shiji*. For one, the film documents him as a citizen of Wei who was later adopted by a Qin family at a young age, and that he is anonymous, which contradicts ancient sources. In the film, he is introduced as ‘無名大俠’ [A hero with no name]. His anonymous identity draws audiences’ sympathy and curiosity, as it is rare in history for any common folk to be recorded, and simultaneously builds suspense and tension in the scenes.

*Hero* portrays Jing Ke as an undefeatable warrior. He is able to walk on water, with precise and accurate swordsmanship. The biggest difference between the primary source and the film would be the ways in which the assassin was able to get so close to the King and have a conversation with him. In the primary sources, Jing Ke is able to get close to the King of Qin because of General Fan’s head; in the film, he is able to get close to the King because he had collected and defeated Qin’s enemies - this time the swords of those assassins’ who had once tried to assassinate the King of Qin. However, the primary sources have a significantly more realistic ending to the film. In the

film, the assassin leaves the palace, although his mission has failed. He was not only able to have a peaceful conversation with the King of Qin, the king himself even gave his sword to Jing Ke and told him ‘*the choice is yours*’ or ‘*the fate of all is in your hands*’. This scene is ironic and meaningful, as the film portrays Jing Ke on equal footing with the King, even though he is known as ‘the nameless’. By doing so, the director affirms Jing Ke’s humble origins yet highlights his excellence and exceptionality. Comparably, Jing Ke’s action to choose the fate of the state over his personal grudge against the King further depicts him as a hero. By choosing not to kill the king, he prioritized peace over hatred and revenge.

The film highlights the word *tianxia* 天下 [All under heaven] which reflects Jing Ke’s concern for political and social stability. Furthermore, Jing Ke displays his skill and loyalty in fighting scenes, demonstrating other positive qualities, making him the undeniable ‘hero’ in this film.

As the film comes to an end, Jing Ke’s death arouses a sense of pathos in the audience over the loss of a hero and leaves many in awe of his bravery and loyalty. Zhang Yimou depicts Jing Ke as a god-like character with superhuman fighting skills, portraying him as the protagonist who sacrificed himself for the greater good of the country, making him the ultimate hero in the hearts of the audience.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Jing Ke was a controversial character in the eyes of ancient and modern interpreters. Many document him as a hero for his bravery and ability to transcend social boundaries. He was portrayed as a tragic hero, a victim of politics, whose failure highlights his nobility of spirit, and as an insignificant common folk who was able to transcend hierarchical barriers and be on an equal footing for a brief moment with the emperor of China. He was praised for his righteous spirit, unwavering determination, and bravery. However, in other sources, he was presented as a foolish man, with inadequate abilities and selfish nature whose criminal acts caused others to suffer. Criticized for his criminal actions and rash attempt at assassinating the King of Qin.

Yet, it is worth keeping in mind that the historical sources of the Han dynasty may contain political bias, as the Han overthrew the Qin. Thus, Han dynasty authors are likely to exaggerate the wrongdoings of Qin and glorify Jing Ke’s assassination attempt, which explains the largely positive portrayal of Jing Ke in

ancient sources. Similarly, contemporary films are largely for entertainment purposes and both filmmakers had to respond to the predominantly positive views of Jing Ke among their audience without extolling political assassination. Therefore, both directors have made the narrative more dynamic in terms of the plot and reinterpreted the story to fit commercial interests.

Studying such a character in history can reflect ancient Chinese societal thoughts and ideals, especially by investigating the different historical views on whether Jing Ke was a hero or a villain. It can also provide meaningful insight into how scholars began to shift their attention from affairs of nobilities to that of normal citizens. *Cike* would be the best representation of heroes who were normal people - stepping up during times of political crisis to serve their country and fulfill their purpose. By placing emphasis on common people, readers not only observe their heroic qualities but also discover that they reflect the dream of being able to change the entire state or nation even as a lowly individual. Such attributes still moved the hearts of ancient historians and the modern audience of today.

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# 從《良友》畫報廣告觀察民國流行文化及其演變

David Cen 岑惟恩

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## 引言

中國的文化歷經幾十載春秋歲月，歷代的皇權統治也隨著中華民國的建立正式滅亡，中華民國可被理解為中華民族成為一個現代國家的重要過渡期。在此時期的人們大量接觸西方文化，積極模仿西方國家。而通過研究廣告內容也能夠反映民國時期的時尚思想及潮流。

本論文所選的《良友》畫報是民國時期最為流行的雜誌之一，於一九二六年二月在上海創刊時一炮打響，屬於月期類畫報。《良友》於 1938 年因戰爭而被迫停辦。本文將分析《良友》印刷出版時期內的民國流行文化。

之所以選擇《良友畫報》原因有三。第一是因為《良友》貼近普遍大眾，銷量眾多。當年就有評論曰：「《良友》一冊在手，學者專家不覺得淺薄，村夫婦孺也不嫌其高深」，可見《良友》之妙處。《良友》畫報貼近廣大百姓，能夠展現民國社會主要群體的思想。二是因為《良友》身為時尚畫報，報導了當時社會潮流內容，符合本研究的需求。第三是能夠進入《良友》畫報的廣告必是規模龐大，深受歡迎的。這也抹去小眾文化廣告的可能性，確保了研究的準確性。

## 一. 二十年代

二十年代是《良友》建立的初期，雖然中華民國的統治已經持續了約 10 年。這個時期的人民大量接觸西方文化，虛假廣告，甚至孫中山先生之死也成為了一種營銷手段。在《良友》的廣告中也展示出了這一點。

### 一. 現象一：突出國外文化

隨著清政府的滅亡和中國在戰爭中的多次失敗，民國時期的人們終於意識到了中國與西方的巨大差距。政治方面，民國時期的領導者受到西方的巨大影響，而這也是西方文化受到重視的根基。而來自西方的貨品，甚至是和與西方有關係的貨品都受到了推崇。

圖一展示了某款雪茄廣告。廣告設計者不忘將品牌的英文名（**Primus Cigars**）及創始人名字放於廣告中心。雖然不排除這項設計是為在華洋人而設，可此廣告仍然使用英語突出此產品特點。

特別能夠突出西學東漸現象的是二十年代初期流行的照相文化。照相機於十九世紀初期引入中國，可當時只供皇族成員使用。可隨著清政府的瓦解和中國的進一步開放，照相這項服務逐漸在普通大眾中盛行。從普通百姓透過照相服務登上《良

友》的現象，可證明照相文化的流行性及普及性。圖二展現了寶記照相的照相服務。公司廣告詞中稱：「定價極為公道，各界仕女惠顧」，可見照相公司是以大眾百姓作為主要客源，展現了西方科技引進中國後為百姓生活所帶來的改變。

第二項能夠突出西方文化流入中國的是西方樂器的引入。圖三的廣告中含有兩張圖片，其中一張展示了一把小提琴，而另外一張展示了一台唱片播放機。廣告中的圖片是讀者首先注意到的部分，因此說明了此公司更希望讀者注意西方樂器，因為這種樂器更有需求。不僅如此，本廣告廣告詞中寫到：「西樂器，中樂器」，說明本公司仍然出售中樂器，只是他們選擇了展示西樂器。就連廣告詞的排序也突出了西方文化。二十年代仍然是「從右到左」的讀寫方法，因此「西樂器」的廣告詞排於「中樂器」前面。



圖一：金海牌雪茄烟廣告，收入《良友》合訂本，第一冊，第十三頁。



圖二：寶記照相廣告，收入《良友》合訂本，第一冊，第二十四頁。



圖三：永安有限公司廣告，收入《良友》合訂本，第一冊，第三十三頁。

## 二. 現象二：大量虛假/迷信廣告

二十年代的虛假廣告數量明顯大於其他年代。多數二十年代的廣告存在誇張甚至虛假的廣告詞。而這些廣告之所以能成功，是基於中國人對於外國貨品認知的缺乏或迷信等因素。我們必須明白當時的中國社會突然湧進了大量西方發明，使國人大開眼界。因此，民眾無法正確分明貨品是否有實際功效也是可理解的。

圖四乃是某研究會催眠術的廣告。廣告詞稱：「催眠術能強生健體，祛除疾病，戒斷煙賭，窺破人性，增長記憶，調和感情，教導弟子，預測吉凶，偵探秘密，防禦盜賊，回見亡魂，幻游世界，及種種奇幻遊戲現象。」可見其明顯誇張及不合理的內容。天馬行空的說詞乃是二十年代虛假廣告的特點之一。

圖五的廣告將產品與西方文化對比。廣告以「求幸福者注意」而吸引讀者興趣。廣告首先描述「病從口入」的特點，再結合人需頻繁飲用水這一特點為他們的產品推銷做鋪墊。廣告稱「近世物理學家霍克氏對飲水之研究有云」而展現他們研究的可靠性。廣告之後聲稱有某種「劇毒」病毒存在於水中，需要以熱水加熱而燒菌，最後再推銷產品（熱水壺）達到推廣目的。

看似科學，符合邏輯性的廣告詞是虛假廣告的另外一種形式。

雖然本論文只展現了兩個廣告，二十年代的《良友》中出現了大量的虛假廣告，而大多數也只出現一次。本論文所挑選的廣告也只是最能夠體現虛假廣告現象的範例，並不能以偏概全。虛假廣告並非本研習的主要研究對象，因此本文不做深度研究。



圖四：中國心靈研究會催眠術廣告·收入《良友》合訂本·第一冊·第五十七頁。



圖五：中國心靈研究會催眠術廣告·收入《良友》合訂本·第一冊·第五十七頁。

### 三. 現象三：以孫中山之死推廣產品

民國時期大總統孫中山死於一九二五年。身為中華民國創始人，孫中山深受民國人民尊重。《良友》也於一九二五年十二月發布孫中山特輯以表示尊敬。遺憾的

是，孫中山先生的地位也被作為商人推行貨品的工具。

圖六的產品是「中山橄欖」，聲稱「中山先生功績在人間。去世還令人思念。要把先生來紀念。第一須吃中山橄欖。吃了回味越有回味。」此廣告也發布於中山紀念特輯，可見是藉悼念孫中山之名而設計的。

民國時期的人們愛慕孫中山及以他為主題所創作的文化，如孫中山所發明的中山裝成為了全國人民所公認的正式服裝，可見孫中山對中國流行文化的影響。而孫中山之死也是轟動全國的大事，因此有關的報導出售額必大大超過普通期刊，這解釋了孫中山橄欖及類似貨品能夠成功的原因。

### 四. 現象四：愛國文化

民國時期流行文化中的一個重要現象是當時的愛國思想。廣告設計者也利用人們這種思想於廣告之中突出此特點。

圖七的金龍牌香菸廣告利用「愛國人士」一詞而達到宣傳目的。廣告詞中寫到：「熱心愛國者……不可不吸」。廣告商將和愛國本身沒有任何關係的香菸與「愛國」聯繫一起，可見廣告商為了銷量而不擇手段的現象。「國貨」二詞也在這個時代頻繁出現。這種現象的主要原因是中國軍事方面頻繁的失敗，使國人真正意識到了中國屬於一個群體，因此掀起一波愛國的風潮。

符合現象三及現象四的廣告都利用了民國時期的政治熱潮而達到廣告的效果。這種本身和政治毫無聯繫的貨品硬生生的於政治產生關係而達到廣告目的似乎只存在於二十年代，並且貌似取得了成功。圖七所展現的廣告於二十年代頻繁佔據《良友》畫報封底，可見其成功性。



圖六：冠生園食品中山橄欖：收入《良友》合訂本第十三冊十一頁。



圖七：金龍牌香煙：收入《良友》合訂本第五冊第一頁。

## 二. 二十年代廣告

以上內容介紹了二十年代廣告的主要特點。接下來的內容將會介紹二十年代廣告的主要類型。二十年代廣告主要分為食物類，貨品類，服務類及娛樂類。

## 一. 食物類

二十年代廣告中展現的食物類廣告頗少。平凡出現於二十年代《良友》畫報的食物廣告唯有圖八所展現的「和合粉」廣告。而食品類廣告的缺乏主要有三種原因。

### 中華民國的財務缺乏

民國建立於頻繁戰爭的時代。清政府下的中國與外國的實力差距使中國國庫空虛，百姓生活品質極差。貧困也導致了人民對於較為奢侈的食物需求極低，而因此食物類的廣告展現頗少。

### 小食品商無法登記廣告

如仔細觀察圖八所展示的廣告，可發現廣告並不直接出售粉類食品，反而是粉類食品廠商直接出資進行廣告。因此可推斷食品出售屬於小企業，因此沒有足夠資本登記廣告。

### 食品不屬於流行文化

《良友》身為流行畫報，讀者或許也是屬於民國社會較為關注風潮的人群，而因此沒有大量食物廣告。雖然如此，這並不能解釋圖八的廣告出現於多刊《良友》畫報中的事實。

## 二. 貨品類

雖然貨品類的廣告在二十年代大約佔所有廣告的三分之一。貨品類出現頻繁的主要是化妝品以及香菸。

貨品類的商品對於民國時期的人們沒有根本上的生活改善，甚至有大量的副作

用。除了化妝品及香菸兩大類商品頻繁出現，其他貨品類的廣告出現頗少。這也進一步反映了以下兩個現象。

### 民國缺少生產其他貨品的能力

民國時代國家經濟實力較差，沒有能力生產需求更高技術的的產品。此時多數複雜的機械貨品都是從外國進口中國，因此價格昂貴，只供資本家使用。民國實力的缺乏主要是因為國家仍然沒有完全適應現代化的世界，因此缺少專業人士對於此方面進行開發。

### 民國時代缺少高價產品需求

如第一點所說，民國時代頗為貧困，多數人群生活的基本品質都無法保證這也解釋了為何人們所追捧的貨品大致都是給予使用者短暫快樂的。也許這種貨品對於民國時期人民而言是一種脫離時代的解脫。

## 三. 服務類

服務類業務是民國時期二十年代最盛行的業務。而其中主要有三項服務頗為突出，分別是：攝影，牙醫和人壽保險服務。這三項服務都頻繁於《良友》畫報上，可見其規模之龐大及社會需求之高。

### 攝影

上海最出名的攝影館乃是本文所介紹過的「寶記照相」（參見圖二）。此照相館最為繁盛時曾有二十來名員工，可見其規模之龐大。而攝影如此受歡迎的原因也於本文中解釋：西方科技的引進而導致的後果。

### 牙醫

「晚清時期的中國近代口腔醫學教育」一文稱，「19 世紀，隨著近代西方醫學及教育的傳入，近代口腔醫學及口腔醫學教育也傳入我國」。可見，中國的醫學系統也在西方的支持下得以進步。

雖然如此，廣告並不解釋為何唯有牙醫廣告登上了《良友》週刊。雖然其他藥物等曾多次登上《良友》畫報，而對此最為邏輯性的解釋，是其他種類的醫療服務所需的價格頗高，無需以廣告形式推行。

### 人壽保險

《良友》畫報中最為突出的人壽保險公司乃是圖九（永安人壽保險公司），於二十世紀中後期廣告數量極大增加，反映了保險事業極大的突破。而其背後的原因主要是由中國銀行業的發展。此時國際關係稍微舒緩，大多國家停戰，使得中國有機會得到較快的發展，中華民國總資本能夠大大提升。保險公司的引進也側面反映出二十年代中後期人均財產，人均壽命等皆有突破，而導致保險公司開業的可能性。這種突破性的變化於三十年代更為明顯。

## 三. 娛樂類

民國時期的娛樂業主要以影院和傳統戲劇為主。有三四家戲院公司頻繁地推出廣告，可見其聲望。而電影本身也圍繞偉人和愛情這兩大主題進行，而這種主題也反映了中國流行文化思想。





## 化妝品

化妝品的增加主要能以兩種形式體現出。第一是化妝品廣告數量的增加。《良友》畫報身為時尚畫報，主要的讀者仍然是女性，因此較為針對性的廣告也是可以理解的。第二是化妝品種類的增加。常見的廣告包括：雪花膏，美容，香霜，口紅等化妝品。

化妝品的增加也隱含了人們社交活動的增多。三十年代的人們不再僅僅忙於解決溫飽問題，開始形成一個社交活動頻繁的社會。

## 保健品和藥物

養生物品如維他命，魚肝油的廣告在三十年代大幅度增加。保健品從未於中國出現。我們可以從其中觀察出西方最新的貨品極可能成為流行文化很大的一部分。

西式藥物廣告也大幅度增加。值得一提的是所引進的藥物並不是販賣給診所的，反而是由人民自行購買。藥物公司於《良友》畫報中打廣告已經說明了這一點。常見藥物針對頭暈，腹瀉，感冒等等較為輕微病狀，人們可自行治療。

## 食物類產品

食物類廣告也增加了，如圖十四中的味精等。食物類產品的引入也表明民國時期對於食物有了一種新的認識：飲食的目的不再是為了維持生命，反而包括享受等成分。

根據「需求層次理論」，人類首先需要的是生理和安全方面的需求，二十年代初期至中期的民國社會尚未完全滿足以上

兩條。而味精等「食物類」產品的出現，證明人們對食物的生理需求已經滿足。

綜上所述，這些「生活品」的增加，使三十年代人民的生活品質提高，反映了三十年代不斷進步的經濟及社會狀況。

## 二. 現象二：品牌壟斷

三十年代中國市場之門迅速打開，使得大量企業湧入。在此之後，部分市場上開始出現品牌壟斷現象。

### 上海電力公司

壟斷現象最為嚴重的是上海電力公司所控制的電器產品。除了圖十一所介紹的電風扇，上海電力公司也極力推廣他們所產的電器爐（如圖十五所示）。《良友》畫報中多數電器產品都產於上海電力公司。

上海電力公司形成的壟斷，保證了其電器的質量。從經濟方面觀察，壟斷帶來了正面的經濟影響。如日本明治維新也通過這種手段使得國家得到迅速發展。

### 高露潔

雖然高露潔（Colgate）並沒有完全壟斷市場，高露潔於清潔類產品中設立了一個標準，也是高露潔能在眾多品牌中至今仍然存在的一個重要原因。如將高露潔廣告（圖十六，十七）與其他品牌的對比，發現其廣告無論是總體框架，廣告詞甚至是廣告數量都大致一致。可見，高露潔之成功並不是因為廣告方面更為突出，而是因為更加優秀的產品。

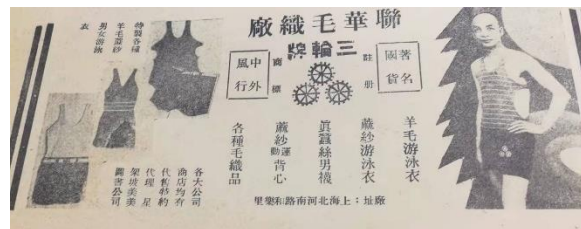
雖然如此，我們不能否認中國市場多種貨品都來源於西方。如圖十七中的廣告詞詳細介紹了牙膏的作用，可見大多數國人對於牙膏並不熟悉。因此我們可以推斷品牌的成功一部分原因是時機的把握。



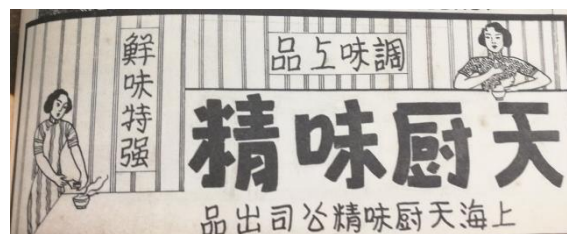
圖十一：上海電力公司（電風扇）·收入《良友》合訂本·第五十九冊·第十二頁。



圖十二：維也勒毛織（睡衣）：收入《良友》合訂本第五十九冊第二十七頁。



圖十三：聯華毛織廠（泳衣），收入《良友》合訂本第五十九冊，第十三頁。



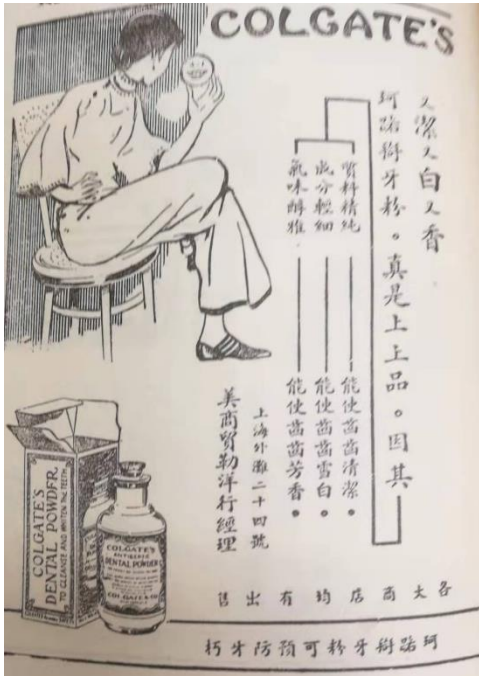
圖十四：海天廚味精公司（味精）·收入《良友》合訂本第五十九冊·第十四頁。



圖十五：上海電力公司（電氣爐）·收入《良友》合訂本第五十九冊·三十一頁。



圖十六：高露潔（反白皂粉）·收入《良友》合訂本第五十九冊·三十二頁。



圖十七：高露潔（牙膏）：收入《良友》合訂本第五十九冊，七十四頁。

## 四. 二十年代與三十年代文化對比

### 一. 相似點

民國時期二十年代與三十年代流行文化的相似點頗少，其背後原因主要是三十年代經濟的進步。雖然如此，仍然有幾點在二十年代和三十年代之間持續不變。

#### 對於西方的崇拜

自民國成立以來，大量西方文化湧入中國，受到高度重視。國人了解當時西方的強大，而因此西方也慢慢融入當時的流行文化之中。雖然三十年代廣告中的英文明顯減少，多數出售的貨品仍源於西方。

#### 廣告風格

如仔細觀察二十年代至三十年代的廣告，則可發現廣告排版等內容大致保持一致，保持者明顯的標題，顯眼的插圖及少

量的文字描述。極少廣告使用了照相機來描繪廠商的產品，大多仍然使用插圖。對於此最合理的解釋是，廣告客戶可能不滿於二三十年代的攝影質量。

### 追捧熱度產品

登上《良友》廣告的大多數產品仍是最新，最流行的產品。如三十年代初期，大量牙膏品牌湧進中國，導致短暫時間牙膏廣告佔據所有廣告的約 70-80%。可見，對於新型產品的追捧沒有因時代而改變。

## 二. 差異點

對比二、三十年代廣告，可發現大量差異點。我們也可從此觀察民國自二十年代在經濟和社會方面的進步。

### 由二十年代開始的「服務」類項目廣告明顯降低

二十年代廣告中頻繁出現的服務類項目，如攝影，牙醫和人壽保險（參見圖二，圖九），於三十年代逐漸消失。《良友》畫報中仍然存在與攝影題材有關的內容，及少量保險廣告，可見該類企業仍然存在。服務類廣告企業的逐漸消失，主要有兩點原因。

本文之前已經提到多數服務類項目熱門的原因，本身只是西方科技傳入中國後所產生的流行熱度。隨著時代的變遷，人們對於此類服務的新鮮度大幅度降低，因此此類服務無需也無法繼續打廣告。

服務類廣告的位置受到了本文於三十年代所詳細介紹的各類的生活品的取代。生活品在某種程度上比服務更產生價值，

也更容易使客戶滿足，因此備受關注。二十年代服務類廣告由生活品所替代，也代表者消費者心理方面的轉變。

### 二十年代頻繁出現的“虛假廣告”明顯降低

於二十年代平常出現的「虛假廣告」（參見圖四、圖五）在三十年代降低至基本消失（雖然誇張成分偶爾出現）。對於以上所提轉變，原因有二。

如本文所在二十年代：現象二：大量虛假/迷信廣告中所提出，虛假廣告之所以能得逞，是基於國人對於西方產品的陌生感。與二十年代年間，相信國人對於什麼是可信的或不可信的，有了進一步的認識。

虛假商品是民國時期攪動經濟一大要素之一。雖然沒有直接證據，但根據虛假廣告突然消失的現象，可以推測虛假廣告極有可能受到了法律或者《良友》畫報的制裁。

### 對西方特性的突出逐漸降低

二十年代的廣告中常常夾雜大量英文內容（參見圖一至圖四）。這並不是僅僅是為了給國內外國人看的，也在國人的心目中貼上「安全」，「可靠」甚至「時尚」等標籤。這類現象於三十年間逐漸降低。雖然大多數貨品仍是由西方引進，對於「西方」特點的強調則明顯降低。如圖十七的牙膏廣告，展示了牙膏的功效，可沒有像圖一至三一般大量突出西方特點。

### 貨品實用性逐漸升高

二十年代貨品與三十年代的一大區別，乃是貨品的實用性逐漸增高。如二十年代的貨品主要是各種香菸及少量化妝品。此類產品對於購買者的身體健康益處幾乎為零，甚至產生副作用。相反，三十年代的產品中出現多種提高人們生活水平的「生活品」。

### 結論

民國年代從二十年代對於西方的崇拜，虛假廣告氾濫及出現大量愛國為主的內容再到三十年代大量生活品的引進，甚至是品牌壟斷的現象的出現，都展現了民國時期流行文化的變遷。雖然本文針對於流行文化，可仍然能與政治，經濟，社會等方面進行多方面進行聯繫。而二十年代，食物類，貨品類，服務類廣告佔據最多內容，服務類主要包括電影內容。可到了三十年代，服務類及虛假廣告的比重降低，貨品類的實用價值則升高。

到了四十年代，國家處於戰爭時期，因此廣告數量明顯下降。而《良友》也因四十年代戰爭的突然變化而遷徙於香港。四十年代中國面對來自日本的侵略，有小部分廣告針對戰爭，如圖十八所的「防空手電筒」，就反映了四十年代的戰爭背景。



圖十八：游擊牌防空手電筒；收入《良友》合訂本·第一百零二冊·三十三頁。

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# A conflation of voices and viewpoints: an exploration into the function of Ekphrasis in Catullus' Poem 64

Tatiana Zhang 張天豫

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## Introduction

Catullus 64 is a poem that ostensibly retells the wedding of the Argonaut Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis. The narrative, however, takes a bizarre turn when it is interrupted by an extended 271-line ekphrasis, where Catullus describes the mythic events supposedly depicted upon Thetis and Peleus' marriage coverlet, centering around Ariadne's abandonment by the hero Theseus. He details how Ariadne helped Theseus escape from the Cretan labyrinth (71-123), inserts her lament about his departure from the island of Naxos in direct speech (132-201), narrates the suicide of Theseus' father Aegeus (241-250), and concludes with the arrival of Bacchus, who has come to save her (251-264).

Written in dactylic hexameter, Poem 64 is an epyllion, or miniature epic, that distinguishes itself greatly from the vast majority of the poet's *carmina* in its length and genre. In Catullus' 116 surviving *carmina*, sixty are short poems in varying metres (*polymetra*) and forty-eight are epigrams, leaving only eight longer poems, out of which Poem 64 is the longest, with 408 lines and notably the only poem in his corpus to feature an ekphrasis. Etymologically, the term 'ekphrasis' (ἔκφρασις) can be traced back to the Ancient Greek verb 'to speak out' (ek-phrazein ἐκφράζειν) and is defined as 'a descriptive speech that brings the subject shown before the eyes with visual vividness' (Squire 4). Other extant appearances of ekphrasis include the cloak of Jason in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* 1.721-67, and Homer's description of Achilles' shield in the *Iliad* 18.478-608. The purpose of ekphrasis, as Longinus argues in his treatise *On the Sublime*, is to 'seek emotion and excitement' (15.2). The ekphrasis is unique in that it affects its readers in a different way, deliberately raising questions about the nature of seeing versus reading poetry. Intrigued by this device, I wanted to research the ekphrasis in Catullus 64 further.

Many scholars view Catullus' portrayal of Ariadne and Theseus within the ekphrasis as moralistic. While acknowledging, via Theseus' cruelty to Ariadne, that the heroic code was not a perfect means of ensuring correct behaviour, Harmon thinks that Catullus nevertheless endorses the Heroic Age as a time when there was at least the possibility of justice, morally more desirable than his present day. He uses two examples to support this argument: Jupiter's punishment of Theseus by causing him to forget to change his sails, and Ariadne's rescue by Bacchus (329). Curran similarly maintains that Poem 64 communicates Catullus' disillusionment with Roman life and politics, while offering a different perspective; the past and present are no different, and in this way, the poet expresses his pessimism about the 'tragic constancy in human nature' (191).

In contrast, other scholars believe that we should enjoy the aesthetic qualities of the myth and not take the content as seriously. Duban contends that 'it has no 'message' or 'meaning' in the strict sense, aside from the attention that this highly stylized, self-conscious, and subjective 'picture' intends to call to itself' (800). Kinsey argues that there is much irony in the poem and that Catullus does not express genuine admiration for the past; rather, he is parodying this phenomenon of harking back to the so-called Golden Age.

Upon reading these contrasting interpretations of Catullus 64, I was particularly drawn to the tension between style and meaning in the ekphrastic section of the poem. To what extent is Catullus 64 *ars gratia artis*, wherein the artistic value of the poem is intrinsic, divorced from any biographical, moral, or didactic readings? What purpose does the ekphrasis serve? I argue that the above interpretations, whether moralistic or purely aesthetic, do not fully take into account the capacity of the ekphrasis. Rather, I believe that there is no reason to prioritise one interpretation over another, and that it is precisely the poet's

intention to produce a conflation of different, competing voices through this device. He does so to express his ambivalence about returning to the past, both in terms of the Heroic Age and literary tradition.

This essay will be divided into five subsections. The first section will outline the characteristics of the ekphrasis and how it differs from other uses of ekphrases in classical literature, making explicit comparisons to Homer's shield of Achilles in *The Iliad*, Jason's cloak in the *Argonautica*, and Theocritus' cup in *Idyll 1*. The second section will explore the way Catullus establishes a subtle difference between what can be viewed within the ekphrasis and what can be read about it. The third section will examine how the ambiguous voices and contradictory perspectives in our coverlet, not visible to the wedding guests, complicate the meaning of the embroidered pictures. Overall, through the 'disobedient' ekphrasis, Catullus creates an amalgam of perspectives and voices that makes for an overall confused reading, which enables him to convey the fragility of our connection to the past.

## 1. Characteristics of the Ekphrasis

Though part of an established literary tradition, Catullus' use of the ekphrasis is noticeably crooked and departs radically from his predecessors. Catullus blurs the lines between seeing and reading by incorporating elements that could not be part of the physical object described with things that could be, confronting the possibilities and limits of the visual and verbal medium. Andrew Laird describes the ekphrasis in Catullus 64 as 'disobedient' in that it 'offers less opportunity for it to be consistently visualised or translated adequately into an actual work of visual art' (19).

Firstly, unlike other uses of ekphrasis in classical literature, Catullus withholds important pieces of information about the coverlet, such as where it is from, how it is made, who made it, and only makes three explicit references to the physical nature of the tapestry (Gaiser 589). This stands in contrast to typical poetic convention, in which the reader is usually often reminded of the physical qualities of the work and its pedigree. Homer, for example, constantly refers to the physical designs on the shield of Achilles in *The Iliad* (18.497-508, e.g. 481-2, 519, 549, 574, 607), and informs us that it was made by Hephaestus (Gaiser 589). Similarly, in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, the narrator only refers to 'static images... [and] strictly avoids narrative elements' when describing Jason's cloak (Koopman 207), also revealing its colour (red) and maker (Athena). Here, Catullus'

omission of such physical details already implies a departure from more normative, or 'obedient', types of ekphrasis. By not describing a divine creator for the coverlet, our poet gives himself more licence and freedom to describe it on his own terms.

Secondly, the prominence of sound in Catullus' ekphrasis makes representation of the coverlet as a visual medium highly difficult. He engages the aural imagination of the reader in something traditionally verbal with the adjectives *fluentisono* (wavesounding) (52), *raucisonos* (harsh-sounding) (263), and *clarisona* (clear) (320). The sibilance in *fluentisono*, for example, mirroring the sound generated by the movement of the waves in the sea. From here we can see that Catullus' use of language blends the visual and auditory together. On the most fundamental level, his use of diction amplifies the incongruous presence of noise in this supposedly pictorial description (Laird 21).

Thirdly, Catullus' incorporation of direct speech, in particular, is highly distinctive. Direct speech is used for Ariadne to fully express her wretchedness and condemn Theseus for his betrayal, and also for Aegeus to give instructions about the ship's sails to Theseus. These two speeches comprise approximately half of the ekphrastic section of the poem. The use of direct speech is unlike anything found in any other extant ancient ekphrasis, because Catullus is ascribing direct speech, something aural, to this purely visual representation of art. The audience is encouraged to immerse themselves in the realism of the myth, perhaps at the expense of the realism of the physical coverlet.

Therefore, Catullus' use of the ekphrasis in Poem 64 is strikingly different from traditional examples of ekphrases in classical literature. He omits physical details about the coverlet, incorporates sonic components, and uses direct speech, all of which are not seen in other extant ekphrases. Now that we have established the unconventional nature of the Catullan ekphrasis, we can outline the purpose behind such 'disobedient' usage.

## 2. The viewing versus reading experience

Catullus uses the ekphrasis to make apparent the distinction between the coverlet the wedding guests have access to — as viewers of the tapestry within the poem — and the coverlet we as readers must navigate.

The pictorial parts of the ekphrasis present a very sensual Ariadne to the watcher:

*non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram,  
non contecta levi velatum pectus amictu,  
non tereti strophio lactentis vincata papillas,  
omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim  
ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis alludebant.*

Nor does she still keep the delicate headband on her golden head,

nor has her breast veiled by the covering of her light raiment,

nor her milk-white bosom bound with the smooth girdle;

all these, as they slipt off around her whole body,  
before her very feet the salt waves lapped. (63-67)

The colours here, with *flavo* (golden) and *lactentis* (milk-white), call attention to the ‘visual’ nature of the work. Catullus also highlights the pictorialism of these lines through the sequence in which he unravels Ariadne’s clothes, which is similar to the path our eyes would follow when viewing a painted figure: our poet guides our sight from Ariadne’s head (her blond hair), to her torso (her bosom and milk-white breasts), and finally to her feet. The picturesque details of the fallen scarf, open breast, and slipped off clothes present a titillating image of Ariadne. The sensuality of Catullus’ physical descriptions creates an air of voyeurism in the text, as if the spectators were leering at her body.

The visual elements of the ekphrasis also lend themselves to an ironic presentation of Ariadne and Theseus. Throughout the whole poem, Catullus only explicitly announces the content of the tapestry once. He does so in lines 50 to 51 when introducing the wedding coverlet to the audience for the first time: ‘This coverlet, broidered with shapes of ancient men, with wondrous art sets forth the worthy deeds of heroes’ (*haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris heroum mira virtutes indicat arte*). The opening of the ekphrasis seems to promise a heroic narrative, but the content that follows surprises the audience with a scene that is anything but: the abandoned Ariadne on the shore of Dia, watching in despair as Theseus sails away. Catullus thus creates an ironic distance between the *virtutes heroum* (‘the worthy deeds of heroes’) and Theseus’ desertion of his lover. It is significant that he employs humour when he refers to the visual and

physical nature of the tapestry for the first time, because it suggests that from the outset of the digression, we are encouraged to take the narrative less seriously.

Catullus builds on this sense of irony when Bacchus arrives to save Ariadne. In lines 251 to 253, the poet writes: ‘In another part of the tapestry youthful Bacchus was wandering’ (*at parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus*). As mentioned in section 1, this is one of only three times Catullus overtly refers to the tapestry as a tangible object, reminding the reader of the tapestry’s physical nature so that they can visualise Bacchus right next to the lamenting Ariadne. In fact, these two images would have appeared side by side on the coverlet (Kinsey 922). By doing this, Catullus injects wry humour into the ekphrasis, and the bewailing Ariadne becomes a comical figure: she dramatically expresses her sorrow over her loneliness and abandonment, but is amusingly unaware that her saviour is right beside her.

The visual effect of what we can gauge from the coverlet contrasts strongly with the poignancy of Ariadne’s direct speech, a disobedient section of the ekphrasis that cannot technically be seen by the reader. This device, not seen before in other examples of ekphrases, creates elements of psychological realism that move the audience. Catullus employs a succession of interrogative sentences in Ariadne’s soliloquy to emphasise her confusion and desperation. For example, in lines 177 to 183, Ariadne asks herself these questions: ‘For whither shall I return, lost, ah, lost? On what hope do I lean?’ (*nam quo me referam? quali spe perdita nitor?*). Catullus also uses personification, with phrases such as ‘treacherous sleep’ (*fallaci...somno*) (56) and ‘fortune too, full of spite, has cruelly grudged all ears to my complaints’ (*nimis insultans...saeva / fors etiam nostris invidit questibus auris*) (170), adding pathos to the heroine’s predicament by showing the extent to which she felt herself a victim of forces outside of her control. We can therefore see how Catullus’ use of direct speech renders the portrayal of Ariadne more touching and emotional, effectively balancing the irony in the pictorial sections of the ekphrasis.

Furthermore, Catullus likes to open some of his scenes with verbs of reported speech (e.g. *nam perhibent olim* ‘for they tell’ 76 and *namque ferunt olim* ‘for they say’ 212), instead of an ekphrastic phrase that indicates the specific location of the scene on the wedding coverlet (Gaisser 600). For example, in line 124, Catullus describes the grieving Ariadne like so:



*saepe illam perhibent ardenti corde furem  
clarisonas imo fudisse e pectore uoces,  
ac tum praeruptos tristem conscendere montes,  
unde aciem pelagi uastos protenderet aestus*

Often in the madness of her burning heart they say  
that she

uttered piercing cries from her inmost breast;

and now would she sadly climb the rugged  
mountains,

thence to strain her eyes over the waste of ocean-  
tide; (124-127)

Here, Catullus prefaces his sympathetic depiction of Ariadne, who utters ‘piercing cries’ (*clarisonas...voces*) from her ‘burning heart’ (*ardenti corde*), with *saepe perhibent* (‘Often...they say’). Verbs like *perhibent* (‘they say’) are commonly used for narration rather than description, distancing the reader from the immediacy of the action and suggesting that the description Catullus employs here does not actually belong on the coverlet itself. Our reading of the myth is thus different from the wedding guests’, because our interpretation of the embroidered pictures is colored by the emotionally charged narration.

Catullus establishes a difference between those who gaze within the ekphrasis and those who gaze at it. While the Thessalian youth — the wedding guests who do not appear on the tapestry but instead are viewing it — ‘had gazed their fill’ (*spectando...expleta est* 267-8), it is not clear that anyone else does. Ariadne and Aegeus’ gazes are unfulfilled and unsatisfied. The former gazes tearfully at Theseus’ departing ship (*prospectans cedentem maesta carinam* 249) and the latter at his son’s sails from the tower-top (*summa prospectum ex arce petebat* 241). Catullus, then, challenges us to consider how we should better respond to the poem, with the unfulfilled gazes of those inside the tapestry, or with the sated gaze of those outside viewing it (Elsner 25).

Overall, the disobedience of the Catullan ekphrasis leads to two overlapping but distinct perspectives of the coverlet: that of the reader and of the wedding guests within the poem who are viewing the tapestry. This duality in the ekphrasis allows for the melding of irony and poignancy, levity and sadness. It exemplifies the difference between the seen and the imagined: in Catullus 64, Ariadne’s pitiful soliloquy — imagined

by the narrator — is counteracted by the more straightforward, even ironic, image seen by the wedding guests.

### 3. Competing perspectives in the Ekphrasis

While Catullus establishes a striking distinction between what can be seen and read from the ekphrasis, as readers, we nevertheless lack a clear view of the poem due to the competing and unresolved perspectives the poet presents. Many scholars take a particular viewpoint — namely, a moralistic one — from within Poem 64 as authoritative, though the ekphrasis shows that it is difficult to believe in the primacy of one over the other.

One point in favour of a moralistic reading is the clear link Catullus encourages the reader to make between the forgetfulness Theseus displays to Ariadne and that which causes the death of his father. In lines 200 to 201, Ariadne prays to the Eumenides: ‘but even as Theseus had the heart to leave me desolate, with such a heart, ye goddesses, may he bring ruin upon himself and his own!’ (*sed...suosque*). Jupiter agrees to Ariadne’s request, for he ‘[bows] assent with sovereign nod’ (*annuit...rector*). Consequently, ‘Theseus himself...[lets] slip from his forgetful mind all the biddings which formerly he had held firm with constant heart’ (*ipse...tenebat*). Harmon draws the same connection, stating that ‘Jupiter listened to Ariadne’s curse and made Theseus pay the price of his cruelty’ (329). Similarly, Curran, who explores the verbal links that associate Theseus’ betrayal with him forgetting to change the sails, writes: ‘three instances [of *linquere*] refer literally to Theseus’ desertion of Ariadne (123, 133, 200) and one figuratively (59, *linquens promissa procellae*). [It] thus essentially [defines] Theseus’ crime against Ariadne, and, with poetic justice, *linquere* is used of his forgetting his father’s instructions’ (186). In this way, justice for Ariadne is served, because Theseus is rightfully punished for the crime he commits against her and suffers the consequences.

However, Catullus presents contradictory viewpoints about the justness of Theseus’ punishment. Ariadne prays that the flaw which causes Theseus’ sin will also bring about his downfall, but that is not what happens. Theseus’ forgetfulness leads to the death of his father, but the *oblito pectore* (‘forgetful mind’) with which he forgets to change the sails is not the same as the cruel indifference she accuses him of. It is, instead, pure and inculpable forgetfulness caused by Jupiter (Gaiser

603). Catullus shows that there are two different meanings to *immemor* or *oblitus* (i.e. thoughtlessness and forgetfulness), and does nothing to hide this contradiction. In this way, he urges us to question the degree to which retributive justice is actually achieved.

Another point in favour of a moralistic reading is the implied happy ending Ariadne receives when Bacchus finds her. Towards the end of the ekphrasis, Bacchus was ‘wandering...seeking thee, Ariadna, and fired with thy love’ (*te quaerens, Ariadna, tuoque incensus amore*) (253). As Harmon articulates, ‘Ariadne is estranged from her nature in 64... but...she seems finally to have come into her own, the intimate presence of Bacchus’ (329-330). Justice is thus achieved when Ariadne is rescued at last by, and presumably married to, the god.

It is, nevertheless, important to note that the narrator does not explicitly mention the marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne. Rather, he focuses extensively on the disconcerting frenzy of the barbarous Bacchantes. They ‘were raging with frenzied mind, while “Evoe!” they cried tumultuously’ (*lymphata...bacchantes*), with the ‘raised clear clashings with cymbals of rounded bronze’ (*tereti...ciebant*) and the ‘barbarian pipe shrilled with dreadful din’ (*barbaraque...cantu*). Through the onomatopoeia and aural imagery employed, Catullus creates a scene not of harmony but instead of chaos. In this way, the poet undermines the reader’s expectations of a didactic, moral ending in which the victim of Theseus’ crime is recompensed for his betrayal.

At the same time, Catullus makes it difficult for us to view Ariadne as an innocent victim by drawing parallels between her and Medea. The act of seeing how her revenge was carried out is an allusion to Medea, who asks the messenger about how her poisoned dress and coronet killed Glauce and remains on stage to hear his response (Trimble 10). In fact, the situations of both heroines are strikingly similar: both kill their family members for their lovers, are abandoned by these heroes, and are left in a raging frenzy. Such ominous parallels are undeniable, and lead the reader to wonder whether Ariadne is as pitiful as she presents herself to be, or whether she may be more powerful, as the allusions have suggested (Clare 76).

The use of the ekphrasis, as seen from above, precludes a singularity of focus through its conflation of voices. The device dilutes any moral heft in the poem, and this is most manifest in the character of Aegeus. Aegeus is, in many ways, the counterpart of

viewers of the coverlet, because he, too, is trying to understand a message from woven fabric (*lintea* 225, *carbasus* 227), namely, whether Theseus departs from the labyrinth alive or not (Gaisser 595). Aegeus falls victim to the deception of his vision: ‘when first he saw the canvas of the bellying sail, threw himself headlong from the summit of the rocks’ (*cum primum...iecit*). This leads the reader to wonder if we are being deceived by the coverlet as well. In this way, Catullus displays poetic self-consciousness, compelling us to be hyper-aware of this very act of reading poetry and destabilising our reading experience. As a result, any definitive moral message that might otherwise be worthy of note is obscured and cannot be trusted.

## Conclusion

In the ekphrasis, Catullus poses more questions than he provides answers. He positions himself in the literary tradition, following the footsteps of his poetic forebears like Homer and Theocritus. At the same time, he also distances himself from it through various elements like direct speech. In Catullus 64, the disobedience of his ekphrasis enables him to draw a distinction between what viewers of the tapestry (wedding guests) and readers of the ekphrasis can interpret from the coverlet, which makes for an overall emotionally confused reading. He further complicates our understanding with competing voices within the narrative that obscure any moral message in the myth. In producing this multiplicity of perspectives, Catullus reflects the conflicted relationship he has with the heroic and literary past.

This conflation of viewpoints in Poem 64 has wider implications about the visual and the verbal. Catullus self-consciously draws attention to how we are to understand the ekphrasis, and by extension, how we are to understand poetry. He prompts us to contemplate the limitations of the visual: why should we believe the things we see, especially when what we are told communicates a different story?

While poetry is thought to only appeal to the ear and visual art to the eye, the ekphrasis in Poem 64 blurs the line between what can be seen and what can be read. Ekphrasis stretches the possibilities of and probes into the dialogue between these two genres: what is the difference between a picture that conveys a narrative and a poem that conveys a picture? Can poetry truly be independent of art and vice versa? Can our senses be independent of one another as well? Perhaps, the multiplicity of perspectives in the ekphrasis of Catullus 64 — which transcends boundaries of the

visual and verbal — speaks to the way we as humans engage with art. We interact with art, and by extension with our world, in the same multifaceted, multisensory, and multidimensional way.

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## 論林夕歌詞中古為今用的意象組合

Athena Ng 吳欣蓓

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### 引言

林夕，本名梁偉文，是為人熟悉的香港專業填詞人，作品包括不少膾炙人口的粵語歌詞作品。林夕出道初期以沿用艱深古典意象聞名，形成其別樹一格的風格，更奠定了其詞壇「一哥」定位；卒業於文學系的林夕更善於巧妙運用都市化、含中西合璧特色的現代意象。詞人將兩者融合，植入詩化的趨向，建構本土填詞界深刻雋永、廣為人知的筆風。<sup>1</sup>

林夕歌詞自幼陪伴筆者長大。筆者心繫富有本土情懷的廣東歌，尤偏愛林夕登峰造極的文學造詣，更鍾愛其對於古今意象組合別出心裁的佈置，以致充滿張力的詞風。參考資料時，筆者發現港大朱耀偉教授提出林夕歌詞中古今意象筒中有異，設置對立性，這緣於普遍認為古今意象拼貼缺乏和諧感，此類組合在歌詞並不常見。<sup>2</sup>古代意象基調多為撲朔迷離；現代意象則被廣泛評為庸俗，欠缺雅緻。資深評論人周慕瑜先生則指詞人描寫高度斷片化，經濟文字不足以達至抒情之效。<sup>3</sup>然而，筆者認為林夕選用古今意象進行拼貼，透過多元文學手法闡釋冷抒情、建築和諧意境，凝造旖旎之美，有別於上述評

論人的見解，因此確定了論文從新詩角度分析林夕詞曲裡最具代表性的自然、禽蟲意象與現代意象的組合，淺析其文筆風格，並與前人的評論商榷。

本文主要研究方法包括歸納、參考現代文學歌詞評論、術語，篩選出適合詞例細讀，並整理、賞析再拓展林夕古今意象比較的文學美感與效果。

### 一. 雪、太陽、石頭：古典自然意象搭配現代意象之空間感與和諧美

林夕或許鍾情大自然，因而歌詞出現大量自然意象，猶以雪、太陽、石頭出眾。詞人將這幾種自然意象靈妙配搭現代化意象，形成別具一格的組合，更透過多種文學手法營造空間感，勾勒和諧意境。

#### 一. 雪 — 突破

「你是千堆雪 我是長街」（《郵差》）

《和子由繩池懷舊》「人生到處知何似？應似飛鴻踏雪泥。」用飛鴻和雪泥的短暫相遇作喻，形容相聚分離，將「雪」歸納為建立傷感意境的意象；而林夕則以

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<sup>1</sup> 司馬川：《林夕歌詞的詩性研究》，中國文學專題，輯於哲學與人文科學，山東：山東師範大學，2016年，頁05。

<sup>2</sup> 朱耀偉：《香港粵語流行歌詞研究 七十年代中期至八十年代中期》，香港：亮光文化有限公司，2016，頁052，頁087。

<sup>3</sup> 黃志華：《香港詞人詞話》，香港：三聯書店有限公司，2009年，頁228。

《念奴嬌》中的古典意象「千堆雪」與都市化意象「長街」的邂逅比喻情侶之間淡淡交會後各散東西的悲哀。此處本意南轅北轍的意象組合奠基陌生化的對立效果，但兩者內在思想關聯卻十分鮮明：詞人有感愛情如「千堆雪」，日出後便瓦解，終究無法開花結果，更不留痕跡。林夕沿用漠然的態度突破雪只用於環境描寫的特性，組合「長街」創造空曠陰冷卻帶有壓抑感的空間，對於在詞中建構清淨淒美的繪畫美構成輔助。詞人以留白引發聽眾思考意象的關聯性，利用古今意象組合之間隱約的聯繫和特徵抒發其對現代愛情寂寥的態度。

## 二. 太陽 — 解構

「夕陽無限好 卻是近黃昏 高峰的快感 剎那失陷」（《夕陽無限好》）

太陽自古形象普遍為明媚妍麗，洋溢生機。參照《登樂遊原》「夕陽無限好，只是近黃昏」，意謂夕陽縱好，也維持不久，寓意詩人對於生命慨然興嘆之情。歌詞直接引用此篇詩為題，然而在古今用法對比下，林夕所表達的道理較正面。詞人借「夕陽」消解太陽的輝煌，執行解構，重新詮釋「黃昏」、「夕陽」：兩者因為陌生化產生出時空上相隔的差異感。然而意象本身兩者密不可分的寄生性，讓意象之間仍存有緊密的聯繫，指出其永恆性。同時這兩個與太陽有關的古代意象和被轉品的現代意象「高峰的快感」形成組合，映襯出落日現象的霎時性質，再將時間流逝隱於跳脫性的意象組合背後，省略了時間摹寫。修飾詞「高峰」更為意境塑造自然氣息，整體氣氛清冷，但畫面協和、陽

光和煦。詞人以「卻」的轉折句式呈現先揚後抑，而對應的關係令意象起伏基調統一，使組合浮現隨意、緩慢的節奏，「世事無常」的哲理，勸慰世人隨遇而安。

## 三. 石頭 — 具象化

「試管裡找不到它染污眼眸 前塵硬化 像石頭 隨緣地拋下便逃走」（《富士山下》）

舉例訴說主角的第一人稱視角勸喻前任情人放下感情包袱，走向未來。詞前部分取自英國諺語“Identify sadness through test tube”，意指悲傷並非實質，因而應把這種悲哀當成虛構。現代意象「試管」比喻真理；古典意象「石頭」則經歷百年、滄桑的洗禮，但在此仍顯得微不足道。詞人把石頭「硬化」的特徵具象化、聚焦並摒除其感情色彩。時間用詞「前塵」和被動式「逃走」增添詞句悲劇色彩，使古今組合再次突出林夕所主張活得更揮灑自如的態度。林夕於此以「對面著筆」抒發禪悟，並蘊藏一抹哀傷，寄予往事既然已成定局，勸諫對方應釋懷異化成石頭的負累，勿要追悔過去，繼而放眼未來。這亦為意境錦上添花地增加故事性，一連串流暢的動作更拓闊了整體空間；同時增強「逃走」的迅速感，達到意識連貫性流動的蒙太奇效果。此處組合所內含的因果關係因故事記述而引起對觀成效，順利昇華至視覺效果之和諧美。

以上自然意象通過古為今用，形成了林夕婉約清麗的詞風。詞人善用自然意象的特性作為詞的牽引，將個人撲朔迷離的主觀情感滲透於本是客觀的自然景象當中，達到緣情寫景的效果。林夕化虛為實

的技巧與古代的用法一致，為歌詞勾畫率性唯美，但消極的空間意境。其次，在藝術效果方面，林夕採納不同型態的意象，如「千堆雪」和「霜雪」<sup>4</sup>、「夕陽」和「斜陽」<sup>5</sup>，整體畫面被具象化。古人在意象選取多注重類別，形態較為單一固定。古今皆用自然意象描寫氛圍：古人多以環境襯托振奮、歡欣之情，而林夕將意象放在空間築構當中，烘托出頹喪情思。由此看來，林夕筆鋒下的自然意象，對比傳統用法更有靈性、張力，擴展感引申出諧和之美。而在訊息傳釋的角度而言，現代詞人林夕對比古人更能延伸出反襯外在的冷肅，善用詞中的每一物，賦予更深摯的感情。

## 二. 螞蟻、蝴蝶、燕子：古典禽蟲意象搭配現代意象之距離感與冷抒情

除自然環境外，林夕似乎對生活瑣碎物極度敏感，歌詞中不乏禽蟲的存在。其細膩的觸覺，使其對於禽蟲意象運用於冷抒情上的佈置相當巧妙。詞人多用留白、用典和反設塑造距離感，再執行冷抒情。

### 一. 螞蟻 — 留白

「漂白了城市的淚 煙霧不必再催 螞蟻只有汗水 歷史總在輪迴」（《雙城記》）

蘇軾在《曲洧舊聞·浮芥之蟻》「滄海之大不捐細流，天地之廣不棄微塵」中，將螞蟻跟人比較，兩者在宇宙宏觀同

樣渺小，藉此表達不必惦記得失的思想哲學。林夕反以人在社會跌宕的狀態實行其歌詞創作。其筆下的古典意象「螞蟻」為社會性動物，有鑒於體型，具徒勞之意。林夕借法國大革命為背景的英國名著《雙城記》命名歌詞，譜寫港台兩地社運對抗強權的愠怒與沈痛。詞人看似站在高地，冷峻撰述客觀事實，以陌生化將革命者比喻為「螞蟻」，跟現代意象「煙霧」拼貼，孕育出一幅不帶絲毫情感色彩的意境；實則是以此留白隱匿自己面對強權的視覺。如此古今意象拼貼，配搭後面歸結性語氣的「總在」，不但拉開了兩者的距離，更為詞籠罩宿命論意味。詞人彷彿在娓娓道出《雙城記》，語調平鋪直敘、不動聲色，可內在情感仍綿延不斷的流動著，慨嘆抗爭者雖積沙成塔，但終究將徒勞而返，闡述其悲劇、無奈的感受。

### 二. 蝴蝶 — 用典

「自古書裡說梁祝 寧願化蝶飛出苦痛 我也要化蝶躲入傳說內」（《傳說》）

蝴蝶在傳統文學上有著多重象徵意義。戰國有莊周夢蝶，穿梭於虛實之間；東晉有梁祝化蝶，穿梭生死之間，因此蝴蝶帶有破繭重生的活力。林夕於此直接點名借鑑典故「梁祝」、「化蝶」，直接挪用典故原本的情感訊息：灑脫自如的理想愛情進行重新包裝，再採用虛實相生，自喻要像傳說中人物追尋至死不渝的愛。古今組合與新穎情感合二為一，不僅未造成聽眾對冷抒情語境的理解困難，比擬的手法更表現出詞人超脫釋然的性格色彩。現代意

<sup>4</sup>（填詞）林夕，（原唱）麥子傑，〈四季歌〉，2006年。

<sup>5</sup>（填詞）林夕，（原唱）陳奕迅，〈Shall We Talk〉，2002年。

象「傳說」與直接借用的古人感情為歌詞進行了修飾，尤顯其細緻淡雅的詞風。詞人亦採用意識流和非流線型敘述時空，用前衛的古今意象組合打破時間性，借古意抒今情，演繹穿越時空的虛幻之感，使距離被多重延伸。詞人熾熱的情操因為「飛出」、「躲入」等翩然的動詞而平淡寫出「苦痛」，使意象獲得更深湛的情感空間。

### 三. 燕子 — 反設

「細雨撲殺燕子 季節放棄了報時 煙  
花燒毀詩詞 笑臉貼滿了數字」  
(《亂》)

杜甫名句「細雨魚兒出，微風燕子斜」借古典意象「燕子」寄情於物，投射渴望悠遊閒適，使其成為名垂千古的「詩之燕」；而林夕則於此「以燕寫人」，運用反設的手法描繪燕子遭遇以諷刺時世，原象徵自由的燕子被殺，而現代意象「煙花」（此處的煙花指的是煙火，並非古時指的春景）、「數字」所象徵的惡勢力卻處於當權。詞中的跡象皆有違常理：微微細雨擊殺地位，季節到了並非為報時，而咫尺天邊的煙花欲焚毀詩詞，短促的句子使飽滿濃烈的情感被消退，生出一種荒謬感。詞人於此沿用多種跳躍性的古今意象，看似毫無規律，背後的象徵性卻被其遞進的手法緊緊著，漸漸揭露現實數字社會的偽善與荒誕不經。詞人「多針見血」點出古今組合內含的悖論性，隱喻其對虛偽社會風氣的失望氣餒。古今意象組合之間距離感進一步增加，構成強烈的突兀感。

林夕擅用古代禽蟲意象與社會性意象結合；古人寫禽蟲多著墨於宏大格局，如抉擇衝突；彰顯對於大氣勢、價值觀的正義追求。林夕同樣以藐小的禽蟲與人類連結，但他從大時代寫出小人物：通過以小見大的方式敘述古代禽蟲意象拼貼現代現象所映現的抑鬱氛圍和疏離感。純淨自然的禽蟲意象配搭簡潔無華的語言，更顯詞人字裡行間的冷抒情因而更深邃。雖然大量使用古典意象，其獨樹一幟的詞風卻符合時下港人口味：內斂的詞中承載被壓抑的熱烈情感，既令人嚮往，現實中又讓人怯步。詞人善於拿捏都市人對於表達情思的難以言喻，滲進多樣化的文學技巧凸顯冰涼的氛圍，凝造距離感，將埋藏許久的感情透過放緩的節奏，建構冷峻的詞境。

### 三. 「深雋動人」：簡評林夕填詞風格

現時針對林夕歌詞的研究，大多與鑑賞辭格相關。朱教授更鑑於此類的研究過多，因此注重細節拼貼當中突出的情感，抑或借文字之力營造氛圍而造成深雋動人的詞境。筆者亦認同以上結論：林夕歌詞感情真摯，抒情更是話語殷殷。可惜研究者對意象拼貼的技巧較少論及。古今意象為詞人作品的一大特色，更是本文有價值之處 — 探索未知的領域、完善名家理論：解讀古今意組合的功能性與效果。

正如引言所述，林夕沿用的古今意象組合被朱教授評點為過分簡化，因此意象

之間延申出不可消除的對立性。<sup>6</sup>林夕為自然意象加入各式的質感與型態，使意象除了自身特徵外，也被附上更豐富的含義。詩人更將主體與客體意象的情感和諧統一，揉合古典意境和現代意識，使詞境在勾勒理智與情感時進行了緊扣的劃一。林夕歌詞以古為今用的建築空間感，突破古代意象原有的單調底蘊，設立聯繫、豐富內涵，頗具創意。雖然林夕經常套用矛盾性語言配搭順手帖來的生活現象，但詞句失去衝擊力後，看似枯燥無味，卻在盡訴連綿起伏的故事。如此一來連貫的文字遊戲使得歌詞別有一番理趣。

另外，林夕作品亦曾被周先生品評過：「是太多筆畫的一幅速寫，太多色彩的一幅素描，是太多裂痕的一個片段」。詞人多於古今組合注入意識流增強故事性，卻被評定為「高度斷片化」的反效果，歸納為意象採用雜亂無章，脈絡不分明。聽眾定會聽得一頭霧水，並不意識到意象之間千絲萬縷的聯繫，或是未能意會其弦外之意。此理論實質言之無物，林夕歌詞通過禽蟲意象提倡敘事抒情：詞人語言風格平實，妙用日益多樣化的敘述觀點進行詠志。某些古典意象，如「蝴蝶」已在文壇中用得過於氾濫，但詞人借古今組合注入淺淺的活力，化腐朽為神奇，達成自然而然的詠嘆效果。詞人亦以留白給予聽眾想像空間，以樂景寫哀景，賦予比興的手法，以淡泊的語氣婉轉抒發胸臆。歌詞已達雅俗共賞的境界，引領聽眾

進入其多愁善感的心底，如此連貫性極高的歌詞甚至能使聽眾產生畫面感。

## 結論

林夕歌詞具備多義性，不必以過於強硬的方式既定它內含的情思。對筆者而言，即便林夕古今意象組合未如上闕臨末所說的妙筆生花，其筆下古今意象組合在鮮明呈現出充滿哲理之餘亦餘音蕩蕩，感染受眾。歌詞其實不必堆砌複雜的詞藻講述道理，含蓄化的意象，已能夠跨越空間、距離的限制。本是南轅北轍的古今意象，卻在林夕筆鋒下成功達到雙向異化的效果，縮小聽眾於歌詞朦朧詞境下與古典時代的距離。

歌詞作為現代社會傳達思想意志的載體，深刻展現社會與個體之間的牽絆，更跨越時空的限制，反映了時代下眾生的情感訴求以及精神特徵。而詞人則背負了社會對於抒情的期待，委婉、軟性且兼有勵志性的表達手法，更容易針對港人困惑的狀態，取得社會性共鳴。林夕透過古今共通的情懷，簡單化的古今對照、時空交錯讓受眾用聯想去感受。這種以留白為主的寫法，讓受眾能夠從自身經驗撮取某個生活圖像，化為富象徵性的意象。<sup>7</sup>

本文選錄的歌詞多為林夕 2000 年代的作品，探討角度並未足夠全面。再觀林夕 2020 年代的作品，驚覺近年其作品消滅了傳統自然、禽蟲意象的沿用，反而多結合佛理意象與都市生活意象。這銳變緣

<sup>6</sup> 黃志華：《香港詞人詞話》，香港：三聯書店有限公司，2009年，頁228。

<sup>7</sup> 姚慶萬：《分析林夕歌詞中的佛家思想及其創作風格》，輯於嶺南大學中文系（編），《考功集 2019-2020：畢業論文選

粹》（頁264-298），香港：嶺南大學中文系，2020年1月1日。



於林夕篤信佛教，自近年來多融洽佛理用語與都市化意象進行冷抒情，貫徹以前淡漠的文筆，蘊藏的情感則因為縱深的禪意而被中和，增添了絲絲暖意。

許多人認為現代意象比古代意象遜色，但林夕歌詞中，無論古典、現代意象，不同意象的疊加組合產生的語境各有不同，這就是意象的同途殊歸，其更能體現林夕歌詞的立意高度。一顆孤寂的內心，細膩的情感，配上婉約的筆法，再而憑著對事物的觀察入微，現實生活中的種種細節被林夕敏銳地捕捉進歌詞裡，讓聽眾在不同人生經歷不同場合下，也能從中感其所感，對聽眾生成共鳴。因而，林夕作品詞約義豐，足以對聽眾動之以情，曉之以理，可謂妙筆生花。

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The Independent Schools Foundation Academy  
1 Kong Sin Wan Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong  
Tel +852 2202 2000  
Fax +852 2202 2099  
Email [enquiry@isf.edu.hk](mailto:enquiry@isf.edu.hk)

