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Ritual and the Moral Life

Reclaiming the Tradition

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RITUAL AND THE MORAL LIFE

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RITUAL AND THE MORAL LIFE

RECLAIMING THE TRADITION

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Chapter 1
Ritual as a Cardinal Category of Moral Reality: An Introduction

David Solomon, Ping-Cheung Lo, Ruiping Fan, and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr

1.1 The Traditional Ritual Project: The Right and the Rite

Ritual cements human life. It is not necessarily fully discursively apprehensible, as is traditional natural law or natural theology. Ritual engages prior to any conceptual thematization of its object and usually also transcends discursive statement. Ritual involves the synthesis of habit, image, symbol, movement, and emotion. It is therefore heuristic for a range of moral and religious insights. To be sure, as a central category of human existence, ritual is secondarily available for discursive appropriation. Yet, ritual is largely ignored in Western philosophical reflection. Hence, the importance of this volume: this book offers a philosophical assessment of the significance of ritual. First, this volume recognizes ritual's pre- or non-discursive character, which nests virtue and directs moral action, so that ritual can be powerfully formative of both moral and immoral action. Second, this volume seeks to assess the roles ritual can play in the pursuit of virtue by those who recognize that the collective insight and wisdom of moral traditions can serve as a positive moral resource. The examination of ritual is thus integral to understanding the possibilities for cultural renewal. Third, because this volume took shape through the engagement of Christian and Confucian scholars, it sheds light on the ways in which rituals structure these cultures and on the extent to which cardinal rituals within both these cultures are in disarray.

The dialogue from which this volume grew brought Western philosophers to confront the insights of Chinese philosophers informed by Confucian resources. The development of this work also brought Confucian scholars to encounter the thick concerns with religious ritual that characterize traditional Christianity. In different ways, each of the contributors to this volume explores the importance of ritual in the realization of human flourishing.

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The contributors examine the interconnection of rite and the right, recognizing that rituals as repeated, stylized bodily movements and/or statements bring together symbols, emotions, and moral commitments in the constitution of the moral life. The contributors to this volume appreciate that the moral world is sustained not only by major rituals that structure ceremonies but also by minor rituals that frame the etiquette of everyday life. Rituals as such are not merely practices built around internal goals such as is the case with chess. Instead, rituals are in general directed to the achievement of a well-oriented life for individuals and communities. Rituals are integral to mutual recognition and the pursuit of the good, the right, the virtuous, and the holy.

Because humans are embodied, and because the fabric of human life is richer than any discursive account can say or compass, rituals summarize, gesture to, and invoke a range of purposes and concerns that go beyond a discursive summary. Indeed, it is the supra-discursive power of rituals that gives them their range and power. Humans develop their lives through rituals, for rituals disclose more content than any easily manageable explicit account could lay out. Rituals tie individual lives to history and point to the future. Rituals have this place and function because they are manifestations of the human incarnate engagement in actions. Those who live in a substantive, transgenerational nexus of rituals are connected to complex dimensions of meaning that reach beyond themselves and their time. In contrast, relatively deritualized cosmopolitans, who seek to live apart from the control of any substantive, in particular traditional, rituals and/or who hold that it is good to taste of everyone's rituals without belonging anywhere, still possess rituals. However, their rituals are truncated, fragmented, and often misdirected (one might think of couples composing a ritual to mark their commitment to a non-marital conjugal partnership). They mark an age of moral disorientation, disengagement, cultural impoverishment, and moral banality that cries out for the civilizing support of substantive rituals.

Rituals are generally contingent in their character because they derive their particular features from the socio-historical context in which they have been framed. Hegel recognized the necessarily contingent character of *Sittlichkeit*, the higher truth of morality, by appreciating that the bonds of custom and usage supply the content of morality. It is within the context of place and history that secular morality has its substance. So, too, with most rituals. They tie the contingent to that which is essentially human, or at least to that which perennially characterizes the human condition. Substantive rituals also connect that which is merely human to that which is transcendent. We are never from everywhere and of no time, but always within a particular somewhere and sometime. The result is that moral content lives and is sustained by the particularity of ritual. Traditional rituals expand the scope of temporal connection by anchoring us in a web of moral obligations that discloses our specific moral roles as husband or wife, father or mother, teacher or student within practices that reach across generations and that have been tested over time. Ritual, though contingent

in its origins and content, has the ability to tie human passions, the passages of life, and moral concerns to communities aimed at achieving the good, the right, the virtuous, and the holy. Ritual binds us to that which endures. Yet, there is little philosophical study, at least in the West, of the significance and character of ritual.

There are historical grounds for this neglect, especially in the Anglo-American world. The term ritual in Anglo-American culture has a taste or connotation quite at odds with the generally positive connotations of the Chinese notion of *li*. In the case of *li*, the right, the rite, and what is reasonable in human conduct are bound together by concerns ranging from religious sacrifice to good form. In the English-speaking world, in contrast, ritual is a controversial term. In great measure, this critical attitude toward ritual results from low-church and free-church reactions against the ritual and cultural inheritance of traditional Catholicism. From the Reformation onward, at least in Protestant countries, there has been the view that in some sense religious ritual distorts and perverts man's relationship with God, and even with his fellowmen. This adverse appreciation of ritual has continued to the present, as is noted by Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes (2012). As recently as 1874, in reaction to the Oxford Movement and the re-introduction of more traditional rituals into Anglican church services, Queen Victoria asked Prime Minister Disraeli to support a bill in Parliament to "put down ritualism," practices Disraeli described as "mass in masquerade" (Somervell, 1964, p. 109). The bill, introduced on August 7, 1874, went into effect on July 1, 1875. The result, the Public Worship Regulation Act, sent five Anglican clergymen to prison for excessive or improper ritualism (Bentley, 1978; Graber, 1993; Yates, 1999). This bitter dispute concerning the proper character of religious ritual occurred in a country marked by a developed court ritual and by an intricate code of social etiquette, as well as by Christians whose religions set centrally, however abridged, the rituals of baptism and the eucharist. In the face of a struggle against ritualism, ritual remained the cement of society, and of the Christian religions. Yet at the same time, there were concerns that obscured the actual scope and importance of ritual, making it more difficult in Anglo-American culture than in Chinese culture to appreciate the significance and role of ritual.

The early 20th century and especially the period around the First World War marked the beginning of a further, important rupture from the traditional ritual practices of Europeans and Americans, as well as Chinese. With the end of the Chinese empire (1911) and the martyrdom of Tsar Nicholas II (A.D. 1868–1918), there was the marked salience of what Ruiping Fan (2012) characterizes as the deritualized cosmopolitan: men cut loose from place, convention, tradition, religious commitment, and substantive ritual practices. Individuals attempted by themselves and uninfluenced by cultural norms to become authentically themselves. Such persons were not without ritual, for no one is ever without ritual. Rather, through these developments, the appreciation of ritual was deflated and the force of most rituals was restricted in scope to the present and its barest shadow. Ritual no longer drew from the distant

past or reached to the far future, much less to the transcendent. In the words of Marshall Berman, the result was "an unending permanent revolution against the totality of modern existence" (Berman, 1982, p. 30). That which was new needed always to be reformed by that which was newer. The emerging culture was progressively disengaged from the stabilizing and orienting force of transgenerational rituals. To take only one example, ever more couples now simply associate and procreate without engaging in a formal ritual of marriage (Hamilton et al., 2009). Their cohabitation and reproduction are outside of the support of transgenerational rituals, which rituals would establish their social unit as a family nested in a cultural perspective that draws from the memory of the past and looks with guidance from tradition to the future. Instead, disengaged from a defining tradition and without the benefit of a stabilizing history supported by ritual, such individuals attempt to define themselves by themselves, unconstrained by any traditional cultural context. Of course, none of this occurs without ritual. It is just that the rituals engaged in post-traditional contexts are historically impoverished, often misguided, frequently dysfunctional, and usually banal.

Compounding these contemporary challenges from the secular culture, Vatican II (1962–1965) unleashed on the Roman Catholic church a rehearsal of the Anglican turmoil of a century earlier. Traditional liturgical forms were altered and altars relocated, by commitments that engendered low-church, non-traditional results. Inter alia, Roman Catholic priests came to pray to the west, not the east (the ancient Christian form). This reversal in ritual achieved the opposite of the goals pursued by the high-church Anglican liturgical movement in the late 19th century of renewing traditional ritual forms and achieving a bond with the ancient Church. Those involved were literally dis-oriented. Conservative Anglicans, who had hoped to come into union with a traditional Roman church, were confounded by a Roman Catholicism that itself had become post-traditional and enamored with the ever new through its reaction against traditional ritualism. Cardinal rituals that had spanned centuries were changed, engendering a broad theological and spiritual chaos that affected not just the Roman Catholic church, but also, given Roman Catholicism's prominence, most mainline Western churches and Western culture generally. The result was that all that seemed solid appeared to melt into air. In a world of permanent reformation, if not cultural revolution, the constraint and direction of ritual came once more to be seen by many in a negative light, recalling Disraeli and Queen Victoria in their reaction against the "excessive ritualism" of high-church Anglicans. The stabilizing force of ritual was compressed to the narrow scope of ever more isolated individuals endeavoring to imagine the liturgy de novo. To regain direction, Western culture as well as the culture of China will need once more to take ritual seriously, expand its scope, and restore its traditional character so as to connect with the resources from the tradition – a point made by most of the contributors to this volume.

1.2 Taking Ritual Seriously

This volume grew out of two small research conferences, the first held July 5–7, 2006, at Hong Kong Baptist University, and the second held November 18–19, 2007, at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. These meetings gave the authors the opportunity to present their ideas, to engage in critical exchange, and to rewrite their papers in the light of the discussions and of subsequent editorial direction, the latter spanning nearly four years. The discussions supported reflections on how and to what extent Confucian ritual still maintains its integrity, can still maintain contemporary Chinese culture, and even retain a religious core. Discussions of the former cluster of issues engendered disputes among the Chinese scholars as to the significance of religious ritual and the importance of the recognition of the transcendent for the integrity of Confucian rituals as a whole. In particular, questions as to whether Confucian ritual recognizes a personal God engendered an impassioned debate among the Chinese scholars. Many of these discussions addressed the significance of the religious rituals in which the emperor himself engaged and their contribution to the integrity and force of Confucian rituals as a whole.[1] The chapters in this volume were repeatedly recast through conversations and correspondence until they achieved their current shape. The result is a volume that with philosophical seriousness examines the rich ways in which right action, symbolic meaning, the life of virtue, and the experience of the holy are sustained through substantive, transgenerational ritual engagement.

This volume reflects the fruit of a dialogue between the Chinese appreciation of the core character of ritual and the traditional Christian appreciation of the centrality of the liturgy. Confucians were pressed by Christians to be open to the place of religious ritual in focusing Confucian rituals as a whole. Confucians helped diagnose the blindness of most Western cultural reflection to the ubiquity and centrality of rituals. This volume offers the possibility of looking afresh at ritual as a central dimension of man's relationship with reality. The contributors also recognize that rituals can, but need not, allow the connection of the transient with the enduring. Rituals can bind the present with the past and the future, and the immanent with the transcendent. Of course, in their post-traditional forms, rituals can separate persons from the transcendent and focus

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[1] There is an extensive literature regarding the role of a personal God in Chinese thought and of the obligation to worship Him. This literature goes back at least to Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and James Legge (1815–1897) (Ricci, 1986: Legge, 1852, 1881, 1960). It addresses the role of God in the rituals and in the moral commitments of Chinese culture. There is even a contemporary response by Chinese Christians to the remarkably central role played by the ritual recognition of the Shang Di, the High God, within imperial Chinese culture and ritual practice. See Chan (2006). It should be noted that the interaction between Christianity and Chinese culture reaches back at least to the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618–906) but very likely even earlier, as Orthodox and then Nestorian missionaries came to China. The materials from this history are only partially and incompletely available in English. See Riegert and Moore (2003), Palmer (2001).

attention on the individual and transient. It is such differences in the function of rituals that lie at the core of the divide between substantive and impoverished rituals. Each of these essays in different ways ties its account of rituals to the question of the place of rituals in sustaining a rightly-ordered culture.

The first section of this volume opens with Ana Iltis (2012) exploring how rituals create and sustain social reality. In her essay, she examines the force of rituals in establishing and re-enforcing social expectations, relations, and roles, by inviting participation in social structures and practices, by securing individuals within the social reality of a community, and by disclosing the significance of the cardinal passages of life from reproduction to death. Noting how the literature has distinguished among various categories of rituals, Iltis appreciates that rituals discover, create, and sustain a moral fabric. They also announce and defend social boundaries. As a consequence, no human and no human community is ever without ritual. The subsequent contribution by Engelhardt lays out how rituals possess expressive, evocative, performative, educative, and transformative functions (Engelhardt, 2012). They express a view of reality, values, and social relationships. They evoke attitudes, commitments, judgments, feelings, and forms of behavior. They are socially performative in creating social reality. They educate and train individuals in how to respond to moral, social, and metaphysical reality. In addition, as Engelhardt points out, religious rituals can themselves transform reality. For traditional Western culture, the cardinal examples of the latter rituals are baptism and the eucharist. Given the centrality of the eucharist, the ritual of rituals has been the Christian Liturgy. Mark Cherry's account shows how a reflection on rituals supports the insights of Orthodox Christianity, which is the most ritual-rich form of Christianity and which recognizes in substantive rituals the intimate interconnections between humans and the transcendent (Cherry, 2012). Orthodox theology is at its core liturgical. Cherry further illustrates and examines the moral function of ritual through the recognition that an appropriate system of rituals is necessary for human flourishing.

Griffin Trotter closes the first section of this volume with an investigation of the place of ritual in medicine (Trotter, 2012). Here again the general animus against many traditional ritual forms in contemporary Western culture has had an important impact, in this case one augmented by commitments to biomedical materialism. The result is a marginalization of the role of rituals in healing and their replacement by a medicine that conceives of health and the human condition in reductive terms. In this context, the knowledge claims of physicians and scientists displace those of theologians and saints, constituting a moral perspective that situates humans in a lifeworld whose scope is narrowed and in which an ultimate orientation is lost. One faces suffering and death without a point of ultimate orientation or therapeutic ritual support. Trotter identifies an important cultural consequence of the failure to appreciate the sustaining force of ritual: one cannot effectively draw on the therapeutic force of ritual.

1.3 The Confucian Legacy

It is likely that the Chinese appreciation of ritual was very significantly altered after 1911 when there was no longer a head of state to perform cardinal religious rites, especially those conducted by the emperor at the Temple or Altar of Heaven in Beijing. The emperor had from before Confucius served as the centripetal cultural focus of Confucian ritual piety. The circumstance that the imperial rites acknowledged the existence of a personal sovereign duty very likely enhanced this focus for Confucian ritual. Once discontinued, the context of Confucian ritual changed foundationally. Confucianism until that point had not functioned widely as a non-geographically located moral and ritual community despoiled of a locating and framing empirical setting, as occurred with Judaism after the fall of the First and Second Temples (586 B.C. and A.D. 70). Following the "fall" of the Temple of Heaven, practices spanning millennia ceased. A focus for the coherence of diverse ritual practices was not just lost, but ritual practices were in general discouraged following the May 4 (1919) movement. Remarkably, the default position for Chinese still remained at least as ritually substantial as that which remained for Jews after the fall of the Second Temple. Against this background, one might ask which contemporary culture, American-European or Chinese, is worse off after the French Revolution, the October Revolution, and the assaults against traditional Chinese culture during the 20th century.

The second section of the volume turns to the resources of Confucian ritual, providing an introduction to the Chinese cultural acknowledgement of the force of ritual. Tangjia Wang's essay gauges the gulf between contemporary European and Chinese appreciations of ritual versus those of traditional Chinese culture (Wang, 2012). Christians and Jews have always acknowledged religious ritual as central to the relationship between man and God. Hence, the depth of the disorientation and alteration of Western culture following the secularization of the West. Nevertheless, Christians and Jews have learned to flourish within communities set within larger secular societies. Ritual for Westerners, despite anti-ritual movements, retains a sense of being paradigmatically religious. So, too, as Wang shows, despite the cultural turmoil of the 20th century, Chinese culture still acknowledges a natural connection between everyday life and etiquette in a manner that makes ritual an important focus of philosophical reflection, apart from concerns for the religious. A Chinese cultural recognition persists that ritual weds emotions, symbols, moral commitments, and metaphysical bonds, and that ritual is a cardinal social category.

Xianglong Zhang (2012) appreciates that in all of this, it is the special focus on filial piety that is the soul of Confucian ritual. The rituals of filial piety have always been, or at least have become, the Confucian rituals of rituals. The individualistic secular Western focus on individual death, as for example is found in the work of Martin Heidegger, discloses a lifeworld disjointed from

what has been appreciated by Confucius and Chinese culture generally. In contrast, Confucian culture through its resources of ritual appreciates that one should not face death alone, but rather nested within the experience of filial piety, comforted by the ritual support of a family. Family bonds sustained by ritual set one within commitments that bind generations from the cradle to beyond the grave. In contrast, the contemporary secular Western post-Christian experience of temporality is cut loose from the context of a substantive parent-child bond nurtured by the rituals of filial piety and by rituals binding one to God. The secularized Westerner no longer engages in ritual prayers for his parents and forefathers. With consenting others he must try to shoulder the work of sustaining a coherent life by in part creating his own rituals as he goes. In traditional Chinese culture, matters are quite different, given the bonds sustained by the rituals of filial piety. The traditional Confucian lives and dies within a web of integrated social support that reaches beyond his own life to his ancestors.

Ping Cheung Lo provides a rich inventory and overview of major rituals in ancient China, with special attention to Xi Zhu's (A.D. 1130–1200) study, *Family Rituals* (Lo, 2012). Lo's examination demonstrates the centrality of religious concerns for Xi Zhu (previously the name was transliterated as Chu Hsi), who recognized the thick religious nesting of Chinese rituals. Indeed, Zhu held that rituals reflect the operation of the principle of Heaven. As Lo points out, Zhu's *Family Rituals* achieved a particular importance through its use by Confucians in counteracting the influence of Buddhism. The status of the work was thus situated in a dialectic of religious competition. This engagement indicates the religiously situated character of Confucian thought. Lamentably, as Lo observes, Zhu's volume is no longer in print in Chinese: a symptom of the desuetude of traditional Confucianism and Confucian rituals in contemporary China. Yet, as he also notes, there are indications of a revival of not just interest in but also engagement in Confucian life and ritual.

This section closes with Ruiping Fan's addressing the rupture from the ethos of filial piety that characterizes contemporary post-traditional societies (Fan, 2012). He acknowledges that a loss of filial piety and a disengagement from ritual mark not just the West, but also contemporary Chinese culture. This circumstance forebodes generally a loss of virtue because, as Fan argues, it is not possible to maintain Confucian principles such as *ren* (humanity) and *yi* (righteousness) as intellectual insights separated from the constitutive roles of Confucian rituals. The moral life is not a disembodied intellectual affirmation of general principles. Moreover, general moral principles are lived through routinized commitments that both have a ritual character and are nurtured by ritual. That is, the moral life is sustained by ritual: virtue cannot be adequately pursued or understood apart from rightly-directed rituals. Indeed, names such as father and son receive their full meaning primarily through the constitutive force of rituals such that the substantive meaning of such terms is derived from their place in a web of rituals. With the rending of the fabric of traditional rituals during the 20th century, a post-traditional Chinese culture has emerged

that is counter to that shaped by the virtues embraced by traditional Confucian thought. This counter-culture with its counter-rituals (e.g., children addressing their parents by their first names) and counter-virtues (e.g., the pursuit of a self-determined "authenticity" of life undirected by parents and grandparents) undermines the fabric of filial piety. All this calls out for a cultural renewal grounded in a renewal of traditional ritual, a point made by many Confucians. Confucius himself saw his life project as that of restoring virtue through proper ritual behavior.

1.4   Modernity, Rituals, and the Bonds of Society

The third section explores ritual and tradition as a challenge to modernity. David Solomon in his contribution develops the recognition of the deep tie between ritual and the life of virtue. Ritual, in directing the cardinal habits of one's life, supports vice or virtue, mediocrity or excellence.

Solomon observes that

(1) Ritual settings allow us to increase the repertoire of human actions;
(2) Ritual settings facilitate the performance of socially important actions which without a ritualized setting would be difficult to perform.
(3) Ritual settings are valuable in moral education both in inculcating certain moral attitudes in persons and also in helping them to acquire the virtues (Solomon, 2012, p. 11).

Solomon also notes the havoc wreaked on the Western appreciation of ritual by the chaos engendered by Vatican II. Vatican II, became the point of departure for a cluster of post-traditional, social, and moral developments, including the collapse of a widespread set of social institutions sustained by religious brothers and sisters. Changes in ritual that are potentially destabilizing, changes that disconnect from a past that was rich in tradition, are particularly disorienting and distorting.

Daniel Bell affirms the role of Confucianism in modernity, even when regarded in substantively this-worldly terms. Confucianism still provides a substantive social fabric mediated and sustained by a web of rituals. Despite Bell's placing the force of Confucianism robustly this side of the grave by stressing its relatively this-worldly character, Confucianism maintains a clearly transgenerational character that includes the dead (Bell, 2012). Bell also emphasizes how Confucian rituals support the status of the disadvantaged over against the powerful by placing each with a web of reciprocity. He addresses such ritualized contexts as the teacher-student relationship, the conduct of meals, and the boss-worker relationship to indicate how the less powerful are sustained by a web of rituals that structures these contexts. As Bell argues, rituals have the task of generating emotions that direct care to the weak and vulnerable. As within many traditional webs of interaction, there is an accent on *noblesse oblige* ingredient in such rituals. Rituals sustain harmonious interaction.

Bell's point about the social fabric provided by Confucianism is strengthened by Jonathan Chan's essay, which begins with an exploration of the conception of ritual in the Confucian moral tradition and ends with a focus on the contemporary relevance of the Confucian understanding of the role and significance of ritual (Chan, 2012). Here Chan discloses an important element of Chinese culture, which still makes the role of ritual (i.e., as maintaining virtue) more fundamental for a society than the formal rule of law. For example, political legitimacy has traditionally been seen to depend on regulating social conduct first and foremost through rightly-ordered ritual. Rule of virtue in the order of being and moral importance is prior to the rule of law. Chan concludes by underscoring the importance of education in ritual and of the transformative role of ritual as a key to building a harmonious society. It is likely that these appreciations of informal order allowed China at the end of the 20th century to transform itself quickly into a successful capitalist, market economy. Even when rule of law was inadequate, rule of ritual likely reduced the amount of misconduct. However, the post-traditional character of the cultural influences imported from the West have imperiled education in ritual, leading among other things to an undermining of filial piety, the cardinal Confucian virtue.

1.5 Restoring and Sustaining the Fabric of Tradition

The final section compasses two commentaries that not only address the project as a whole, but critically speak to each other's commentary. In the first commentary, George Khushf characterizes as traditionalists those who advance what he terms the "traditional ritual project", namely, a project of providing a general account or theory of ritual as a basis for (1) a critique of modern society and as (2) an apologetic for the fabric of traditional ritual (Khushf, 2012). He also argues that one should look for parallels between the traditional ritual project and projects in the West aimed at supporting natural law and natural theology, even though natural law and natural theology are discursively expressed, while rituals are engaged and lived, usually non-discursively. The power of rituals lies in the circumstance that they can be engaged without rendering discursively explicit the richness of their meaning. Khushf also explores what he takes to be a potentially paradoxical feature of claims concerning traditional rituals. As he notes, accounts of rituals are marked by a tension between their universalizing and particularizing tendencies. The universal elements of ritual (e.g., the elements of filial piety) are bound up with general characteristics of the human condition (e.g., everyone is someone's child), while the particular elements carry the contingent content of local culture (e.g., the specific ways in which Confucian rituals express and support filial respect). Then there is the issue of access to the meaning of ritual. As in the case of speaking a particular language, one only gains the feel of the language (to take a point from Dilthey, one only achieves *verstehen*) by actually speaking the language. In the case of certain rituals, one may only be able to enter into the

real significance of the rituals through the energies of the Divine, the gift of grace). Khushf also recognizes that, there are at least two ways to criticize modernity, both of which are engaged in different fashions by the contributors to this volume. The first approach involves accepting modernity's premises and then showing that they lead to inconsistencies or to implications that are in their own terms problematic, such as the affirmation of individual self-realization that leads to the fragmentation of the family and the cultural isolation of individuals, thus imperiling individual self-realization and self-fulfillment. The second involves criticizing a culture by standing outside of it, by appealing to some generally accessible account of what is good or true. For example, one can criticize a post-traditional culture for lacking certain virtues such as filial piety that only traditional rituals can fully sustain. Both stances can be undertaken in different ways by those who embrace what Khushf terms the traditional ritual project, and who find the rituals of contemporary culture both dysfunctional and inadequate.

Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes reminds the reader of a cardinal goal of this volume: the recognition of the relevance of ritual for cultural renewal. She understands that well-ordered rituals effectively orient their participants so that they can realize the goods of core human relationships such as those between husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and students, rulers and subjects, and creatures to their God. She appreciates that a major challenge to the appreciation of the centrality of ritual is not just the low-church Western Christian animus against ritual, but the rationalist Enlightenment agendas of figures such as Immanuel Kant who transformed a low-church Protestant animus into a view of human moral agency that could not take the cardinal role of ritual seriously. The normative community became the ahistorical kingdom of ends or the original position. In a post-Christian culture still influenced by forces set loose by the Enlightenment, which accents individual autonomy and an authenticity liberated from history, traditional ritual communities will be regarded as perversely anachronistic. However, they are those that tend to reproduce and maintain coherent social structures (Longman, 2004a, b). For their part, such traditional communities are incarnate in history and context. They stand in perpetual criticism of the Enlightenment project of articulating an ahistorical community of humans as such.

George Khushf and Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes have it right. Everyone has rituals. The traditional ritual project is predicated on the view that some rituals are morally and theologically much better than others. More than that, the traditional ritual project, for traditionalists, whether secular Europeans, Christians, or Confucians, rests on the judgment that much of contemporary post-traditional, post-modern culture is beset by disordered rituals, that is, by rituals that in crucial ways aim in wrong directions (e.g., homosexual marriages) by undermining what traditional mores apprehend as a proper bond between humans. Others have dysfunctional rituals that fail to aim where they purport to direct their participants, as with do-it-yourself marriage rituals that purport to allow the realization of authenticity and individual autonomy, but are cut off

from the wisdom that generations of spouses can through traditional rituals teach about marriage to new husbands and wives in the present. Others have banal rituals that deflate an appreciation of the significant and the transcendent, such as occurs in many Roman Catholic post-Vatican II liturgies.

1.6 Ritual and Cultural Renewal

Cultural renewal will involve aiming and engaging the right rituals rightly. A culture's cardinal rituals must help their participants to aim at the good, the right, the virtuous, and the holy. Christians and Confucians have always been concerned with culture. Culture, after all, derives etymologically from *cultus*, worship. Getting things ritually right is tied to right worship, a correct appreciation of the ultimate meaning of reality. As already noted, in the West the impact of Vatican II on the ritual integrity of the West was associated with a significant disintegration of traditional morality and with a widespread cultural upheaval even within boundaries of earnest Christian communities. The causes of these changes were multiple, but the ritual chaos within Roman Catholicism surely made a contribution to destabilizing a major social institution in Western culture. Yet generally, Christianity's staying power has shown a resilience that has allowed Christianity to resist being marginalized from the public square and rendered into a matter of private belief and private ritual observance. The ritual integrity of the West remains Christian and persists in maintaining an anchor in the transcendent.

The question is whether, when Confucian rituals are no longer built around the rituals aimed rightly at the High God, the Shang Di, they can still succeed over time in aiming at rightly-ordered relations between parents and children, husbands and wives, teachers and students, rulers and subjects, so as to give effective orientation to virtue. Can Confucianism survive as a ritual-based philosophy, but without the metaphysical depth? Can it survive apart from religion? Can a ritual-based philosophy sustain itself without the transcendent roots that ritual recognition of the Shang Di afforded? This is an unavoidable question, in that the good and goals of rituals are not merely internal to the practice of rituals. Rather, rituals are about living life rightly as a whole that is connected to the substance of reality. It may not be possible adequately to achieve that wholeness without recognizing the place of God. In particular, it may not be possible to maintain the fabric of Confucian ritual, absent recapturing the importance of ritual orientation to the Divine. Perhaps the future for Confucian ritual and morality lies in realizing value in the local customs that shape the authentic Confucian commitments in China.

Then there is the question as to whether Confucianism can function from the bottom up, whether it can maintain itself as a non-geographically-located community in the sense of a community that is not dependent on the support of the local sovereignty and that transcends national boundaries. How communal integrity will differ depends on whether the community of those who

participate is located in a non-geographically located community or a community that is in some way equivalent to the officially established dominant society of a particular state. Ritual communities in a post-traditional world will rarely ever be the dominant community of a particular state, but will usually be restricted instead to being non-geographical communities, of which Orthodox Jews and traditional Christians are exemplars. A crucial question is whether Confucians can sustain themselves as non-geographical communities. Of course, a ritually constituted community can sustain itself as a community that is independent of local sovereignties and the dominant communities they compass, while also being established somewhere in the world as the officially normative community. Ritually sustained communities can be both locally established and transcend local communities, as in the instance of Jews who sustain their rituals and pursue the good, the right, the virtuous, and the holy in communities beyond the borders of Israel. Israel remains nevertheless something very special. Perhaps China is the Israel of the Confucians.

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Part I
Ritual, Virtue, and the Pursuit of the Holy

Chapter 2
Ritual as the Creation of Social Reality

Ana S. Iltis

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers four principal ways through which rituals can create social reality for those who participate in the rituals as well as for those who stand outside as mere observers. Rituals are performative acts that create social boundaries both including and excluding humans.

Societies are marked by a range of rituals explicit and implicit, formal and informal. They range from the sacred to the secular, the public to the private. Rituals create and mark social reality in four principal ways. First, by creating a social reality, rituals establish or reinforce expectations, relationships, and roles; they create a web of social bonds. Second, by inviting participation in a social reality, rituals maintain social stability and harmony; they create sustaining social structures. Third, rituals by placing individuals within a social reality enable individuals to understand themselves as part of specific groups invested in particular activities, commitments, and traditions; rituals by creating social reality allow individuals to understand their position within the social geography of the world. Fourth, rituals by placing humans within a social reality disclose the significance and meaning of time, including the passages of human life, from reproduction, birth, marriage, and suffering to death, thus aiding individuals to appreciate their location in history.

For those who stand outside of rituals as mere observers, rituals declare social boundaries. As a result, the observers appreciate themselves as either excluded from a social reality or invited to enter into it, if not both. Rituals by creating a social world declare those outside the social world as to some extent an other.

This chapter gives special accent to the extent to which the social reality created through rituals not only effects the supervention of a new perspective, but in addition should be understood as disclosing the meaning of the reality

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addressed through the ritual. That is, there are good grounds to hold that a number of rituals not only create a social reality that is contingent and could have been otherwise, but a number of rituals may have a more substantive force. They make explicit a reality otherwise unnoticed.

Before I consider the performative force of rituals and their role in creating and shaping social reality, I will speak briefly to the question: what is ritual and how is ritual bound up with tradition? Ritual denotes "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers" (Rappaport, 1999, p. 24).

Rituals can range from the sacred to the secular, the informal to the formal. Some religious rituals, coronations of kings and queens, and the installation of heads of state, in which particular protocols are followed and in which adherence to the prescribed form is considered important, are formal. Rituals may be institutionalized, as the rituals of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christian churches, or non-institutional, as the Confucian rituals described by Fan (Chapter 9). Rituals may be highly structured and there may be written instructions as to how to proceed. For example, on the first night of the Passover holiday, the Jewish people follow specific guidelines about what to eat, in what order to serve food, which prayers to read, and who should read them. It is understood that specific acts must be performed, statements made, clothing worn, and so on. In other cases, there is no written set of rules about how something is done, but a ritual is passed on through experience. For example, a family may have a particular way of celebrating the birth of a child, or a holiday. The ritual is learned by being a member of the family. Similarly, for many young children, a particular ritual before bedtime signals that they day is ending and that soon they will go to sleep. Parents may bathe a child, help him brush his teeth, read a certain number of books to or with the child, and then give a goodnight kiss. When that is done regularly, it becomes a ritual. There is no written rule. There is simply a custom – a routine – that is imbued with meaning. The actions serve as signs of what is to come.

As we explore ritual, it is important to recognize that there are hierarchies of rituals. Some are major, such as an Orthodox Christian Wedding or a Jewish naming ceremony. Others are what we might call minor rituals, such as the bedtime ritual described earlier. Yet others are somewhere in between. The classification is not important for our discussion except insofar as readers should understand that in examining different rituals – from the major to the minor – we are not suggesting that they are all equally significant. It also is important to recognize that grandeur is not necessary for a ritual to be a ritual. Events need not be on a large scale or conducted in public to be rituals. The concept of ritual covers a broad range of human experiences discussed here together because they share important elements. Discussion of different types of rituals – major and minor, secular and religious – in the same chapter and volume does not diminish the significance of the major rituals.

Scholars of ritual have identified characteristics of ritual and attempted to establish categories of ritual. Two explorations of the characteristics of ritual, of

what makes a ritual a ritual, stand out. Both help up us to distinguish rituals from routines, a distinction explored below. First, Klapp (1965) identifies five characteristics of ritual.

1. Practicality: "Ritual often occurs in areas of life where practical control is lacking – crises, the weather, the supernatural, and so on – but that it substitutes for practical control is no reason for saying that it is the same kind of thing as practical control" (Klapp, 1965, p. 10); "... much ritual has no practical effect whatever – and the participants know this, but nonetheless perform it (as in the familiar anecdote of the Englishman in the tropics who, no matter how hot it was, always dressed for dinner)" (Klapp, 1965, pp. 10–11).
2. Regularity: Ritual "adheres to some pattern, formula, method or role, which is considered as the correct or best one. Originality is not welcomed in ritual once established" (Klapp, 1965, p. 11).
3. Periodicity or Repetition: Ritual requires that "[a] thing must be done rightly and at certain times" (Klapp, 1965, p. 11).
4. Meaningful: Ritual "belong[s] to a class of significant gestures" (Klapp, 1965, p. 11) and involves "behavior which communicates something..." (Klapp, 1965, pp. 11–12). "Ritual is ... essentially mnemonic, that is, it retains a memory-image, as does language or some music" (Klapp, 1965, pp. 11–12). Ritual "give[s] living immediacy to certain vital ideas on which society is based" (Klapp, 1965, p. 12).
5. Dramatic: Ritual is performed for an audience, even if the audience consists only of the person performing the ritual (Klapp, 1965, p. 12).

Second, Bell (1997) identifies categories of attributes of ritual action. Among the important categories noted are:

1. Formalism: Rituals involve different degrees of formality (1997, p. 139).
2. Traditionalism: Traditionalization is "[t]he attempt to make a set of activities appear to be identical to or thoroughly consistent with older cultural precedents" (Bell, 1997, p. 145). Traditionalization is a "powerful tool of legitimation"; repetition or adaptation of old activities in or to new settings.
3. Invariance: Rituals involve repetition and physical control (1997, p. 150).
4. Rule Governance: "[C]odes of orchestration" govern rituals (Bell, 1997, p. 153).
5. Sacral Symbolism: Often times, "Activities that explicitly appeal to supernatural beings are readily considered to be examples of rituals..." (Bell, 1997, p. 155).
6. Performance: "[D]eliberate, self-conscious 'doing' of highly symbolic actions in public – is key to what makes ritual, theater, and spectacle what they are" (Bell, 1997, pp. 159–160).

These descriptions of ritual help differentiate rituals and routines. In examining Klapp's criteria for ritual, for example, we see why a bedtime ritual for a child may be a ritual and not merely a bedtime routine. Insofar as it meets all five criteria Klapp establishes, it is a ritual. In some households, a bedtime routine might be merely a routine. In many homes, however, it may be a ritual

because, for example, it includes bedtime prayers that reflect religious commitments the parents are passing on to the child. Particular elements of the ritual may be meant to communicate a parent's love for the child. They are not meant simply to put the child to bed. Mere routines, unlike rituals, lack the meaning associated with rituals. Routines are mechanical, such as the way a person slices a banana into his cereal each morning. The practice may be repeated regularly, but it is not filled with meaning or performed for an audience.

Examining some of the categories of ritual identified in the literature helps us understand the ways in which rituals create and shape social reality, which is the focus of the next section. Although these categorizations of types of ritual are not definitive, they are informative. Bell (1997) identifies various types of rituals, including:

- Rites of passage (Bell, 1997, p. 94)
- Calendral rites, which "give socially meaningful definitions to the passage of time, creating an ever-renewing cycle of days, months, and years" (Bell, 1997, p. 102).
- Rites of exchange and communion, such as "offerings to a god or gods with the practical and straightforward expectation of receiving something in return..." (Bell, 1997, p. 108).
- Rites of affliction, which "seek to mitigate the influence of spirits thought to be afflicting human beings with misfortune" or "attempt to rectify a state of affairs that has been disturbed or disordered; they heal, exorcise, protect, and purify" (Bell, 1997, p. 115).
- Feasting, fasting, and festivals, which involve "public display[s] of religio-cultural sentiments" (Bell, 1997, p. 120).
- Political rites, which "comprise those ceremonial practices that specifically construct, display and promote the power of political institutions (such as king, state, the village elders) or the political interests of distinct constituencies and subgroups" (Bell, 1997, p. 128). Such "rituals actually construct power," according to Bell (1997, p. 128).

In all of this discussion of ritual, it is obvious that rituals are rituals in part because they have meaning. Identical actions could be performed by various people and these actions would be ritual for some and not for others. Those that fail to meet the criteria of ritual fail, in part, because they are not imbued with meaning. As meaning-filled activity, ritual is a form of communication, though it may be a unique form of communication. As Rappaport argues: "To say that ritual is a mode of communication is hardly to suggest that it is interchangeable with other modes of communication. It is a special medium peculiarly, perhaps even uniquely, suited to the transmission of certain messages and certain sorts of information" (Rappaport, 1999, p. 52). The information communicated shapes and creates social reality by, for example, (1) marking an individual as an adult or as a member of a church, (2) signaling the end of a season of feasts, (3) or vesting the authority of the state in a new judge as he is sworn in to office.

That rituals are rituals in part because they are meaning-filled, communicative activities has important implications for attempts to renew or reintroduce rituals. Rituals and the commitments that they reflect are bound up with one another. Thus as the commitments that ground and are communicated by rituals are weakened, we should expect to see the practice of the associated rituals dwindle. Once the underlying commitments are lost altogether, we should expect rituals associated with them to become extinct. Similarly, if the practice of particular rituals becomes weak, we should expect a weakening in the underlying commitments. This bi-directional dependence raises important questions for how cultural renewal can be undertaken effectively. Assuming that cultural renewal involves renewing both the commitments and the ritual practices associated with those commitments, how may we engage in cultural renewal if there has been a loss of both the underlying commitments that ground and are reflected in a ritual and the ritual itself no longer is practiced? Is it necessary or possible to introduce ritual practices, make them highly visible, and use the curiosity they might generate as a starting point for cultural renewal? Can rituals communicate meaning to those who do not already share the underlying commitments reflected in the ritual? Can those who stand outside be drawn in and come to share new commitments as a result of observing a ritual? Is it necessary or possible to reintroduce particular commitments first so that persons may engage in a ritual only after already understanding them, believing in them, or in some other way recognizing and accepting their meaning? These questions are variations of the classic question: which came first, the chicken or the egg? Do or must shared commitments precede ritual practice or vice versa? These are some of the many questions that should be considered as part of an overall effort of cultural renewal. My purpose in the remainder of this chapter is to characterize some of the particular ways in which rituals uphold tradition, maintain culture, and function in society as well as to explore the relationship between rituals, traditions, and routines.

2.2 Establish or Reinforce Expectations, Relationships, and Roles

The social power of ritual – that is, the power of ritual to create and mark social reality – is captured in this summary definition of ritual:

> . . .the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers logically entails the establishment of convention, the sealing of social contract, the construction of the integrated conventional orders . . . , the investment of whatever it encodes with morality, the construction of time and eternity; the representation of a paradigm of creation, the generation of the concept of the sacred and the sanctification of conventional order, the generation of theories of the occult, the evocation of numinous experience, the awareness of the divine, the grasp of the holy, and the construction of orders of meaning transcending the semantic (Rappaport, 1999, p. 27).

I turn to examine the four principal ways in which ritual creates and marks social reality.

First, ritual marks social reality by establishing or reinforcing expectations, roles, and relationships, thus weaving the fabric of society. Rituals from the informal to the formal, the secular to the sacred, can have this effect, as suggested by some of the examples above. Among the informal, secular rituals, consider the bedtime ritual for children and the bridal shower for a young woman. A bedtime ritual, which may involve a bath and stories, signals to a child that he or she must soon separate from his parents and go to sleep. Although in some families a bedtime routine merely is a routine, it may be a ritual for some, i.e., when the children understand that their bedtime "routine" reflects their parents' love and the security of their parents' presence. Or, when the bedtime "routine" includes nightly prayers, families participate in something that is not merely mechanical. In the United States, perhaps no ritual traditionally has made it more clear to a young woman about to be married that she would be expected to care for the home and to cook than the bridal shower. Traditionally, bridal shower gifts revolve around the home, and the kitchen in particular. With pots, baking pans, kitchen gadgets and other housewares before them, no young bride should have missed the social cue that she would be expected to cook and care for the home. In recent years, many people have recast the bridal shower as a couples shower, where men and women are invited and household gifts are given jointly to the bride and groom, suggesting that domestic responsibilities will be shared. Although traditional shower gifts continue to be given, many other gifts have come to be seen as appropriate shower gifts, including alcohol and home bar items, and home entertainment items. Many preserve the traditional bridal shower ritual – women gathering to give a bride housewares – but we also have seen the ritual change. The new shower reflects new customs and beliefs. It also reflects the fact that many couples cohabitate before they are married and already have many of the basic kitchen items that traditionally have been given as shower gifts.

Consider also the ways in which clothing or accessories have meaning; the donning of such articles can signal (1) one's place in society or in the universe or (2) a role one has assumed and can evoke expectations in others. Physicians typically wear white coats, and medical schools often have white coat ceremonies for entering students. The white coat is a symbol and wearing it carries duties and evokes expectations. When patients see a person in a long white coat, they may make certain assumptions about that person's abilities, motives, and role. The physician, it generally is presumed, will act in the patient's interest and will not harm the patient. Rebecca Dresser (2002) has noted that this ritual of wearing the white coat can be dangerous in some circumstances because it delivers a powerful yet wrong message. When physicians who are acting as medical researchers wear their white coats, they suggest to patients that their interactions with the physician are "business as usual." Yet this may not be the case. A physician-researcher has different primary objectives than a physician acting strictly as a clinician. The researcher may offer interventions, perform

tests, or withhold interventions not because they are in the best interest of the patient but because they are necessary for the conduct of research. The patient may mistakenly believe that the physician is providing treatment, a phenomenon known as the therapeutic misconception. Therapeutic misconception refers to situations in which individuals are participating in research as subjects but mistakenly believe that research is an extension of or is comparable to clinical care and that the patient's best interest is the guiding principle of research (Appelbaum, Roth, and Lidz, 1982). Patients seeing a physician in a bright red coat, for example, would be much less likely to assume that the physician was providing them treatment based on what the physician thought was best for the patient.

Ritual clothing also can play an important role in reinforcing religious beliefs about persons' roles and responsibilities. Consider the various head coverings worn by married Orthodox Jewish women, Orthodox Christian women in church, Muslim women, and by Orthodox Jewish men. For a married Orthodox Jewish woman, a head covering is a sign of modesty and serves to separate her from men other than her husband. For Orthodox Jewish men, head coverings serve as reminders of God's presence and power and as signs of respect. For Muslim women, head coverings are part of an obligation to cover their bodies when in public or with men and to be modest. For Orthodox Christian women, covering their heads in church is a sign of submission. Rituals communicate information, and ritualistic clothing is no exception. Much of that information concerns the social world, the roles and responsibilities of individuals within them, and the expectations others have of individuals who occupy specific roles. In doing so, rituals mark the social world in a powerful way, creating and reinforcing a web of social bonds.

2.3 Promote or Signal Stability or Harmony

Rituals mark social reality in a second way; they may serve as social signals or cues that indicate stability or continuity and as such shape the social world and one's perspective of it. They generate and enable individuals to experience and affirm such beliefs (Bell, 1992, p. 20). Some of the most powerful rituals may be very simple, everyday rituals. In some cases, one may not notice the ritual until it is absent, and its absence is our sign of change or trouble.

Consider this example. In many offices, it is customary to say "Hello" when one passes a coworker in the hall. One expects the other person to respond similarly. When someone fails to greet a coworker, it is noticed. The failure may indicate that some harmony has been disrupted. Participating in greeting rituals signals stability and harmony in a workplace and participation in these rituals promotes further stability and harmony regardless of how minor or mechanical the process may appear to outsiders.

A British lord chief justice once noted that the reason British judges where what he called "outmoded attire" rather than plain black robes (as in the U.S.) is

that Britain has no written constitution. According to a British lord chief justice, the tradition of the judicial regalia helps maintain a sense of stability because "Traditions play an important role in providing continuity of powers and responsibilities" (quoted in Poders, 2000, p. 103). Such attire suggests that judges are part of a tradition and are making decisions in accord with that tradition and hence keeping the tradition alive. When judges don their garb, the don their tradition. To break with that tradition would indicate a general willingness to break with tradition, which could yield instability.

Traditional family rituals are among the most powerful examples of the ways in which rituals can promote and signal stability, and the breakdown of such rituals can signal disharmony or change. The movie *The Lost City* explores the Cuban Revolution with emphasis on the life of one family. Throughout the movie, we observe the family gathering for Sunday dinner at 6 p.m. sharp. As grown sons marry, their wives join the family meal. Each child greets mother and father with a kiss, each person occupies a particular seat, and it is obvious to the outsider that this gathering is not optional. As the Revolution progresses, one son joins Castro and another an anti-revolutionary group and goes in to hiding. The pro-Castro son ceases to attend family dinners; this seems in part due to his own rejection of his family and its beliefs, as well as a rejection of tradition altogether and in particular of a tradition that values duty to and love of family. His absence is poignant, a sign that the family no longer is one. But the fact that the rest of the family continues to gather at the same time each Sunday evening also reflects an important sense of stability and continuity among the other family members. The ritual of gathering serves as a sign of family unity and harmony and further cements that bond. Disruption of the ritual is equally meaning-filled; to reject the ritual is to reject what it represents, namely the family.

In reinforcing traditions, rituals can link the past, present and future. They sustain the social fabric and expand it by connecting generations, thereby creating and marking social reality.

2.4 Establish or Reinforce Identity as Part of a Group

Third, rituals by placing individuals within a social reality enable individuals to understand themselves as part of specific groups invested in particular activities, commitments and traditions. Moreover, in some cases, rituals actually change an individual's identity making that person someone or something he previously was not. Participating in ritual activities can help individuals recognize themselves as being part of a defined group, organization or tradition. With this sense of belonging to something larger than themselves can come a recognition of responsibilities to the group and responsibilities that derive from being a group member. Rituals allow individuals to understand their position within the social geography of the world. In this way, rituals are performative acts – they shape individuals and relationships and thus establish and maintain social structures.

One of the most powerful secular rituals through which a person's identity changes is the citizenship ceremony in which naturalized U.S. citizens become U.S. citizens. The naturalization ceremony is a ritual that culminates the long process of becoming a citizen and at the end of the ceremony individuals who arrived as non-citizens leave as citizens. With that identity change come new rights and responsibilities. The ritual has powerful implications for social reality; it is a performative act, one that changes fundamentally who a person is and what that person's place is in society.

Some rituals may not change a person's identity or status in the social world but may remind individuals of their membership in particular groups or communities. For example, it is common at some sporting events in the U.S. to sing the national anthem prior to the event. This ritual serves to remind those who participate that they are members of a particular community. Religious rituals sometimes transform identities or reinforce membership in a community. According to believers, some religious rituals change the identity of some participants. For example, Orthodox Christian believe that the bride and the groom are changed by the ritual of the marriage ceremony from single persons to husband and wife. They are placed in a social structure with asymmetrical authorities and obligations. Orthodox Christians understand that the marriage comes into existence not as the result of bridal agreement or betrothal contract, which are at best desirable but not sufficient conditions. Indeed, the marriage itself is not at all contractual but the result of the power of the ritual. It reflects a new category of unity through which a man comes to have duties and authorities over a woman who had been single and is now his wife, just as the woman who had been single now becomes a wife with duties to and claims over him and his body. That some rituals do or are thought to change the identity of those who participate does not mean that all rituals do this or that a practice must involve such changes to be considered a ritual. Altering metaphysics is not a necessary condition for a practice to be a ritual, but it is important to understand that some rituals are thought to have this power.

In addition, the religious implications of rituals shared among members of particular religious communities can reinforce a person's awareness that he is a member of a community, one that in some cases extends over many generations. Certain religious practices also remind individuals that they are members of a community whose integrity they must protect. For example, in Roman Catholic churches marriage banns are printed several weeks before a wedding is scheduled to take place. This gives members of the community the opportunity to come forward if there are reasons for which the proposed wedding should not take place, such as knowledge that one member of the couple had a secret marriage to another person or that the members of the couple are closely related to one another. Members of the church are responsible for helping to maintain the integrity of the community and the sacraments. For Christians, baptisms and weddings fundamentally transform the identities of those who are baptized or married.

2.5 Signal the Passage of Time or a Change in Circumstances

Finally, rituals can signal the passage of time or changes in life circumstances and thus disclose the significance and meaning of time. Rites of passage serve as obvious examples. High school graduations in the United States traditionally have been seen as pivotal moments when children become recognized as adults. Students who graduate from a school that does not have a graduation ceremony but merely marks transcripts to indicate that a student has completed high school still go into the world as high school graduates. A ceremony is not a necessary condition for being a graduate, but the ceremony is an outward sign that communicates to students and others present that the students have met an important milestone and are at a time of significant change. Without participating in the ritual, it is unlikely that those present will otherwise experience an "Ah-ha" moment when they realize that life has changed. A school registrar marking a transcript indicating that a student has graduated does not communicate the passage of time and change in life circumstances that a graduation ceremony conveys. At the same time, the graduation ceremony is not a sufficient condition for becoming a graduate. If a student participates in the ritual but in fact has not completed all the requirements and the school does not mark on his transcript that he has graduated, his participation in the graduation will not make him a graduate.

In some Latin American countries, the quinceañera is a celebration marking a young girl's transition to adulthood. A young girl will turn fifteen with or without the ritual, but the ritual marks an important time in her life. Other ritualized events also may serve to mark the passage of time and shape the social space as a result. For example, celebrations surrounding Mardi Gras mark the final days before Lent, a period of fasting and penitence that precedes the joyful season of Easter. The cycle of feasting and fasting repeated each year in special ways marks the passage of time. Moreover, by being immersed in the rituals associated with the seasons, the meaning of the seasons is learned.

2.6 Impact on Outsiders

When persons observe but do not participate in rituals, they experience a social boundary and know themselves to be in some sense outsiders. This sense of being outside may evoke, among other feelings, a sense of relief that one is not a part of a group or community, yearning for membership, loneliness, disgust or repulsion, curiosity, confusion, or awe. For example, in some communities, a recently deceased person is washed by family members and prepared for burial. Persons unfamiliar with this practice may see it as repulsive and disrespectful. Regardless of how the outsider responds, knowing that he stands on the outside speaks to the communicative power of ritual. Rituals declare boundaries and mark individuals off from one another – they draw lines in the map of social geography. Because of this power, it should be of greater importance to

philosophers, who strive to understand human reasoning, interaction and so on. Moreover, rituals define boundaries in unspoken ways, they establish, reinforce, or remind us of divisions and differences. As such, rituals are an important element of the social world, an important way in which people understand themselves as part of and apart from others, and hence should be the focus of greater philosophical consideration.

2.7 Conclusion

Rituals, from the implicit to the explicit, from the informal to the formal, from the secular to the sacred, from the public to the private, are performative acts. They both create and enforce social reality for those engaged in them and those who stand outside them in four principal ways. First, they create and sustain a web of social bonds by establishing and reinforcing expectations, relationships and roles. Second, rituals play an important role in maintaining stability and harmony by creating and sustaining social structures. Third, rituals mark people as members of specific groups and they enable individuals to understand themselves as being part of some groups and as being excluded from others. Rituals demarcate the social geography of the world and the boundaries that separate us from one another. One who observes a ritual of which he is not a part clearly senses his otherness. Finally, rituals disclose the significance and meaning of time and of significant life events.

We should recognize not only the power of ritual but be acutely aware of the fragility of ritual, i.e., the extent to which even well-established rituals can be disturbed and even lost. Rituals communicate meaning and reflect and perpetuate commitments or beliefs. As those underlying commitments or beliefs erode, we expect the practice of rituals associated with those commitments and beliefs to decline. This relationship between ritual behavior and particular commitments and beliefs suggests that a failure to engage in ritual practices, a weakening of ritual, may not only reflect a weakened appreciation of particular commitments and beliefs but also may contribute to the erosion of those commitments and beliefs. If the practice of rituals is weakened, for example, because they are seen as too time-consuming, then over time we may expect that even those who lament the loss of ritual and who aim to uphold traditions may eventually find that their commitments and beliefs have changed. Loss of commitment can lead to loss of ritual, and loss of ritual can erode traditional commitments. Many chapters in this volume address the practice of Confucian rituals in China and lament the circumstance that many Chinese no longer participate regularly in Confucian rituals. This decline in ritual practice reflects and perpetuates a changed way of life, which many see as detrimental.

Ritual is an important mechanism for maintaining ways of life, customs, traditional relationships, and established understandings of duty, virtue and morality. The loss of ritual is the loss of the social world known and sustained through ritual. Because rituals can be so central to maintaining a particular

social order, we should expect that those who wish to change the social order will not only abandon specific rituals but attack them so that the old order might be erased. This happened not only in China but in other regimes, such as the USSR and Cuba, where rules aimed to destroy the previous social order by, among other things, intimidating persons who participated in religious rituals, forbidding various religious practices, and confiscating church property. These same rulers who understood the power of rituals and hence worked to eliminate old rituals often established new rituals to create and sustain a new social order. For example, in Cuba, Fidel Castro routinely held public rallies, participation in which is mandatory, where children (the Pioneers) wear uniforms and chant support for their ruler.

In other cases, rituals are altered or abandoned not out of hostility but as a result of apathy. As new ways of life seep into a culture, attention to the practice of traditional rituals may be lost. Such rituals may be seen as too time-consuming, or perhaps they require the presence of family members who have moved to far away cities. Imagine a contemporary family in the United States. John plays soccer and sometimes has games on Sunday mornings. Sarah is a gymnast and sometimes has competitions several hours away on Sunday afternoons. If the family allows these activities to interfere with church attendance, they might find over time that they rarely if ever attend church. Over time, the family no longer participates in the rituals of their faith and the children will grow up without learning the rituals or learning from the rituals. This loss of ritual reflects the loss of a way of life.

Insofar as we are concerned with maintaining traditional ways of life, commitments and beliefs, we should recognize the importance of protecting the integrity of rituals through the regular practice of rituals. We must guard against the danger of apathy, and antipathy should be guarded against if traditional cultures are to flourish. The important role ritual can play in transmitting meaning and maintaining traditional cultures should not be under-estimated.

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Chapter 3
Ritual, Virtue, and Human Flourishing: Rites as Bearers of Meaning

H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr

3.1 Taking Ritual Seriously: The Philosophical Anthropology of *Homo Ritualis*

Ritual unites and it divides. In doing so, it sustains and directs. Rituals draw boundaries. Rituals affirm community and mark social differences. Ritual frames human life. Ritual is a core category of being in the world. Ritual is ubiquitous, but also often unnoticed. Nevertheless, the role of ritual in articulating a lifeworld, in sustaining and renewing culture, as well as in directing moral deportment, is relatively uncharted in the philosophical literature.[1] Most have placed ritual within anthropological, sociological, and psychological approaches that have generally ignored the implications of ritual for moral philosophy, metaphysics, and cultural development (Frazer, 1951; Geertz, 1973; Girard, 1977; Grimes, 1982; Panikkar, 1973). Accounts tend to be more descriptive than normative.

This essay explores the central but philosophically under-examined dimension of ritual as cardinal to morality, human flourishing, virtue, and, more generally, to the rightly-ordered life of a culture. Ritual is one of the foundations of virtue. A philosophical analysis of the roles of ritual in the moral life is undertaken, with special accent on ritual as the scaffolding of virtue and culture. Attention is given to how different categories of ritual in different fashions nurture virtue and support a culture. The role of ritual for orientation

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[1] Among the few exceptions is Schilbrack (2004).

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to ultimate meaning is also noted (e.g., religious rituals). Because different systems of ritual are tied to different and competing cultural frameworks, the culture wars (political, social, and cultural struggles to define the public space) manifest themselves in ritual wars (e.g., cultural struggles about the place of prayer in the public space and with respect to the significance of attempts at homosexual marriage). The culture wars are in great measure about which rituals should define public interactions and the public space.

Rituals can reach beyond a particular time and beyond a local community. Rituals expand the present into the past and to the future. Through the ceremonial commemoration of historical events (e.g., Passover, Pentecost, and Texas' Independence Day [March 2, 1836]), through an appreciation of times and seasons (e.g., New Year's celebrations), and through the anticipation of future tasks (e.g., the ceremonial opening of Parliament), participants in rituals live a common reality that unites them with that which was and that which will be. Ritual functions as a primary source of education concerning the metaphysical, moral, and social commitments of a culture (e.g., the celebration of Christmas). In addition, rituals are performative acts. Rituals create social roles (e.g., the swearing-in of a governor), and embed persons in socially established roles (e.g., through a marriage ceremony rendering a man and a woman into husband and wife). They emphasize the appropriate scope of particular social roles (e.g., the Chinese capping ceremony marking and establishing adulthood, or the bar mitzvah marking and establishing a boy's having achieved the full ritual obligations of a Jewish man). Rituals when rightly ordered sustain the moral life.

Rituals can also be broken, misdirected, and poorly functioning. But there are always rituals. There are even rituals that are perversely directed to an anti-meaning, indeed to radical evil. There are black masses; there are ceremonies meant to undo virtue, initiate false virtues, and affirm evil (e.g., satanic rituals and initiations into street gangs). Such rituals should not be confused with those that negate a false claim in order to establish or restore right relationship and right order. Examples of the latter are rituals of conversion. Thus, the Orthodox Church has various rituals for receiving converts that involve rejecting previous, misdirected religious commitments. "Dost thou renounce the erroneous belief of those who think that the Pope of Rome is superior to the Oecumenical Councils, and infallible in faith, notwithstanding the fact that several of the Popes have been heretics, and condemned as such by the Councils?" (Hapgood, 1983, p. 456). Indeed, all baptisms begin with the catechumen or the godfather on behalf of the catechumen renouncing Satan, ritually underscored by spitting three times to the west. Nor should perverse rituals or rituals directed towards evil be confused with rituals that undo a positive social order in order to recognize that the social order is broken, as when a judge declares a couple divorced. There are as well curses and antinomian rituals that with malice aforethought bring meaning into question, as in Hemingway's anti-Our Father: "Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name" (Hemingway, 1998, p. 291). Rituals have a power that can support the right, the good, and the virtuous, or

instead empower that which is wrong, harmful, vicious, and indeed evil, as when there are rituals that from the insight of traditionalists are recognized as both without effect and wrongly directed (e.g., rituals of homosexual marriage and the Episcopalian ordination of priestesses). Disputes regarding the right and wrong character of rituals often reflect profound disagreements concerning the human condition, the nature of virtuous conduct, and the character of human flourishing.

What then are rituals? For the purpose of this essay, a ritual is understood as a set of routinized bodily movements, possibly but not necessarily including sounds, constituting an action that is repeated and that conveys, and is meant to convey, meaning. Rituals are shorthand summaries, recognitions, and instantiations of complex fabrics of commitment and purpose. Mere routines are not rituals (e.g., washing one's hands for hygienic purposes before a meal, although such can take on a ritual force). Although rituals involve routines rich in tacit knowledge, not all routines rich in tacit knowledge are rituals. Nonetheless, all human actions are proto-ritualistic: they can be given a ritual significance. It is at least the symbolic character of rituals that distinguishes rituals from mere routines. Human actions are shaped by and carry with them fabrics of moral and metaphysical meaning. Because the human environment is cultural and because humans are symbol-users who live in complex seas of symbolic meaning, humans must be clear about their relation to the meaning of the symbols they engage. Humans through rituals render symbols incarnate and chart their place over against the often competing symbols, moral commitments, and metaphysical understandings that attempt to define the human cultural environment. Not only is language rich in symbols and meanings, but so, too, is human behavior. The symbol-rich character of human behavior can through rituals be placed within a nexus of behavioral norms and understandings of the cosmos, often expressed in rules for deportment, norms for polite interchange, and in customary and ceremonial usages. Rituals include all ceremonial acts, as well as behavioral etiquette.

In everyday life, rituals are largely pre-discursive. Images, ideas, ways of feeling, and styles of thinking are impressed on, and ingredient in, patterned (ritualized) activity, thus condensing and referencing intricate geographies of meanings (e.g., the order of a military parade) and civility (e.g., routines for greeting). Rituals have a contingency unlike the norms claimed by the proponents of natural law. They lack the reflective character of a Western Christian natural theology, although they can support a reflection on the cardinal roles of religious ritual. Ritual behavior is an epiphany of man's incarnate, symbol-creating nature, where symbols are understood as partially iconic signs that usually take shape under the impress of history and context. Most significantly, rituals have moral significance in affirming that which is morally normative (e.g., through blessings) and in creating morally endorsed structures (e.g., marriage ceremonies). Rituals in enacting or embodying values and moral commitments can serve as an induction into a life of virtue (e.g., rituals that show respect of parents can instill filial piety). However, contemporary

philosophical explorations of morality devote little attention to the place and the significance of ritual, especially ceremonial behavior. This major dimension of the embodied character and life of human values and of the symbolic character of human interaction is largely discounted. There is no developed philosophy of ritual, though there is theology of ritual in the sense of liturgical theology, an enterprise quite different from natural theology (Fagerberg, 2004; Schmemann, 1986).[2] Ritual is not generally appreciated as embodying commitments, which if rightly ordered nurture virtue, and if wrongly ordered nurture vice.

This study proceeds by first exploring the conceptual geography of ritual action. In the following section, this task is further engaged through examining the linguistic complexity of concerns with ritual through comparing key terms bearing on ritual in Chinese and in English. The diversity of the roles of ritual is the focus of Section 3.3, while Section 3.4 explores how ritual provides the cement for communal activities through functioning as the scaffolding of a rightly-ordered culture in identifying, affirming, and integrating the good, the right, and the virtuous. Section 3.5 places ritual within the context of religious rites and ceremonies. It examines why religious concerns are of cardinal importance: rituals can locate the good, the right, and the virtuous in terms of the holy so as to offer orientation to ultimate meaning. Rituals function for orientation within the cosmos. The essay concludes with a brief reflection on the importance of maintaining and re-establishing rightly-ordered rituals for the preservation and renewal of culture. The challenge of defining rightly-ordered behavior, including rightly-ordered rituals, lies at the root of the moral and cultural conflicts that drive the contemporary culture wars. Because competing understandings of rightly-ordered rituals reflect competing understandings of morality and human flourishing, the culture wars express themselves in ritual wars, disputes over which rituals should define the public space.

3.2 *Li* and *Li*, Rite and Right

The unclarity of the intension and extension of the term ritual is reflected in the strategic ambiguity of both the Chinese and English semantics of ritual. The Chinese concept of *li*, for example, carries with it a rich framework of concerns, including "religious rites, ceremony, deportment, decorum, propriety, formality, politeness, courtesy, etiquette, good form, good behavior, [and] good manners" (Dubs, 1927, p. 113n). The meaning is both general and particular. *Li* identifies a category of action as well as specific activities. In the latter case, *li*

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[2] Natural theology developed at the beginning of the second millennium as an attempt to demonstrate the existence and explore the nature of God through discursive reflection apart from divine revelation. Liturgical theology involves a reflection on the character, function, and power of liturgical actions, religious ritual, primarily the Divine Liturgy (Engelhardt, 2005).

refs to particular undertakings such as the *li* of mourning, the *li* of sacrifices, the *li* of manners, so as to include concerns that compass law, morality, religion, and social institutions generally. *Li* as ceremonial usage, which is apparently the root of all meanings of *li*, has its likely origin and roots in religious observances, especially sacrifices to spirits (Cua, 2002). Its scope is broad; *li* ranges over family, community, study, state, and dynasty. Or to put matters slightly differently, *li* includes concerns with law, religion, military matters, politics, ethics, rules of propriety, and ceremonial etiquette.

Li as ritual gains an added scope of meaning because of association with its homophone *li* (which is written with a different Chinese character), which designates good order, and with the somewhat similar-sounding word *yi*, which designates rightness or fittingness. The heuristic ambiguity engendered by the homophonic connection between the two senses of *li* suggests a tie between well-ordered behavior and ritual as well as the ritual character of good order. On the one hand, there is the implication of the reasonableness of ritual: ritual provides a rich shorthand that summarizes clusters of reasons or grounds for common activity. On the other hand, there is an appreciation that a well-ordered individual and communal life requires a web of ritual-supported, mutual acknowledgements. For example, formal philosophical lectures, debates, and disputations are undertaken within stylized formats that announce a web of established relationships and common understandings among the participants, thus allowing relatively harmonious interactions. Ritual is a form of reasonableness, rightness, and propriety. Ceremony establishes what is well-ordered and fitting. Ritual in the Chinese cultural context is multivalent and nuanced.

The Indo-European term "ritual" is itself rich in meaning. The English term ritual is derived from the Latin *ritual* and enjoys the Latin term's rich ambiguity in compassing religious rites (i.e., the formal procedures that structure religious observances), solemn secular offices, customs, and certain formal practices. *Ritual* in turn is grounded in the Latin noun *ritus*, whose meanings span from forms of religious ceremonies to customs and accepted usages, to norms of appropriate behavior. The Latin *ritus* for its part is the source of the Latin adverb *rite*, which identifies acting according to the requirements of religious ceremonies, as well as in a well-ordered manner. As already noted, the English word rite is a homophone of the English right as that which is proper to do, right as that which is legally required, and right as that which is morally obligatory, as well as right as opposed to left, that is, to that which is sinistral, and by association sinister. Because both rite and right focus on proper, rightly-directed action, they are related by important cognate meanings. For example, acting ritely identifies acting with appropriate form, while acting rightly identifies action in a proper manner. These complex meanings may have common roots at the origin of Indo-European languages.

Beyond or behind these semantic relationships, there is an insight shared by both Chinese and English usages that recognizes the interconnection between acting rightly and acting within and through appropriately structured rites. Just

as the right sets constraints on the pursuit of the good, appropriate rites set constraints on, and supply direction for, the pursuit of the good and the virtuous (e.g., marriage sets sexuality and reproduction within a structure of mutual obligations between spouses and to their children). Ritual declares and nurtures the right harmony among human concerns required in order to realize the goods of life and community and to achieve virtue (e.g., by established webs of rules and expectations binding parents and children, teachers and students). Ritual nurtures rightly-ordered intentions (e.g., the mutual exchange of brotherly kisses as a greeting) and develops a rightly-ordered attention to duty (e.g., a soldier's saluting his officer), thereby fostering virtue. That which is right to do and fitting to accomplish is that to which rightly-ordered rituals aim. That is, rightly-ordered ceremonies or patterned behaviors aim at that which is right and proper. The richness of the etymological fabric in Chinese and English heuristically points to an underlying social, moral, and metaphysical unity through which ritual supports that which is right, and that which is right presupposes a fabric of rituals.

The appreciation of ritual in Europe and North America is nevertheless frequently encumbered by influences from low-church Protestantism and from Kantian Enlightenment sentiments that have attempted to give Scripture or reason a radical priority over ritual. Both involve a reaction against the role of ritual in Roman Catholicism.[3] Both have attempted to discount ritual and to establish either more authentic or more "rational" ritual practices. Ritual may even be seen (given low-church influences) as inauthentic or as diverting from pursuit of the truth. These approaches tend to regard traditional rituals as in need of reformation or deflation in the light of critical reflection, individual responsibility, and rational choice. As a result, in the shadow of these understandings ritual is often considered mere ritual, mere hollow observance, such that ritual behavior may be judged as lacking in appropriate commitment. In these contexts, ritual has taken on a negative connotation in the West for some. So, too, the capacity of rituals to habituate moral commitments and conduct so as to direct them within the constraints of traditional ways of life is taken improperly to undermine critical reflection, personal autonomy, and proper authenticity. Such attitudes to rituals fail appropriately to recognize their capacity to nest meaning and to nurture virtue.

3.3 The Multi-dimensional Character of Ritual

Rituals relate humans to nature (e.g., the stylized prefatory activities of the formal German hunt; the blessing of fishing vessels), humans to each other (e.g., rituals of marriage and the conferral of citizenship), humans to spirits

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[3] Immanuel Kant spoke against all the ceremonies of religious worship. 2 blue Quotes on p. 106, AK VI.116.

(e.g., rites of exorcism), and humans to God (e.g., the Divine Liturgy). Rituals relate humans within families (e.g., a Southern child refers to his father as sir and his mother as ma'am) and within social organizations (e.g., a layman asking for the blessing of a priest). Rituals bring with them and sustain a rich set of values and theory-laden understandings to human interactions with nature, humans, spirits, and God. Rightly-ordered rituals exist to address all of reality, such as when setting aside relationships to evil spirits and reclaiming reality within the domain of the holy (e.g., one of the widely used Orthodox Christian pocket prayer books in English includes a ritual for the priest to bless any object; "The Blessing of Any Object," in *A Pocket Prayer Book*, 1999, pp. 118–119). Rituals give structure, meaning, force, purpose, and direction to human actions, solidify human relationships, and if appropriately ordered can cultivate virtue and undermine vice.

Rituals are expressive, evocative, performative, educative, and transformative. First and foremost, rituals, especially through their ceremonial character, express a view of reality, values, and social relationships: they declare a taken-for-granted geography or web of metaphysical, axiological, and social structures or relationships (e.g., the interaction of clergymen in an Orthodox Christian Liturgy). Second, rituals are also evocative of attitudes, commitments, judgments, feelings, and forms of behavior: they invite participants to act and feel in accordance with a particular geography of metaphysical, axiological, and social realities (e.g., the ceremony of pledging allegiance to the American flag is meant to inculcate patriotism and have its participants live in accord with a set of patriotic attitudes). Third, rituals are socially performative: they create a social reality that realizes a particular view of reality, a particular ranking of values and right-making conditions, and a particular enveloping fabric of social relations (e.g., the sheriff places an individual in a social-legal category by stating, "You are under arrest"). Fourth, rituals educate and train: they provide information and show participants how to act in accordance with, and in acceptance of, particular understandings of metaphysical, moral, social, and political reality (e.g., the ceremonial recollection of past events, as in the Passover service). Rituals can habituate to a way of life and can aid in teaching, indeed in living virtue. Fifth, some rituals are also transformative of reality. They are transubstantiating in changing the metaphysical character of what they address. Rituals do not simply create social reality and educate concerning reality, but they in some cases transform the nature of things (e.g., baptism and the Eucharist). Rituals orient their participants, engage their participants, shape social reality, educate concerning reality, convey political standing, and at times transform the very character of reality.

Examples of rituals include weddings, naming children, baptizing converts, shaking hands, voting in elections, inaugurating heads of state, anointing sovereigns, installing presidents of a university, and ordaining priests. Rituals include as well giving baby showers, churching mothers, circumcising sons, blessing houses, hosting going-away parties, exorcising the possessed, saluting

the flag, a hotel doorman's bowing to guests, holding retirement parties, conducting funerals, and burying the dead. Rituals vary in the depth and scope of the participants' involvement, as well as in the extent to which rituals carry with them a thick and all-encompassing life-world of meaning. Rituals recognize, establish, and support mutual commitments through binding their participants within and through ceremonial and quasi-ceremonial behaviors (e.g., Christmas parties given by an employer). By their stylized character, rituals evoke mutual commitments, affirm a common experience of reality, sustain an experience of interconnection while directing and educating human passions and feelings. Some rituals through their very rigor (e.g., an extended military parade or an all-night vigil in Orthodox Christian monasteries) involve human exertion, focus, and dedication, thus binding the participants in the experience of a formative common struggle. Within a life-world of meaning, co-ritualists share understandings, recognize social boundaries, express affection, and affirm a shared community.

Rituals disclose community by announcing borders, moral, social, and political. Rituals bind moral/metaphysical friends (e.g., by determining who may participate in a ceremony, as with closed Communion). They separate moral/metaphysical strangers. Rituals indicate where community does and does not exist. Rituals announce boundaries. The character of a ritual acknowledges the importance of some differences and the relative triviality of other differences (e.g., persons of all ancestry who are non-excommunicated Orthodox Christians may enter fully into the celebration of the Liturgy so that kings and slaves of all races can join together, while their heterodox kinfolk may be asked to leave: water is thicker than blood[4]). To be fully a member of one all-encompassing community is usually not to be fully a member in the same fashion of other communities, especially of other all-encompassing communities. Rituals sustain and announce the social geographies within communities (e.g., a gentleman opens a door for a lady) and between communities (e.g., a monk asks a heterodox to leave the nave and stand on the sinners' porch during the Liturgy of the Faithful). Rituals serve as maps and signposts of communal boundaries and expectations.

Rituals are usually nested within social practices (e.g., practices for the greeting of friends) sustained by institutions and lodged within communities (e.g., the character of the bow or of the embrace, or as in the Orthodox Church with its particular practices of greeting, such as exchanging two or three kisses),

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[4] Orthodox Christianity's ritual of baptism illustrates the socially performative and metaphysically transformative power of ritual. For this reason, water is thicker than blood. That is, the bonds created by water, by the waters of baptism, are recognized to be socially and ontologically thicker than those established by blood, by kinship. This is the case because the bonds of the waters of baptism among other things allow an individual and communal turn to, and participation in, salvation. The power of the baptism ritual is thus recognized to be more significant than the more transient bonds of physical, blood relationships. Beyond that, baptism is recognized as metaphysically transforming the person baptized.

through which communities experience themselves, their boundaries, and their commitments. Personal relationships, framed by rituals, sustain the narrative of a community's history, a set of expectations regarding the possibilities of moral, empirical, and scientific, and metaphysical knowledge, a cluster of understandings regarding the nature of reality, an axiology that affirms a particular understanding of the meaning of the good, the right, the virtuous, and the holy (and which endorses a particular orientation to the good, the right, the virtuous, and the holy), a taken-for-granted appreciation of who counts as exemplar knowers and rightly-ordered agents, as well as what should count as cardinal examples of knowledge and right action. Rituals focus, maintain, and nurture rich fabrics of meaning.

3.4 Ritual as the Scaffolding of Culture and Virtue

Words alone can never be enough. Because humans have complex concerns regarding reality's deep structure, the character of proper action, and the nature of appropriate social relations, it is usually impossible exhaustively to express in words all that is at stake and to be communicated in relationships and commitments. Rituals integrate movements, circumstances, words, and often costume in order to condense and/or to summarize in incarnate fashion a complex fabric of meaning. As a result, ritual activities carry with them and render embodied thick, intricate messages communicated via intertwining images, ideas, ways of feeling, styles of thinking, spoken words, and patterns of bodily movement. Ritualized behavior provides a solution to the challenge of succinctly communicating, sustaining, and nurturing a web of metaphysical, moral, social, and political commitments. Through stylized activity, ritual orients the participants to the meaning of reality, to the nature of values, to the character of social structures, to the importance of particular social relationships, and to the rightly-ordered character of political relationships. As a result, depending on its character, ritual behavior can either support, strengthen, or undermine (i.e., through being wrongly directed) the life of a culture (e.g., exclusion or inclusion in formal events of couples living together without the benefit of marriage has broad implications for the ceremonial integration of sexuality, reproduction, and family structure).

Preserving a culture and maintaining its coherence requires commonly recognizing the structures appropriate for a well-ordered, moral, social, and political life. Rituals endorse a culture's understanding of the correct ordering of values and goals, as well as the appropriate means for the preservation of cardinal human social relationships (e.g., the bonds between husbands and wives; parents and their children), the realization of virtue, the achievement of proper political structures, and the achievement of human flourishing. Rituals allow comprehensive common commitments to be made (e.g., through a marriage ceremony) whose impact on the participants only become fully manifest explicitly and concretely over time (e.g., when one marries, one is unlikely

concretely to envisage all the duties involved in being a parent and then a grandparent). The difficulty is that post-traditional humans are largely shorn of many of the ritual behaviors that bind husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and students, communities and individuals, and polities and citizens, as well as creatures to God. Since ritual orients to reality, a weakening of ritual, or a failure of ritual to have its proper compass and character can leave persons disoriented in moral, social, and political reality, as well as in reality generally, so that they become morally, socially, and politically rootless (i.e., they are people of no particular moral commitments, community life, or patriotic concerns), if not lost in the cosmos. Without a coherence of ritual, persons lack a coherent view of the meaning of their lives. They may be unclear as to who should show deference to whom, under what circumstances, and how (e.g., should a wife assert equal authority with her husband, or should "wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord...[so that] a wife should respect [*phobitae*] her husband" [Ephesians 5:22,33]. Should children insist on being treated as equals with their parents?), so that their relationships are marked by controversy and struggle between competing moral, social, and micro-political understandings. Conflicting views regarding cardinal rituals are expressed in controversies concerning appropriate marriage ceremonies, the proper reverence due on the part of children to parents, and the correct bearing of subjects to sovereigns.

A diminished appreciation of ritual as well as conflicts regarding the appropriate character of rituals (e.g., should children refer to their parents through forms of polite familial address; should they address their parents by the parents' first names) may lie at the root of the fragility of many contemporary interpersonal relationships and the weakness of contemporary social structures (e.g., the family) intermediate between individuals and the state. The buttressing function of common ritual is largely in disarray. This loss of the coherence of ritually sustained structures may also be the source of a growing anomie in some areas of society: persons increasingly living alone within ever more anonymous, impersonal cultural structures and without an affirming connection with others. Many individuals are no longer nested within and oriented through a web of ceremonial actions that can aid in sustaining a robust experience of mutual commitments and community. The stability of marriage as an institution, of families, communities, and societies in the 21st century will likely depend on the capacity of cultures to maintain communities that support practices that nurture rightly-ordered rituals so as in turn to engage and nurture the presence and experience of mutual commitment and community.

By cultivating a way of life replete with its ordering of values and its understanding of the empirical character of the world, as well as its account of the deep structures of reality, rituals bring people into a common lifeworld and sustain its integrity. Some cardinal rituals have the character of explicitly ceremonial actions binding persons together (e.g., marriage ceremonies). Others, like shaking hands, or even greeting all fellow customers when entering and leaving a restaurant (a ritual still generally observed in parts of Germany)

have less of a salient ceremonial nature but nevertheless bind persons together in social relationships. Through rituals that announce differences in roles and in authority, a complex web of taken-for-granted social expectations is implicitly accepted, acknowledging spheres of intimacy and gulfs of social distance. Such webs of ritually announced expectations and interrelationships support fabrics of social relations and roles around which and through which human interactions can occur with greater harmony and can possess greater endurance. Both explicitly ceremonial rituals and informal conventions, by announcing roles, relations, and expectations, aid in diminishing conflicts by avoiding explicit negotiations regarding the social relations at stake. For example, the informal manners and protocols of a corporation help to sustain its established chains of authority. Even the mere order of shaking hands during introductions concedes a certain community, thereby supporting harmony and mutual collaboration. Rituals supply cultural scaffolding by supporting the moral, social, and political habits, relations, and understandings that moderate points of conflict and encourage community.

Rituals provide cement for human relationships (e.g., the giving of gifts at birthday parties). Rituals support moral commitments by bringing them into action (e.g., a gentleman extending his hand to a lady exiting a taxi). Rituals are like a moral ballet (e.g., a sheriff with his mounted posse riding in the opening parade at a rodeo). Rituals are incarnate lectures about metaphysics, morality, and graceful deportment danced out in the ordinary and extraordinary contexts of life. On the one hand, ritual is ubiquitous: ritual forms a general support for human interaction. On the other hand, ritual behavior must be nurtured to have strength and give moral direction. At the simplest level, rituals must be engaged in order to support sustaining webs of values, mutual respect, and decorum so as to maintain a fabric of civility (e.g., the arrangement and use of cutlery at a meal). Ritual is ingredient to the refinement which the ancients described as the realization and celebration of that which is most truly human: *philanthropia* (Jaeger, 1943–1945). Rituals when fully and rightly engaged nurture the flourishing of the *humanissimus vir* (Haffter, 1983), the sage, the wise man, the *phronemos*, and even the saint (i.e., the behavior of such persons establishes the canons of both rightly- as well as ritely-ordered action). Such persons, in showing the possibility and significance of virtue or holiness, help nurture virtue and enable human flourishing and direct towards the transcendent.

Rituals evoke the feeling of, declare the presence of, lay out the structure of, and maintain the experience of mutual commitment, community, polity, and culture. Core to an adequate philosophical anthropology should be the recognition that ritual activities, ceremonial usages, and forms of etiquette, including genteel manners (Anderson, 1996), are essential to the symbolic framework that supports a culture and its moral life. Mores embedded in ritual give flesh to a culture in that rituals remind the participants of their moral, social, political, religious, and aesthetic ideals, as well as of their mutual commitments and relationships. Because rituals can connect values and sustain commitments to

virtue by rendering incarnate the ideals of human interconnection (e.g., the mutual and differential respect of husbands and wives), rituals can renew and sustain the moral life within a culture. When embedded in a culturally structured appreciation of time and place, rituals emphasize a culture's experience of the rich meaning of seasons (e.g., spring festivals), history (e.g., the ceremonial remembrance of battles won as with San Jacinto Day April 21 [the battle that achieved Texas Independence in 1836]), and feasts (e.g., a meal on Thanksgiving Day), while recognizing certain spaces as holy and revered (e.g., tombs of unknown soldiers that receive a perpetual honor guard), and others as profane (e.g., the injunction to catechumens to spit to the west).

Those who live within moral communities robustly framed by ritual find themselves throughout every day related through ritual behaviors (e.g., morning, noon and evening prayers) to the location of their own projects (e.g., their lives receive a ritually mediated integration and orientation), with those around them (e.g., their relations to others are interpreted and in many cases affirmed), and to reality in general (e.g., through religious rituals). Those who live in thickly ritually-shaped life-worlds are never alone, because rituals bind participants in common action with co-ritualists over time and over space, through history and across distances (e.g., rituals for the remembrance of the dead, such as lighting a candle while praying for one's dead family members). In this case, rituals support the institution of marriage. They sustain the character of families, communities, and cultures over generations. Participants in such webs of ritual experience the thickness and character of mutual commitment, not just the presence of community. Persons embedded in such matrices of ritual tend not to have a feeling of social anomie, though they also tend not to experience a sense of capricious freedom in their social choices. They live in a robustly framed, supported, directed, and defended social contexts.

On the other hand, those not nested in thick sets of ritually-framed expectations that can locate them within highly-determined metaphysical, axiological, and social fabrics of interconnections will to various degrees not experience a thickly orienting envelope of meaning or a set of communal expectations guiding their lives. They seek the seeming freedom of thinner bonds and thinner rituals, preferring to have informal bonds to partners rather than to enter into marriage. The result is a contrast of life-worlds, a conflict of cultures, an incompatibility of rituals for those living outside of a thickly ritualized life when they encounter someone living within a thickly ritual-sustained community (e.g., if a fellow-traveler on a plane crosses himself on take-off and landing, this may seem to those outside of ritual-rich communities to be an improper intrusion into a "neutral" public space). Those who are not immersed in a thick web of mutual commitments and understandings may often experience themselves as disconnected from others (e.g., never receiving Christmas or birthday greetings from friends and relatives), as lacking community, as well as innocent of a sense of the larger purpose and the meaning of things. Such persons may find themselves left without direction, disoriented if not socially isolated, and marked by feelings of anomie. The class of such individuals may be considerable, in that increasingly

residents of large cities, especially in Europe, live alone. Yet, such persons may also experience a sense of freedom, a liberation from restraints, and a strong sense of having fashioned their own self-identity and having personally achieved their individual life projects. They will consider themselves to be self-made men, as having done things their way. In their aloneness, some may relish the stark character of their isolation, the courage of a life lived in the face of apparent ultimate meaninglessness. Others may with time recognize their situation as socially, morally, and metaphysically impoverished.

Because rituals sustain structures of meaning and initiate persons into webs of commitment, an appreciation of ritual is central to understanding better the possibilities in the 21st century of communal engagement versus isolated individual self-determination. Rituals aid in overcoming an individualism born of the Enlightenment assumption that humans can and should think of themselves first and foremost as free and equal persons, as self-legislating agents, able to construct and sustain relationships as well as communities when and where they choose. The persistence of traditional rituals discloses the possibility for maintaining social structures such as traditional families (e.g., families assembling for meals on Christmas, Pascha, and Thanksgiving). The abandonment of rituals discloses the possibility of liberation from constraining communal assumptions and viewpoints (e.g., in the 19th-century the French no longer greeted another as "citizen", or those after the fall of the Soviet regime abandoning the greeting "comrade").

The notion that one can freely alter or invent rituals as one pleases allows a place for creativity. However, this view despoils ritual of the opportunity to carry into the present the rich heritage of the past. It takes from ritual the capacity to connect past and future by undermining a sense of enduring commitment and stability. An appreciation of the gulf between the life-world of traditional and post-traditional communities, and between traditional versus post-traditional senses of ritual, requires a recognition of the differences between those thought communities where there is a salience of communal meaning, purpose, and orientation that reaches over generations, versus those where there is, if not a salience of anomie, a sense of disorientation, and loss of meaning, then at least an attenuation of the claims of the past and sense of the priority of the present.

Although traditionalists may embrace radically different rituals and understandings of reality, and may be separated by disagreements as to how those rituals should be structured, they may nevertheless share a communality of commitment to certain human relationships (e.g., marriage as only being between a man and a woman) and to a continuity with the past (e.g., Jews celebrating Passover and Christians celebrating Pascha). While traditionalists may be separated by different understandings of marriage, they may all share a sense of the importance and continuity of the institution of marriage, as between a man and a woman and set within social obligations which bind generations even though marriage means different things to those in different communities. In contrast, post-traditionalists of various sorts may argue in favor of new rituals along with the social bonds they promise to sustain (e.g., endorsing civil rituals for placing couples in registered partnerships in lieu of fully traditional marriage ceremonies

whatever those in a particular culture may be, marriage ceremonies for homo-sexual couples, etc.). The passion for the post-traditional, against established rituals that bind generations, engenders a passion against the traditional. One might also note the often strident reactions on the part of the post-traditionalists within Roman Catholicism against attempts to restore the more traditional Latin form of their Western liturgy, the Tridentine Mass. In all of this, it is worth underscoring that traditional ritualized relationships bind the present with the past. They possess the benefit of having survived generations of challenges, thus establishing traditional rituals as prima facie possessing social and perhaps also biological survival value. An indication of the latter circumstance is the higher birthrate within traditional moral communities (Longman, 2004a, b). The survival strength of particular webs of ritually maintained communal commitments must be better understood. A better appreciation of ritual should offer a more complete account of the social mechanisms likely to maintain the mutual commitments needed to sustain social structures such as families, as well as the communities they constitute and the cultures they support.

3.5 Why Rightly-Ordered Worship Is the Cardinal Ritual

At the origin and core of ritual is the domain of religious ceremony, in particular Divine worship. In different cultures, different points in the human journey from birth through burial and the remembrance of the dead are marked by exorcisms, blessings, and invocations of the Divine. These rituals locate human community and indeed all concerns about the good, the right, and the virtuous within a cosmic context. How these rituals are framed, engaged, and understood depends on one's recognition of the power and nature of the Divine. Indeed, the more one acknowledges the existence of the personal, transcendent Creator God, the more it should become clear that the cardinal act of orientation in the cosmos is Divine worship. Insofar as one recognizes God's existence, and recognizes God as being personal, omnipotent, omniscient, and concerned for His creatures, then to that extent to be rightly oriented in the cosmos and in history is to be rightly related to the personal God in terms of Whom alone one's creaturely status can be ade-quately appreciated (indeed, the notion of "orientation" derives from Christians facing east in prayer, thus recalling the sun rising early on the morning of Christ's Resurrection). The point is to note the implications of ritual framed within the presence of ultimate personal meaning in contrast with ritual that ignores such meaning. To be confronted with the existence of a personal, omniscient, omni-potent God is to be confronted by a Being in terms of Whom all creation as His creation must be understood and Who merits one's primary personal attention, and to Whom above all else one ought to be rightly and ritely oriented.

It is for this reason that Christians recognize that the ritual of rituals is the Divine Liturgy, the primary corporate act of rational creatures joining in worship of, and thereby orientation to, their Creator and Judge. As the appointed and appropriate interaction between God and man, the Liturgy is

the rightly-directed act of orientation for all theology. It is the core of theology (Engelhardt, 2005; Fagerberg, 2004; Schmemann, 1986). Liturgy is the work of appreciating the relationship of God and man (Engelhardt, 2000, pp. 157–231). In the praxis of rightly-ordered ritual, one moves towards theoria, towards experience God's presence. For this reason the Liturgy, along with its Typikon (i.e., the ancient rubrics for the ritual), constitutes one of the primary creedal statements of the Orthodox Church.[5] This place of the Typikon involves acknowledgement of the importance of the motions and words of incarnate creatures in their relationship to the Divine. Because of the rich significance of the Liturgy, it has been the focus of numerous commentaries, including that of St. Germanus of Constantinople (†733) (Germanus, 1999), and Nicholas Cabasilas (14th century) (Cabasilas, 2002). Moreover, the Liturgy not only instructs and orients, it opens the heart (the nous) to a theological knowledge that is empirical, albeit noetic. The ritual of the Divine Liturgy is the cardinal act of orientation in the cosmos, because it rightly orders creatures to their ultimate origin and goal. It brings them to experience their creation and their Redeemer (i.e., God) in a way that provides a foretaste of the eternal heavenly liturgy (Revelations 4–5).

One can express this Christian knowledge regarding ritual in natural-theological terms. Here natural theology is used not in the Schoolman sense born of the Western Middle Ages, but as a reflection on how humans can in general can come to appreciate the cardinal, prayerful relation of creatures to their Creator. What is invoked is a natural liturgical theology. Natural theology in this sense invites an exploration, apart from God's particular entrances into history, of those liturgical-theological relationships that are grounded in the primordial relationship of humans as creatures to their Creator. Such an endeavor in natural liturgical theology can help disclose the cardinal character of religious rites. That is, one can explore the claim that the very character of being a finite, created person requires a religious ritual response because

1. creatures can only be one-sidedly and incompletely understood, even self-understood, apart from their Creator, Who is their defining source;
2. a personal Creator should be recognized by a personal creature through worship because He is their goal and point of orientation (i.e., because He is their completing and final partner, they should seek relationship with Him); and because
3. falsely-directed worship wrongly construes the Creator as well as the creature's relationships to the Creator,
4. the absence of rituals of Divine worship leaves persons to live as if their lives and the universe were without ultimate meanings, thereby

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[5] Core to Christianity from the beginning has been a commitment to right worship. As a result, included among "the credal and dogmatic monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church [are] the liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great, complete with their *typikon* or liturgical rubrics and the actual manner of their celebration" (Vasileios, 1984, p. 19). Traditional Christianity is framed by and lives in the rituals integral to right worship.

5. disorienting (i.e., wrongly locating) them in their lives and in the cosmos.
6. As a consequence, rightly engaging in religious ritual sets the context for rightly ordering all other rituals, and thus for being rightly oriented in the cosmos.
7. Further, a rightly-ordered appreciation of the holy rightly orients the worshiper's appreciation of the good, the right, and the virtuous, because without a God's-eye perspective, views of human flourishing and of proper action become in principle intractably plural,
8. Because humans are bodily beings, the ritual relation to God will involve bodily actions that symbolically express their appropriate relationship to God.

It is because of the necessity of creatures being rightly related to their Creator in order to be rightly related to their ultimate original and final goal that rituals of worship crucially ground and orient all other rituals.

It is surely the case that one can make some sense of some things without making ultimate sense of everything: we have both regional and ultimate concerns with meaning. The theological point with respect to God and ritual is that, if God exists and if He has the properties recognized by Orthodox Christians, then any understanding of rituals will to some extent be off the mark if one does not take into account the existence of this God Who is one's ultimate point of orientation. In the background is an extension of an insight articulated by Kant, namely, that, without an at least as-if acknowledgement of God's existence, commitments even to morality cannot claim categorical priority over the claims of prudential rationality (Engelhardt 2010a, Engelhardt 2010b). This circumstance has implications as well for our understanding of the nature and character of ritual, especially its significance in renewing and sustaining culture and the moral life. Without an unconditioned point of objective moral and metaphysical reference, all accounts become one among many other socio-historically-conditioned perspectives. Without a point of objectivity that is not simply intersubjectivity but is rightly anchored in being, there is no ultimate narrative of the universe, since there is no ultimate narrator. The consequences are far-reaching. To paraphrase Gianni Vattimo: once one acts as if God did not exist, then all facts become cultural interpretations (i.e., man becomes the measure of all things), with the result that one has engendered a principled plurality of alternative narratives, each with its own hermeneutics sustaining a plurality of competing ritual systems, among which one cannot meaningfully say that one can canonically identify the *right* one.

The contrast between those frameworks of ritual that are located within a recognition of a personal Creator-God and those framed as if all were ultimately meaningless is profound. The latter framing hermeneutic need not actually deny a final point of cosmic orientation. It is enough implicitly to turn Immanuel Kant's postulate of practical reason on its head, and to proceed to integrate morality and all cardinal human rituals as would a religious agnostic: without any reference to, but no denial of, an ultimate point of meaning and therefore of unconditional truth. Even religious and

philosophical accounts that assert that beyond humans there is an ultimate meaning, but do not recognize it as personal, are partially disorienting in holding that at the core of the meaning of the universe is a meaning that is less than the self-conscious existence of humans. The recognition of the inadequacy of an ultimate meaning that is less than personal involves a special appreciation of the principle of sufficient reason. The existence of ultimate personal meaning, a personal God, places at the core of all existence not an anonymous force, but a creative self-defining self-consciousness, so that truth is appreciated most fully as a Who, not just a what, a Being Who can fully name Himself "I am Who am" ("I will be Who I will be" – Exodus 3:14). The assertion of impersonal meaning, as the ultimate meaning of a cosmos that contains self-conscious persons, is radically inadequate. Only meaning that can fully self-consciously appreciate its own meaning, and the meaning of every story, can be ultimate meaning.

For example, without religious rituals that recognize a definitive relationship to a transcendent, personal God, all other rituals become merely human contrivances and conventions in (1) not being set within the cosmic or ultimate context that Self-consciously defines Itself and all else. Rituals are (2) left with affirming a particular system of rituals as sustained by and within a particular tradition, but not by reality, much less a defining, self-conscious, ultimate point of reference. In particular, without rightly-ordered rituals of ultimate orientation, persons are related to their particular spheres of reality as if all were ultimately contingent, as if there were no non-humanly constituted point of final reference. In the absence of religious rituals aimed at unconditional transcendence, rituals are undertaken as if all were in the end ultimately purposeless: as if all ultimately came from nowhere and went nowhere. The point is not simply epistemological. Not recognizing God's existence is not just an intellectual mistake. It involves a willful decision about how one will define one's relationship to reality. In such circumstances, post-modernity triumphs: all accounts of morality, ritual, and meaning become regarded as fabrics of particular traditions, particular narratives constituted out of a particular and contingent human response to the human condition carrying with them only their own particular hermeneutics.

Here it may seem that one has found a defining cleft between the Confucian cultural sphere and that of Christianity. Confucian culture often takes itself only obscurely and unclearly to recognize the Divine as a transcendent, personal God. What the Divine means for Confucian culture is far from unambiguous (Ching, 1977; Fung, 1983; Ivanhoe, 2007; Legge, 1971; Louden, 2002). Though it is clear that Christian culture recognizes the personal presence of the God Who commands, both cultures have rituals that direct humans in aiming rightly towards the Divine. One might consider the twice-yearly border sacrifice (at the southern border at the winter solstice and at the northern border at the summer solstice) by the Emperor of China to ShangDi, the Supreme God, which sacrifices were offered from 2230 B.C. to A.D. 1911. The text (from A.D. 1538) addresses God as personal and sovereign.

> Of old in the beginning, there was the great chaos, without form and dark. The five elements [planets] had not begun to revolve, nor the sun and the moon to shine. In the midst thereof there existed neither forms or sound. Thou, O spiritual Sovereign, camest forth in Thy presidency, and first didst divide the grosser parts from the purer. Thou madest heaven; Thou madest earth; Thou madest man. All things with their reproductive power got their being. ... Thou hast vouchsafed, O Di, to hear us, for Thou regardest us as a Father. I, Thy child, dull and unenlightened, am unable to show forth my dutiful feelings. ... Thy sovereign goodness is infinite. As a potter, Thou hast made all living things. Thy sovereign goodness is infinite. Great and small are sheltered [by Thee]. As engraven on the heart of Thy poor servant is the sense of Thy goodness, so that my feeling cannot be fully displayed. With great kindness Thou dost bear us, and not withstanding our shortcomings, dost grant us life and prosperity (Damascene, 2004, p. 5, 6).

This ritual (1) recognizes the power of God in shaping, if not creating, reality, (2) acknowledges God as personal (i.e., as a Father) and as able to hear the Emperor's prayer (i.e., this Deity is not the detached God of the deists), and (3) appreciates God as responsive to prayer, as able to bestow life and prosperity. The prayer is a pleading to the Sovereign of the universe for conditions of harmony within which relationships between earthly sovereigns and subjects, husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and students can be both rightly as well as ritely realized and maintained.

In this ritual, the emperor clearly oriented himself and the Chinese empire to a personal God. Take, for example, the ceremonial prayer used by Emperor Jia Jing (reigned A.D. 1522–1566).

> O awesome Creator, I look up to You. How imperial is the expansive heavens. Now is the time when the masculine energies of nature begin to be displayed, and with the great ceremonies I reverently honor You. Your servant, I am but a reed or willow; my heart is but as that of an ant; yet have I received Your favoring Mandate, appointing me to the government of the empire. I deeply cherish a sense of my ignorance and foolishness, and am afraid lest I prove unworthy of Your abundant grace. Therefore will I observe all the rules and statues, striving, insignificant as I am, to be faithful. Far distant here, I look up to Your heavenly palace. Come in Your precious chariot to the altar. Your servant, I bow my head to the earth, reverently expecting Your abundant grace. All my officers are here arranged along with me, dancing and worshipping before You. All the spirits accompany You as guards, from the east to the west. Your servant, I prostrate myself to meet You, and reverently look up for Your coming, O Di. O that You would promise to accept our offerings, and regard us, while we worship You because Your goodness is inexhaustible! (quoted in Chan, 2006, p. 138)

The character of this and other prayers by the emperor makes it quite clear that the emperor is directing himself to an all-powerful, personal God. The context for all other rituals is shaped by this ritual and its analogues, which rituals place all human activities within the ambit of Divine power.

In summary, religious rituals directed to the personal God affirm that there is a truth, a canonical narrative, however poorly and incompletely this may be appreciated. Accounts that decouple ritual from a notion that ritual should be rightly ordered and directed to a point of ultimate meaning offer only numerous alternative frameworks or traditions within which the complexity of different ritual

systems is embedded and relativized. Each ritual system becomes one among alternative other ritual systems. In such circumstances, the conflict between traditional and post-traditional frameworks is reduced to a conflict between alternative human narratives, accounts, and/or hermeneutics of meaning, which may be more or less rich and integrative of the complexity of the human experience, and which may sustain more or less elegant, beautiful, and integrated systems of rituals, but which cannot be judged as right or wrong, that is, as rightly or ritely directed in any ultimate or final sense. Instead, one is left within the horizon of the finite and the immanent, such that all facts are in the end only interpretations rightly ordered and directed. Religious rituals not only disclose, if not open up an otherwise unappreciated depth of meaning, but religious rituals highlight a profound gulf separating foundationally different appreciations of the human condition: they disclose a profound depth to the contrast between traditional versus post-traditional appreciations of the human condition.

3.6 Cultural Preservation and Renewal: The Culture Wars as Ritual Wars

The English term culture is derived from the Latin *cultura*, which compasses cultivation of the soil as well as the performance of rites of worship. The root of *cultura* is in the verb *culo*, which can mean to till the soil, to cultivate a field, to dwell in a place, to honor a shrine, to care for something, to dress, to adorn, to give honor, to devote oneself, and to worship. Culture is also tied to *cultus*, which spans labor, education, refinement, style of dress, adoration, and worship. To have a culture is to have the fruit of an encompassing way of cultivating human life, as well as a relation with the Divine. From social refinement to the worship of God, the fabric of culture is shaped by the rituals that till the landscape of human possibility. Since ritualized actions can sum up thick webs of meaning and commitment, attention to ritual is core to sustaining, renewing, and changing a culture. Here praxis sets the context for theory, in that ritual practice defines and directs a culture (though, of course, the same can be said in a different way but reciprocally on behalf of theory). Because rituals engage cardinal summarizing webs of meaning and commitment that frame a culture's intersubjective space, recasting rituals will, helpfully or harmfully, recast a culture (e.g., the presence or absence of habitual linguistic phrases such as "thank God" or "God willing" marks the religious or secular nature of a culture's public discourse). Such changes in ritual may even be more effective than directly correcting and reforming false theoretical accounts, though surely both are important tasks.

Because of the centrality of ritual in human life, renewing a culture requires restoring or augmenting those rituals which support particular, rightly-directed webs of meanings and commitments, which among other things structure the life of virtue. As already indicated, rightly-ordered rituals nourish the habits that form the virtues. In this regard, rightly-ordered rituals that bind parents and children, husbands and wives, communities and their members, and creatures to God, are

crucial to the habits of the moral life. What should count as "rightly ordered" rituals can in part be determined by reference to the virtues they sustain. How one identifies the content to be affirmed for the virtues will depend on whether one is a traditionalist or a post-traditionalist, and of what sort. Much also depends on whether the character of a ritual as rightly-ordered has an ultimate foundation or is simply determined by human moral and aesthetic creativity and artifice. As already noted, questions of which rituals are rightly or wrongly oriented involve matters that fuel the culture wars. These conflicts are in part controversies about alternative rituals (e.g., patterns of interaction that indicate the proper deference of wives to their husbands, or instead an equality of authority between spouses; the deference of adult children to their parents, or instead equality between parents and children; the deference of creatures to their Creator, or instead a view that takes humans to be the final arbiters of meaning). Rituals are also about competing ways of life. Competing sets of rituals affirm alternative scaffoldings for incompatible webs of meaning and commitments at the foundations of central human relationships. This diversity of ritual supports different ways of structuring key human practices, from marriage and parenthood to friendship, citizenship, and relation to the cosmos (e.g., worship). Alternative webs of ritual sustain alternative cultures. At issue are conflicting visions of human flourishing, as well as of the meaning of life and the significance of the cosmos.

These conflicts of culture are aggravated by competing and incompatible moral and political views, but most especially by conflicting views about religion, religious rituals, and the transcendent. Religion is key because religious rituals through their metaphysical embeddedness provide ultimate orientation and therefore a foundational framework for all actions, all other rituals, and all social relations. At stake are not just the differences separating the various religions. There is the even more profound gulf separating traditional religious understandings from the secular, laicist, post-Christian, indeed post-religious cultures that embrace as well post-traditional mainline churches and post-Confucian Chinese culture, which gulf widened dramatically in the wake of the consequences of the French Revolution. Cultures that attempt to exclude religious rituals from their public space (or radically secularize religious rituals, as when Christmas celebrations become associated not with the birth of the Messiah, but with Santa Claus, snowmen, and reindeer) foundationally differ from those framed around and through rituals and celebrations that acknowledge religious truth (e.g., the observance of the Advent Fast prior to the celebration of Christmas so as, inter alia, to recognize the proper yearning that all should have for the Messiah's coming). As noted, those who attempt to frame their culture without the support of religious ritual implicitly approach reality and the significance of all rituals as if all ultimately came from nowhere, went to nowhere, and for no ultimate purpose. Those whose lives are framed by substantive religious rituals approach reality and the significance of ritual with the recognition that all meaning is not ultimately transient and socio-historically conditioned, appreciated an enduring meaning to all human actions and rituals.

Across the gulf separating those who acknowledge ultimate meaning and those who do not, the partisans of these contrasting views will recognize each other as moral strangers, indeed as reciprocally deeply morally strange. One might think of the astonishment of secular persons on seeing a family saying grace in a restaurant, or of religious persons at the vacuity, indeed perverse character, of secular funeral services. They confront each other separated by a profound cultural gulf defined by incompatible accounts of the universe and the significance of the human condition. It is this gulf that characterizes one of the foundational points of cultural conflict at the beginning of the 21st century. It is a conflict between an acknowledgement of ultimate meaning as found in the personal God, and an acquiescence in, if not a commitment to an at least as-if ultimate meaninglessness, the final transience of all self-conscious meaning. As Benedict XVI, pope of Rome, observes with regard to the secular, laicist culture of the West that developed out of the French Revolution, and that characterizes much of Continental Western Europe, "To the other cultures of the world, there is something deeply alien about the absolute secularism that is developing in the West. They are convinced that a world without God has no future" (Benedict, 2006, pp. 21–22). These two foundationally different worldviews and the rituals that frame them are in profound tension, indeed they are in conflict.

3.7 Taking Ritual Seriously

For China and the world generally, it is a matter of no mean importance to assess the role of religious rituals in setting the context for all other rituals, as well as for a culture's openness to enduring meaning. These matters are matters of substantive contention and enduring importance. Because the renewal of culture is tied to the renewal and/or the development of religious ritual, which in turn involves distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate, orthodox and heterodox religious rituals, the very talk of such renewal is provocative, controversial, and divisive. Nevertheless, such difference, controversy, division, and conflict are unavoidable. To aim at virtue is to identify vice. To affirm some rituals and to reject others is often to accept or reject whole ways of life. Such judgments about whole ways of life are inevitable if one is to aim at moral and religious truth, in that the significance of moral truth is embedded in the acknowledgement or rejection of a point of ultimate personal significance.

There is a temptation to obscure the depth of these disagreements and the disputes they engender. One strategy is to attempt to frame the disagreements as if they involved only choices among alternative human narratives, rather than disagreements about which narrative it is into which Ultimate Meaning tells the universe. Separated from an ultimate perspective, moral and metaphysical claims are construed as mere alternative interpretations. They are no longer recognized as disputes about the Truth, about matters bearing on the appreciation of ultimate meaning. This obscuring of an ultimate perspective occurs most especially if one renders the encounter with the transcendent God into "a

religion in keeping with reason", because the reason invoked will always be inadequate to the transcendent and hostage to the particular philosophical conceits of the age (Ratzinger, 2006, p. 47). In such circumstances, the experience of God, and the rituals that reflect that experience, are brought into conformity with a particular human perspective, a particular rational or philosophical account. In such cases, religion and its rituals are brought to the bar of human judgment.

Matters are quite different if one recognizes a truly transcendent point of ultimate orientation. In such a case, human reason, ritual, and the proper nature of religion are appreciated as needing to be brought into accord with an encounter with the fully transcendent God, the Person Who commands, Who places all in relationship to Him, and to Whom one turns primarily through worship, so that such rituals take on the character of mysteries, of ways of encountering the Ultimate. An encounter with ultimate personal Truth sets the praxes of ritual prior to the claims of theory. As a consequence, the concern to have matters rightly and ritely ordered becomes an issue of ultimate concern. The result is that disputes about ultimate truth and the meaning of reality are foundational to the most bitter of the battles of the culture wars. Choices among rituals and the meanings of rituals in the end turn on fundamentally different understandings of morality, social reality, the meaning of ultimate Truth, and the significance of reality. As noted at the beginning of this essay, ritual divides while it also renews. The issue of how, to what purpose, and with reference to whom to renew our culture profoundly separates the parties at disagreement. We do not agree about the final significance of things or about how to relate to reality. The culture wars are wars about ritual.

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Chapter 4
Ritual as Education Concerning Social Space and Time

Mark J. Cherry

4.1 Introduction

Humans do not live simply within a physical intersection of space and time. Rather, the passing of individual and communal time is appreciated as history. Physical space is appreciated as social space ordered through the interconnection of social intimacy and distance, friendship and estrangement. Moral understandings, accounts of human flourishing, accepted social roles, and appreciations of the role of man vis-à-vis nature, mark the conceptual frameworks that shape social mores, moralities, and appreciations of space and time. Here religious and cultural rituals locate persons within particular communities of knowers and educate persons regarding the community's core metaphysical, epistemological, cultural, and moral paradigms. As this chapter explores, rituals demarcate and teach understandings of and approaches to reality; that is, rituals frame human life within specific paradigms and social spaces, orienting persons to truth claims about the world.[1]

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[1] Thomas Kuhn introduced the idea of a "paradigm" in the history and philosophy of science in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. This complex idea conceptualized the ways in which scientists, even from the same field, can be separated by radically different ways of understanding and experiencing reality. For example, Newtonian physicists and Einsteinian physicists appreciate and approach reality differently. Divergent understandings of reality separate Newtonian from Einsteinian scientists. This idea of divergent paradigms suggests not only how scientists are separated from each other, but also how cultures and religions are disassociated by different understandings of and approaches to reality. Paradigms identify the "thought-styles" of communities of knowers and investigators. Here, the term "thought-style" comes from Ludwik Fleck (1979), who uses it to identify a community of knowers who share metaphysical, epistemological, methodological, and axiological assumptions in their approach to both framing reality as well as assumptions regarding exemplar knowers and methodologies of discovery.

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The term "ritual" is richly ambiguous—identifying clusters of social phenomena and cultural practices often associated because of family resemblances.[2] Rituals mark out and frame understandings regarding (1) the deep structure of reality—i.e., questions of metaphysics; (2) how one comes to know reality—i.e., questions of epistemology; (3) exemplar knowers—i.e., questions of expertise and of who is taken to be in authority to resolve controversies; and (4) sociologies of knowledge—i.e., questions regarding the reference class of the community of knowers.[3] Throughout the chapter, I draw on sociological and anthropological accounts of religious and cultural rituals to illustrate the analysis. Readers are put on notice, however, that academic accounts of rituals necessarily truncate the phenomena they analyze. Traditional rituals were (and frequently are) lived experiential practices, interacting with reality in facets beyond the ability of academic discursive analysis to conceptualize. Rituals embody canonical understandings regarding the nature and meaning of the cosmos and of man's place within it.

This essay explores five dimensions about which traditional rituals provide experiential instruction; each situates truth claims regarding the nature of reality and of man's place within that reality. Rituals disclose: (1) the relation of man to the world, (2) the relation of man to animals, (3) the relation among living humans, (4) the relation among humans over time, (5) the relation between man and God. As I will argue, rituals provide integration to these five dimensions, thereby forming a core component of an experiential epistemology. Rituals both announce and educate regarding the authority to use nature and animals, the presence of intimates, friends, or strangers, relationships of authority within families, social groups, and states, and the boundaries between the holy, the diabolical, and the profane.

4.2 The Experiential Epistemology of Rituals

Traditional rituals are unique in their ability to clarify and to communicate certainty, trustworthiness, and orthodoxy of the information conveyed (see Robbins, 2001, p. 593; Rappaport, 1999, pp. 52–53). They embed participants within potentially powerful and illuminating experiential learning experiences. The educational role of rituals is foundational to their orientational and

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[2] The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of ritual notes that it relates to rites or is of the nature of rites, but also as "pertaining to or constituting a social or psychological ritual; used, occurring, etc., as a social convention or habit". Ritual also refers to a "prescribed order of performing religious or other devotional service" as in "ritual observances and ceremonial acts" (2006, on-line, http://dictionary.oed.com, accessed April 7, 2006).

[3] For a development of this set of distinctions see H. T. Engelhardt, Jr. (2000), who maps out a conceptual geography identifying the clusters of metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, and sociological presuppositions that direct investigation. See also Cherry (1996).

performative force: their power to create meaning, to recover meaning, and to bind traditional religious communities together through time and space.

Rituals teach through experience, educating regarding the concepts and categories necessary appropriately to encounter and to know the world. Rituals give instruction regarding how to see and how to know. To see truly one must already have an idea of what truth is and how to find it. For example, medical students have to be taught how to "read" the slides they examine under microscopes, researchers must be initiated into the assumptions and practices that guide the experimental methodology of their fields. Each must be initiated into a particular way of relating to and of experiencing reality.[4] Just as science students must be taught the rituals of proper scientific practice, and medical students must be embedded within the rituals of proper medical practice, children must be brought up in the rituals of proper cultural practices (e.g., formal bowing in Japan, a handshake in the West), and children and converts must be brought into and instructed regarding proper religious rituals. Rituals tutor neophytes towards expertise, immerse children in their culture, and orient believers towards God. In each case, initiates must be properly prepared and taught how to experience and appreciate reality. Given time and proper habituation, one is taught how rightly to see the world.

This circumstance is not meant to imply that all frameworks for seeing, experiencing or appreciating reality are equally true or alike in value. Rather, the analytic point is similar to Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis that accounts of justice and rationality are always embedded within the assumptions of particular traditions[5]: all such understandings must begin from somewhere. "There is no standing point, no place for enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned argument apart from that which is provided by some particular tradition or other" (1988, p. 350). Similarly, all attempts to engage reality will necessarily bring to the encounter underlying ontological, metaphysical, epistemological, and moral assumptions through which the encounter is framed and understood. Persons come to see the world in terms of their expectations. As Nelson Goodman argued, building on a Kantian insight, "Talk of unstructured content or an unconceptualized given or

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[4] Consider Ludwik Fleck who recounts the ways in which both students and researchers are initiated into "appropriate" scientific rituals: "An intellect is prepared for a given field; it is received into a self-contained world and, as it were, initiated. If the initiation has been disseminated for generations as in the case of introducing the basic ideas of physics, it will become so self-evident that the person will completely forget he has ever been initiated, because he will never meet anyone who has not been similarly processed" (1979, p. 54).

[5] MacIntyre argues: "The conclusion to which the argument so far had led is not only that it is out of the debates, conflicts, and enquiry of socially embodied, historically contingent traditions that contentions regarding practical rationality and justice are advanced, modified, abandoned, or replaced, but that there is no other way to engage in the formulation, elaboration, rational justification, and criticism of accounts of practical rationality and justice except from within some one particular tradition in conversation, cooperation, and conflict with those who inhabit the same tradition" (1988, p. 350).

a substratum without properties is self-defeating; for the talk imposes structure, conceptualizes, ascribes properties" (1978, p. 6).[6] However, neophytes and children must still learn what it is that they are encountering. Here rituals play a core communicational and educational role.[7] For example, rituals orient persons toward and teach them to live within particular moral understandings, such as the appropriate gendered roles of men and women. Over time the lessons and worldview are internalized such that those living within the tradition come to see, interpret, and appreciate the world through the tradition's framework.[8]

4.3 Ritual Disclosure: Five Dimensions of Reality

4.3.1 Disclosing the Relation of Man to the World

Rituals disclose understandings regarding the relation of man to the world. Such rituals include prayers to ward off hurricanes, to preserve against earthquakes, prayers for good crops, and to have safe travels by land, sea, or air. In the pagan world of the Maya, for example, archaeological evidence of human sacrifice indicate that these ritual "prayers" were believed to ward off future hurricanes,[9] secure a good harvest,[10] or otherwise benefit the people. Hopi

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[6] Goodman continues: "Although conception without perception is merely *empty*, perception without conception is *blind* (totally inoperative). Predicates, pictures, other labels, schemata, survive want of application, but content vanishes without form. We can have words without a world but no world without words or other symbols" (1978, p. 6).

[7] Francis Fukuyama has made a similar observation regarding the educational role of traditions and rituals: "There is much more variability in human than in animal behavior, since human beings are to a much greater degree cultural creatures, learning how to behave from laws, customs, traditions, and other influences that are socially constructed rather than natural" (2002, p. 23).

[8] Consider Aristotle's account of how one acquires the virtues: "The virtues, on the other hand, we acquire by first having put them into action, and the same is also true of the arts. For the things which we have to learn before we can do them we learn by doing: men become builders by building houses, and harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, we become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage" (1986, p. 34, 1103a30–1103b). One is taught to act in a particular way; over time such actions become habituated, until they are simply fully internalized as a personal characteristic or disposition: the virtue has become part of one's nature. The educational role of rituals is analogous.

[9] "The archives also give us a good idea of why the Maya were performing these sacrifices. Twelve of the 99 rituals performed in 1562 made reference to a 'great hurricane' that ravaged Yucatán a year earlier. Two sacrifices were performed to request good harvests, one for long life, and three for the well-being of a cacique. Two sacrifice victims were used for divinatory purposes" (Romey, 2005, p. 49). A "cacique" is a tribal chief.

[10] In the pre-Columbian Andean cultures, repeated ritualistic sounds indicated associations critical to expressing and teaching their self-understanding of the relation between man and the world. "The sound *aki* in Akha invokes earth's sacred product, corn, from which corn

spring planting rituals were seen as bringing forth rain and ensuring a good harvest (James, 2002, p. 337).[11] Those who keep kosher or the traditional Christian fasts are reminded at each meal that they are observant Jews or Christians and, therefore, that though they live in the world, they must not embrace the secular or other religious assumptions of the surrounding culture. Here, rituals also reveal the authority of God over creation. Consider Christian prayers before travel:

> Prayer Before a Journey: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, the true and living way, be thou, O Master, my companion, guide and guardian during my journey; deliver and protect me from all danger, misfortune and temptation; that being so defended by Thy divine power, I may have a peaceful and successful journey and arrive safely at my destination. For in thee I put my trust and hope, together with thy Eternal Father, and the All-holy Spirit, I ascribe all praise, honor and glory: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen (Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1956 [2004], pp. 20–21).[12]

The prayer locates man within the cosmos, within nature, announcing God as Creator and as at the center of reality. In each example, the underlying account of the relationship between man and the world is revealed, educated, and nurtured into the daily lives of the people.

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beer, or chichi (*akha*), is made. And *akha* invokes the vessel from which chichi is drunk. These elements are both acoustically and narratively embedded in the myths of the earth mothers . . .” (Columbus, 2004, pp. 154–155). Claudette Columbus also documents the use of sound in war: “The Inca always killed enemy captains who either resisted them or who . . . might rebel. They cut off their heads and drank from them. The Inca also cut off their arms, taking out the bones and filling the skin with ashes. When the heads were not being used as drinking vessels, they and the severed arms were placed over a drum that was made from the victim’s stomach. When the drum was beaten, all the body parts made a sound” (De Mesa 1570–72, quoted in Columbus, 2004, p. 153).

[11] According to Susan James, for the Hopi the “fertility of the year, and thus the survival of the people, depends on the careful exercise of mimetic magic in prescribed patters of behavioral interaction and on the reiteration of ritually received ceremonies” (2002, p. 338).

[12] Similarly: “Prayer for Those About to Journey by Water or by Air: Priest: Let us pray to the Lord. O Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, who didst walk upon the waters as upon dry land, and didst deign to have thy holy Disciples and Apostles as thy fellow-voyagers in the ship; and didst rebuke the stormy wind, and command the waves of the sea to be still: Be pleased now also, we humbly pray thee O Savior, to sail with *this thy servant* in *his* ship, allaying every unfavorable wind and tempest: And rise up special and timely winds for a successful voyage, being thyself ever unto *him* a pilot, and a saving; an untempestuous and tranquil haven unto *him* and *his* ship. . . . For thou art the Savior, and the Deliverer, and the rich Giver of all good things, both spiritual and temporal, and unto thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen” (Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1956 [2004], p. 124).

4.3.2 Disclosing the Relation of Man to Animals

Rituals disclose the relation of man to animals; such rituals include those of blessing the hunt and kosher butchering. Here, consider the Huaulu—an indigenous tribe in Indonesia—who offer parts of the meat of the hunted animal as a ritual sacrifice of thanks for the blessing of the hunt. The ritual thereby also authorizes the eating of animal flesh.[13] In east Siberia ritualized bear hunting was practiced until the first half of the 20th century (Kwon, 1999). Often called "play the bear", this hunting ritual involved capturing bear cubs from the mother bear's den to be raised in captivity for several years, culminating in the inter-clan festival slaying, cooking, and consumption of the bear. This detailed ritual included a carefully defined method for killing, skinning, cooking, and serving the bear within a great feast (Kwon, 1999). It was utilized as part of the binding together of clans or of marriage.[14] Asking a blessing on the hunt, giving of thanks after a successful hunt, and similar rituals, each disclose understandings of the appropriate order of nature and of the authority of man vis-à-vis animals.

In Hebrew the term for conquering, "koveish," does not mean utterly destroying. Instead, it implies leaving intact the conquered resources and abilities, perhaps enhancing them, but nevertheless redirecting them toward one's own end. This is what Jews are told to do with the resources of nature (Rabbi Fradkin et al., 2000, p. 12). Thus, religious Jews understand themselves as in authority to utilize the resources of the world, including animals. They may be used for "every possible beneficial manner" (p. 12). It would fall short of the mark randomly to destroy animals for no good purpose, but the function and place of animals is to be seen within the context of human life, with man at the apex of creation: "One reason that sacrificial rites played such a vital role in the daily services of the Jerusalem Temple was to drive home the

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[13] As Valerio Valeri argues: "The offering of parts of the victim, wild or domesticated, may be used to make the rest of its meat available for human consumption. But it may also be used to obtain benefits that have nothing to do with eating. Of course, ... these nonalimentary benefits are always in some measure implied even in the most alimentary-minded offering, since eating is not a purely material act but involves maintenance of complex moral relations between society and cosmos. Still, there is no doubting that the main purpose of the offering is to authorize the eating of animals" (Valeri, 1994, p. 123).

[14] In the den hunting variation of this ritual, Kwon documents, "the hibernating bear is poked on its back with a pole introduced through a hole in the den, and the bear is forced to emerge through the exit on the opposite side. A noose is then placed around the bear's neck. The animal is held by the noose tightened from both ends by two men, and another man shoots at its heart while the man who poked the animal is ready to support the shooter. In the bear feast, this process is enacted in the order of poking (cleansing) the animal, noosing it, dragging it from the host's house to the playground, and the final killing. Throughout these actions, the male affines collaborate with the men of the host group, and this culminated in the division of labor between the guest (wife taker), who shoots the animal, and the host (wife givers), who skin the carcass" (1999, p. 380).

point to the ancient Israelites that killing animals in the service of God, and for the purpose of his people, was morally permissible" (Rabbi Fradkin et al., 2000, p. 12). Meat is to be eaten on Saturday and on most holidays as a religious obligation: it recognizes the hierarchical nature of God's creation.

Consider also the expression given to man's place in creation in the ritual blessing of flesh meats at the Christian Pascha.[15] The prayer specifically references the blessing humans have to eat animal flesh; indeed, eating meat is affirmed as good. Christian prayers recognize and teach the hierarchical nature of God's creation, which authorizes the use of animals to benefit humans. When vegans and vegetarians assert the immorality of eating meat, and work socially or politically to forbid animal research, and other beneficial uses of animals, they thereby identify themselves as outside of the religious communities of traditional Christians and Jews.[16]

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[15] "Priest: Let us pray to the Lord. Look down, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, upon these flesh-meats, and sanctify them, as thou didst sanctify the ram which faithful Abraham offered unto thee, and the lamb which Abel brought unto thee as a burnt-offering; also the fatted calf which thou didst command to be slain for thy son who had gone astray, and had returned again to thee; that even as he was accounted worthy to enjoy thy good things, so may we also, enjoy these things which are sanctified and blessed by thee, to the nourishment of us all. For thou art our true nourishment, and the Giver of all good things, and unto thee we ascribe glory; together with thy Father who is from everlasting, and thine all-holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen" (Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1956 [2004], p. 120).

[16] What is often referred to as the "biocentric viewpoint" of "deep ecology", for example, requires that humans regard themselves as simply one member among others of the earth's community of life, where human good counts as important, but only on the same terms as the good of other non-human members. Humans are not to appreciate themselves as superior, but only as equal members. The use of other members of the bio-community is permissible provided that it is not to the exclusion of their own good, while maintaining ecological equilibrium. "Biocentric equality is intimately related to the all-inclusive Self-realization in the sense that if we harm the rest of Nature then we are harming ourselves. There are no boundaries and everything is interrelated. But insofar as we perceive things as individual organisms or entities, the insight draws us to respect all human and non-human individuals in their own right as parts of the whole without feeling the need to set up hierarchies of species with humans at the top" (Devall and Sessions, 2003, p. 265; see also Taylor, 2003; for a critique see Guha, 2003). In short, one must "religiously" convert to this biocentric worldview; divorcing traditional Christianity or Judiasm.

Consider also the political campaigns against kosher slaughtering as a form of animal cruelty: "For many, the pervasive nature of animal abuse at AgriProcessors [a kosher butchering facility] and elsewhere means that eschewing meat is now a moral imperative. Indeed, many who have investigated the pitiful conditions in which dairy cattle and egg laying hens are raised, have committed themselves to veganism (eschewing all animal products)" (Gross, 2005, p. 54; see also Judd, 2003). Here, vegans advance moral claims that their personal sentiments regarding the treatment of animals somehow trump God commandments.

4.3.3 Disclosing the Relation Among Living Humans

Rituals disclose the relations among living humans; these rituals include stylized interactions: such as between adults and children, and of children honoring their parents, and respect for elders.[17] In the West, examples include rituals of respect between men and women, such as men opening doors for women; between friends, such as an amicable embrace and the use of familiar address; and among strangers, such as a formal handshake and the use of formal modes of address. Children express respect for their elders through the use of "Mr." and "Mrs.", "sir" and "madam"; but also demonstrate close relationships of love through the use of "Mom", "Dad" "Grandpa", "Grandma", "Nana," and "Pawpaw". In Hawaiian culture, children will frequently refer to an adult who is a close family friend as "auntie" or "uncle", even though the individual is related neither genetically nor through marriage to the family. Students express respect through the use of "Professor".

For the traditional Confucian, Ruiping Fan notes, "Exercising the virtue of filial piety is also the major task in performing perfect virtue" (2006, p. 4). Humans are born into particular roles and relationships. The love of children for their parents must be cherished as the moral root of perfect virtue.

> Within a Confucian culture, the expected normal situation is such that while children, following the Confucian virtue of filial piety, take good care of their parents and try to make them happy, elderly parents, being honored of having filial children, would strive to live meaningful lives along with their children (Fan, 2007, p. 496).

Filial piety marks a virtuous life in which children honor their parents. As Fan (2012), Chan (2012), Lo (2012), and Wang (2012) each illustrate, if Confucianism is to be sustained as a significant cultural and moral force, the rituals proper to traditional filial piety must be revitalized, integrated, and sustained within contemporary Chinese society.

As Ana Iltis (2012) demonstrates, rituals are not merely descriptive or evaluative, but performative. Rituals thus mark new social status, such as a marriage or the conferring of an academic degree, or professional status, such as becoming a lawyer or a physician.[18] The marriage ceremony, for example,

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[17] In some areas of Japan, performance of the *kabôsai* ritual solidifies older men as elders within the rural community. The public *kabôsai* procession and related rituals "visually acknowledges the ascriptive status of elders as holders of symbolic capital derived from their age and membership in the elder age grade" (Traphagan, 2000, p. 93). It marks the elders as a group, who can expect care and protection from the community. At the same time, elders come to have the social authority to give formal and informal direction to the other community members. To obtain this status as "elder" it is not sufficient simply to be old, "Both gender and personal qualifications such as family status, prior experience in leadership positions, and accomplishment over a lifetime contribute to one's position within the elder age grade" (Traphagan, p. 92). Following the public ritual, those so designated as elders have honored positions in the community.

[18] The Confucian "capping" ritual is another example. As Ping-Cheung Lo documents, it is the rite of initiation for males into adulthood (2012).

publically announces a change in social reality: man and woman have become husband and wife.[19] Rituals also signal the existence of a new political reality. One might consider a number of public political rituals: for example, citizens voting in a democracy, soldiers saluting a national flag, a country inaugurating a president, or a religious authority anointing a king. Here Samuel's anointing of David, indicating that God had chosen David to be King of Israel, is a relevant example.[20] In the United States, some have raised the concern that the display of the Ten Commandments in governmental offices, court rooms, and public schools, functions as a type of public ritual attempting to bind the country together as a Christian polity (Davis, 2002). In each case, the force of the ritual performatively marks the existence of a particular social or political reality.

4.3.4 Disclosing the Relation Among Humans Over Time

Rituals disclose the relation among humans over time, as with the celebration of the Jewish Passover, Christian feast days, and the remembrance of ancestors. Archeological research documents, for example, the remembrance of ancestors as an ancient practice in China. According to Yun Kuen Lee and Naicheng Zhu the worship of ancestors played a central role in the continuation of cultural norms and the preservation of social groups.[21] They argue that burial rites and remembrance of ancestors as cultural rituals were central to a smooth transition

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[19] As Robbins notes: "Because ritual action brings about its effects directly through such performance—indeed, the performance is simultaneously the creation of the effect—participants in ritual display by their participation a commitment to its outcome" (2001, p. 594).

[20] The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons . . . And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here." And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward (1 Samuel 16: 1–13).

[21] Their research documents prehistoric examples of ancestor worship in China: "We argue that these two pits were used in the ritual activities for the dead, perhaps independent of the funeral ritual. The central locations of the pits suggest that the rites were meant for the solidarity of the whole community, including both the eastern and western groups. The animal bones could have been sacrificial offerings to the dead, as well as the remains of ritual feasting. If the sacrificial rite was conducted on a regular basis, the Shuiquan people had transformed a crisis ritual pertaining to the loss of group members into a regularly performed calendric ritual. The long-dead were then worshipped as an ancestral cult. Ancestral worship eventually developed into a regular fixture during the latter prehistoric and historic period of China" (Lee and Zhu, 2002, p. 717).

of the community into a new social arrangement, while also maintaining the
continuity of the culture.[22]

Consider also the importance of calendars for sustaining religious or cultural
communities.[23] The events marked on a calendar reveal the rituals of particular
importance to a society or culture, systematically educating children and adults
about their history and beliefs. Examples range from political dates of note,
such as Independence Day (in Texas: March 02, 1836) to central holy days, such
as the Christian Pascha (in 2009: April 19). The annual observances of the
Jewish Passover,[24] Rosh Hashanah,[25] Yom Kippur,[26] and Hanukkah,[27] show
the observant Jewish community as mystically connected with the Jews of the
past. Calendars also indicate how to mark the passage of time. The Jewish
calendar dates its years from what is taken (in a formal religious sense) to be the
origin of the world. The year A.D. 2000, for instance, spans the Jewish years
5760–5761 (Breslauer, 2003, p. 2). "The story of Judaism understood from the
perspective of this calendar is the completion of the story of humanity"
(Breslauer, 2003, p. 2). Such a method of counting time underscores the destiny
of man and his relation to the divine plan, which has remained unchanged since
the creation of the cosmos.

Similarly, the Christian calendar marks the feast days of the saints,[28] as
well as the fasts and feasts of the Church, e.g., the Nativity fast,[29] Christmas,
Great Lent,[30] and Pascha, as it unfolds the life of Christ, drawing Christians
into mystical participation in that life. The liturgical calendar is the mechan-
ism for regulating the life of the Church, mystically integrating the lives of
contemporary Christians with the lives of the saints and the history of the
Church, all the while aiming them at God. Each calendar year marks out a
Christ-centered whole, as Schmemann notes: "The entire worship of the
Church is organized around Easter, and therefore the liturgical year …
becomes a journey, a pilgrimage towards Pascha, the *End*, which at the
same time is the *Beginning*—the end of all that is 'old', the beginning of the
new life, a constant 'passage' from 'this world' into the kingdom already

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[22] For further discussion of prehistoric indicators of ancestor worship in China see Liu (2000).

[23] For a discussion of the Chinese ritual calendar and its use in Japan see Como (2005).

[24] The Jewish festival celebrating the liberation of the Israelites from generations of slavery in
Egypt. See Exodus.

[25] The beginning of the Jewish new year.

[26] Yom Kippur translates as the day of atonement. It is a holy day set aside to atone for the
sins of the past year.

[27] Hanukkah remembers the rededication of the Temple in 165 B.C.

[28] For example, May 17 commemorates Saint Nectarius, the builder of the holy monastery
Varlaam of Meteora.

[29] The Nativity fast begins on November 15 and ends with the feast of the Nativity; i.e.,
Christmas, December 25.

[30] The Great Lenten fast begins forty days before Holy Week, which itself also prepares for
Pascha—the great feast of the resurrection of Christ.

revealed in Christ" (1974, p. 13). The calendar remains Christians when, how, with whom, and to Whom to pray. For example, among Orthodox Christians the first Sunday of Great Lent celebrates the triumph of the Church over the Iconoclasts, and the reestablishment of the use of icons in worship in the year A.D. 842. Holy icons are carried around the church in grand and solemn procession. Christian tradition carries with it a very particular way of life, marked by Christian ritual observances throughout the calendar year, which are themselves not a mere matter of social convention. Rather, they locate man within Christian communal time and the history of salvation.

4.3.5 Disclosing the Relation Between Man and God

Rituals disclose the relation between man and God, as through worship services and prayers, and by demarking the boundaries between the holy, the diabolical,[31] and the profane. Here consider two examples from Judiasm: ritual charity and the architecture of the bimah.[32] As Eliezer Segal documents, Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat (c. third century A.D.)[33] would typically give a *perutah*—a small bronze coin—to a poor person just before praying. "He said: Because it is written, 'In righteousness shall I behold thy face'" (Segal, 2005, p. 27). Moses Maimonides (A.D. 1135–1204) preserved this practice while universalizing its scope: "The great among the Sages used to hand a *perutah* to a poor man before praying ..." (quoted in Segal, pp. 29–30). While not fully satisfying one's obligations of charity, as a ritual act of giving to the poor it reminded the faithful to show concern for others, before praying for oneself.

The location of the bimah within an American Orthodox Jewish synagogue orients worshipers towards God. The bimah is the rostrum from which public readings of the Torah are given and the services are led. As Lee Shai Weissbach documents, the appearance and location of the bimah is the central element in framing the worship that will take place. One arrangement, associated with Orthodox Judaism, utilizes a free-standing bimah "placed at or near the center of the worship space, oriented so that those who lead the service or who participate in the ritual of Torah reading face the *aron kodesh*, the ark at the front of the hall in which the Torah scrolls are housed" (Weissbach, 2003, p. 31).

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[31] Christians know the modern "feminist rituals" of goddess worship and witchcraft to be diabolical. See Rountree (2004). For an exploration of Hittite magic see Torri (2004). For an exploration of Hindu ritual worship of stocks, stones, animals and so forth see Lahiri and Bacus (2004).

[32] Another useful example is the Halakhah of Miqvaot, or the immersion pool containing forty seahs of water unaffected by human intervention, which when utilized properly ritualistically purifies from some types of uncleanness. See Neusner (2003).

[33] Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat was a prominent third-generation authority from Palestine. See Segal (2005, p. 27).

The architecture itself places the prayer leader in the middle of the congregation, orienting him, with the other worshippers, towards the aron kodesh. The intention is to engender inclusion and participation: "individuals are expected to involve themselves in the worship experience in much the same way as those leading the service... prayer is intended to be communal and personal at the same time, so that the framing of the experience should create a certain tension between the connection that binds together the worshippers, on the one hand, and a focus on the cantor and the liturgy, on the other" (2003, pp. 34–36). The leader of the service—*shaliach tzibur*—is an emissary of the community, orienting and guiding the people.

Similarly, traditional Christian epistemology is nested within the cardinal ritual practices of prayer and worship. It is through right worship that Christians seek and come to know Truth, where Truth is not a "what" but a Who: the one God. To know truly one must correctly orient oneself towards God and come to know Him. Christians appreciate this as a relationship among real persons: between finite created humans and the uncreated transcendent God. As a distant analogy, consider marriage: a husband can only truly know his wife through a direct, personal, experiential relationship—rational, discursive analysis utterly fails as the basis of a flourishing marriage. One should not simply philosophically reason about one's spouse, but talk to her and develop a serious and significant personal relationship. Analogously, traditional Christianity does not understand itself as a philosophy of life, a rational conceptual system, or an academic discipline; rather, it announces itself as the one true faith and experience of God. The center of the spiritual life must thus be embodied in right ritual, right worship, so as to be properly oriented towards God and to enter into relationship with Him. The central epistemic vantage point is to be found in the union of the Christian assembly in the liturgy, where liturgical prayer is the mystical union of the community with God. The liturgical ritual connects cosmic history and human achievement with God and the deep nature of reality.[34] Consequently, wrongly oriented ascetic practices and wrongly

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[34] Christian epistemology is thus in many facets experiential. The role of the traditional ascetic disciplines (e.g., prayer, fasting, alms-giving) is to aid in the development of spiritual discipline, as one learns to set aside one's own passions and desires so as to acquire a will in union with God. Rightly oriented and guided, such practices can be spiritually therapeutic: engaging in action which changes oneself and leads one closer to God, treats the soul and cures the effects of sin so that one can learn to judge rightly. The process of forgiveness, repentance, and illumination must be experienced to be known. To know the good, to comprehend true human flourishing, one must be oriented correctly towards God. St. Isaac the Syrian (A.D. seventh century) likens this process of coming to know to possessing two types of sight: the view of physical objects and the vision of spiritual perception: "What the bodily eyes are to sensory objects, the same is faith to the eyes of the intellect that gaze at hidden treasures. Even as we have two bodily eyes, we possess two eyes of the soul, as the Fathers say; yet both have not the same operation with respect to divine vision. With one we see the hidden glory of God which is concealed in the nature of things; that is to say, we behold His might, His wisdom, and His eternal providence for us which we understand by the magnitude of His governance on our behalf. With this same eye we also behold the glory of His holy nature.

oriented worship are spiritually harmful.[35] Rightly oriented ritual worship is central to sustaining traditional Christian belief and culture (Engelhardt, 2000); liturgical unity grounds the morality and religious life of the Christian community.[36]

4.4 Shifts in Ritual as Signaling Changes in Content

Shifts in ritual practices often signal important changes in background moral, metaphysical, axiological, or political understandings. Ruiping Fan argues, for example, that once traditional cultural or religious rituals are marginalized, moral norms will not be kept in good order for long (2012). For example, when individuals live outside of the traditional rituals of marriage and the married life, they are no longer educated, or "nurtured", regarding morally appropriate sexual relationships. As the rituals proper to the traditional moral life are marginalized, the underlying moral content changes as well. If society only affirms the very thin rituals of individual consent, asserting the goods of sexual freedom and sexual pleasure among consensual partners, then "free love" and sexual experimentation will become the taken-for-granted norm. There will

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When God is pleased to admit us to spiritual mysteries, He opens wide the sea of faith in our minds . . . (Homily 46, p. 223). The intellect is spiritual perception that is conditioned to receive the faculty of divine vision, even as the pupils of the bodily eyes in which sensible light is poured. Noetic vision is natural knowledge that is used [by power] to the natural state and it is called natural light" (Homily 66, p. 323).

[35] This is in part why the changes from the Latin Tridentine Mass to the modernized Novus Ordo so distressed traditional Catholics: the new ritual seemed unlikely rightly to direct and order worshipers towards God. Consider some of the changes: "The venerable Puginesque altar no longer in use, the Mass being celebrated on a plain wooden table on the edge of the sanctuary! The celebrant facing the people! The entire service in the vernacular! An attractive young lady and a bearded young man reading the first two lessons from the lectern! Bidding prayers coming from the members of the congregation as well as from the celebrant! An offertory procession during which a group of tousle-headed youngsters sitting on the altar steps sang what was apparently regarded as a hymn to the accompaniment of a strident guitar! A completely new version of the offertory prayers and Canon! Hand-shaking and embracing at the Kiss of Peace!" (Davies, 1980, p. 74).

[36] Wrongly oriented prayer will fail in this regard. This is why St. Makarios of Egypt (A.D. 331–391) reminds us: "Most people, however, are exactly like men walking at night wholly without light and not enjoying the slightest illumination in their souls from the divine Logos, so that they scarcely differ from the blind. They are totally caught up in material entanglements and the chains of temporal life, neither restrained by divine awe nor performing any virtuous acts. On the other hand, those who live in the world and are illumined by the holy commandments as by the stars, and who do cleave to God with faith and awe, are not utterly shrouded in darkness and for this reason can hope to attain salvation" (1986, p. 350). Distorting or abandoning the traditional rituals of Christian life and worship makes it difficult to discern good from evil undistorted by desire.

cease to be any deeply meaningful moral context through which to differentiate appropriate from inappropriate sexual relationships aside from consent.[37]

Consider the example of marriage. While Christians may consent to enter into private marriages, such as clandestine marriages, which are valid marriages but without the blessing of the Church, such circumstances are not considered ideal.[38] For traditional Christians, marriage is not simply reducible to an exchange of promises or to a contractual relationship among persons. Rather, the traditional marriage ritual reveals God joining man and woman together into "one flesh".[39] It is not merely a human partnership but holy matrimony; marriage is a divine institution. In spiritual terms, it is likened to the reunification of Adam and Eve in the man and woman, who are married to each other. As St. Ignatius of Antioch (second bishop of Antioch c. A.D. 69) reminds Christians: "It is fitting for men and women who marry to be united with the bishop's consent, so that the marriage may be related to the Lord, not to lust. Everything is to be done in God's honor (St. Ignatius, Letter to Polycarp, 1978, p. 118). The goods of Christian marriage are not simply this worldly, although such goods too may be blessed; but rather the marital relationship embraced rightly should aim the couple towards God and salvation. The ritual reminds the couple that they are to be a "house church"; that is, they are "to establish within the family truly Christian relationships, to raise children in faith and life according to the Gospel, to be an example of piety for those around one ..." (Pomazanski, 1994, p. 302). During the traditional marriage ceremony, the man

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[37] Such consequences were part and parcel of the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the 1970s in the United States.

[38] Private, or clandestine, marriages are valid and true marriages, which may occur when a priest will not be easily available for some time to perform the marriage ceremony. The typical practice within the Orthodox Church is for the priest to bless the already existing marriage once he is available. The Roman Catholic Church forbade such clandestine marriages at the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545–1563) as mortal sin; yet, it did not question their validity as marriages. As Joyce in his *Christian Marriage* (p. 116) notes: "From this it seemed to follow that if two persons, whose union was not hindered by a diriment impediment, chose to give each other the mutual pledge which was commonly held to furnish the matter and form of the Sacrament of Matrimony, not even the Church herself could prevent the sacrament from efficaciously being conferred. All that could be done was to forbid such marriages under the pain of mortal sin and impose the greatest ecclesiastical censures on all who should violate the command" (quoted in Fus, 1954, p. 22).

[39] "O God most pure, the Creator of every living thing, who didst transform the rib of our forefather Adam into a wife, because of thy love towards mankind, and didst bless them, and say unto them: Increase, and multiply, and have dominion over the earth; and didst make of the twain one flesh; for which cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh..." (Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, 1996, p. 295).

and woman do not exchange vows; instead, crowns are placed on their heads signifying that they are crowned as martyrs to each other and to Christ.[40]

Shifts in marriage ritual demarcate changes in background understandings of the place, meaning, and reality of marriage. For example, if marriage is appreciated essentially as a contractual relationship among consenting persons, it becomes plausible to recast it as primarily a legal arrangement regarding the rights and duties of community living, community property, raising children, inheritance and so forth. Here, it is no longer holy matrimony, aiming at deep spiritual goods, but has become a legal and civic arrangement. The goods of marriage have been removed from their religious and spiritual context and have been reduced through civic ritual to the immanent goods of this world. In such terms, it becomes more plausible to affirm the possibility of same-gender marriages. Here there is revealed a deep cleft between the traditionally Christian—marriage as the union of one man and one woman in holy matrimony—and the general secular—marriage as a living arrangement among consenting persons, regardless of gender, biological relationship, or, potentially, number of partners. Each utilizes the term 'marriage', but the content, context, and meanings are vastly different. Divergent meanings are often signaled by disassociated rituals (e.g., a church vs. a courthouse, the crowns of martyrdom vs. a contractual relationship and a legal marriage license). The secularization of marriage represents an immanent displacement of the transcendent: holy matrimony has been recast as a civic or legal arrangement aimed at goods in this world, rather than a spiritual unity aimed at salvation.

As with changes to religious rituals, transformations in political rituals signal shifts in political realities. When the Soviets intervened in Central Asia, they simultaneously worked to eliminate existing religious rituals and to replace such rituals with Bolshevik secular civil ceremonies to create and reinforce the new political reality.[41] The goal was to supplant the celebrations and festivals of traditional religions with civic rituals. For example, religious marriages were for

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[40] The crowing of man and woman as husband and wife remains the usual practice among Eastern Orthodox Christians. It was the ancient tradition among Roman Catholicism: "The celebrated text regarding the formation of marriage comes from the famous *Responsa ad Bulgaros* of Pope Nicholas I (858–867). In his reply to a series of questions proposed by the Bulgarian Christians, the Pope delineated the customs connected with the celebrating of marriages as they were observed at Rome. He wrote that the customs were accepted by the Church in very ancient times, and that it still held them. The Roman Pontiff then divided the entire process into four stages. There was first a betrothal, which was then followed by the rite of the *desponsatio*, at which a ring was placed on the woman's finger. Thirdly, there followed the celebration of the Mass either immediately (*mox*) or at some convenient time (*aut apto tempore*). Lastly there was the crowing of the couple as they were leaving the church" (Fus, 1954, p. 13).

[41] "Successive 'scientific atheism' campaigns targeted the established religions against the background of an active search for alternative rituals and symbols of communal solidarity. These manifested themselves not only in public collective ceremonies such as May Day parades, but also in more private life-cycle celebrations, such as the visits paid to the Lenin mausoleum by newly wed couples" (Kandiyoti and Azimova, 2004, p. 329).

many years forbidden in the Soviet Union, replaced by simple civic political rituals.[42] Devoid of religious content, such civic rituals educated citizens regarding the new political reality, while also reinforcing loyalty to the state.[43] Soviet Marxists sought to replace Orthodox belief in God, traditional asceticism, and personal charity with state patriotism, generalized solidarity, and social justice.[44] Refocusing citizens on patriotism and nationalism, solidarity and social justice again represents an immanent displacement of the transcendent: the state replaces God. Changes in ritual should thus be noted as signs to watch for other, perhaps deeper, more significant, shifts in the moral, cultural, religious, or political reality.

4.5 Conclusion

Rituals range from mostly empty bureaucratic courtesies among strangers to those that are tied into claims regarding the deep nature of reality itself. As rituals become more meaningful, they also become more particular rather than generic. The deeply meaningful rituals of traditional religions underscore our failure to share a common understanding of the meaning and goal of human life, the place of humans in the cosmos, and the character of proper behavior. Traditional rituals in contemporary society locate humans vis-à-vis specific religions and cultures, revealing those who belong while also demarcating

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[42] As Dina Siegel documents, of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel many were married only in a civil ceremony: "During field work, many immigrants who were married in the former Soviet Union in a civil marriage told me that it was a very complicated and indeed dangerous procedure to place a chupah in their apartments, since for many years religious marriages were forbidden" (1998, p. 60).

[43] Consider, a personal account, which the *New York Times* documented: "FORTY-SEVEN years ago Vladimir and Sophia Fraden were married by a Soviet Government official in a dry, five-minute civil ceremony in the city of Sverdlovsk in the Urals. There was no mention of Jewish customs or tradition, and no friends or relatives were present. 'I don't remember much about it,' Mrs. Fraden said recently. But Mrs. Fraden said she will never forget June 9, the day she and her husband were married again in a Jewish ceremony at Congregation Bnai Jacob in New Haven, along with 22 other Soviet-Jewish emigre couples. They made their vows under a traditional marriage canopy in front of 700 friends and relatives. 'It was the most exciting day of my life,' said Mrs. Fraden, 69 years old, who explained that she knew nothing of her religion until she came to the United States five years ago.

'Now I go to the synagogue whenever I can,' she said, 'and I light candles on Friday night. I love being able to openly practice my religion'" (1991).

[44] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argued, for example, in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" that it would be easy to subvert the expressions of Christianity with which they were familiar through solidarity and socialism: "Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat" (1978 [1888], p. 492).

those who are outsiders. For example, while many may observe the Orthodox Christian liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom—a popular cultural stop for comparative religion classes—only those who are canonical Orthodox Christians may receive communion. Only Orthodox Christians may fully participate in the liturgical ritual. As such, these rituals also divide moral friends from moral strangers (Engelhardt, 1996).[45] For those outside of the culture or religion, traditional rituals will appear idiosyncratic, symbolic, or aesthetic, whereas for those within the community these core rituals will be evocative of the nature of reality itself.[46]

Rituals that aspire to apply to everyone will necessarily develop forms of polished courtesy without deep substance or real intimacy. Such rituals will seek a civility that can be shared among strangers and that can be expressed without particular moral or cultural commitments, but they will reveal little in the way of moral or metaphysical content. Alasdair MacIntyre's description of Western culture as no longer in possession of a common understanding of virtue suggests as well a society without a common notion of ritual (1981). As a result, modern general secular rituals are embedded in what MacIntyre characterizes as a cosmopolitan culture articulated in the international language of secular modernity; that is, isolated from traditional cultures and religions:

> The social and cultural condition of those who speak that kind of language [is] a certain type of rootless cosmopolitanism, the condition of those who aspiring to be at home anywhere—except that is, of course, in what they regard as the backward, outmoded, undeveloped cultures of traditions—are therefore in an important way citizens of nowhere…It is the fate toward which modernity moves precisely insofar as it successfully modernizes itself and others by emancipating itself from social, cultural, and linguistic particularity and so from tradition (1988, p. 388).

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[45] As defined by H. T. Engelhardt, Jr., moral friends "…are those who share enough of a content-full morality so that they can resolve moral controversies by sound moral argument or by an appeal to a jointly recognized moral authority whose jurisdiction they acknowledge as derived from a source other than common agreement." Moral strangers, on the other hand, "…do not share enough of a moral vision so as to be able to discover content-fulll resolutions to their moral controversies, either by an appeal to commonly held moral premises (along with rules of evidence and inference) and/or to individuals or institutions commonly recognized to be in authority to resolve moral controversies and to give content-full moral guidance" (1996, p. 7).

[46] Consider the religious practices of the Aztec. Michel Graulich documents the ways in which the Aztecs reenacted myths through ritual sacrifice—including human sacrifice—so, they believed, to keep the cosmos functioning. "Reenacted myths help us to understand the rationale and the hidden or overt ends of those sacrifices that, together with the consecutive cannibalistic meals, constituted the culminating points of the great sacred dramas that were the Aztec festivals. These rituals helped the cosmos function by reenacting the creation of the world and the birth of Venus-Maize, then assisted the creation of the sun that vanquished the forces of darkness in the underworld and rose bringing the day and the rainy season assimilated to it, by erecting trees that supported the sky, by nourishing the gods and in particular Sun and Earth, by making offerings to propitiate the earth and rain deities, the Tlaloques, and so forth" (2000, p. 353).

Such rituals demonstrate general respect for the other without providing any content to that respect.

Social and political struggles often regard the structure and content of what will become the sustaining public rituals of the prevailing moral, cultural, and social ethos. Such disputes are substantial. They concern not merely which policies will best achieve the desired objectives, but which objectives are themselves desirable; that is, what moral understanding should be established as the general background for public law and social debate. As explored throughout this essay as rituals become more meaningful, they also become more particular. As rituals become deeply connected to metaphysical understandings, moral knowledge, and the deep nature of the cosmos they also underscore our failure to share a common understanding of the meaning and goal of human life, the place of humans in the cosmos, and the character of proper behavior. This is, in part, why Engelhardt refers to the contemporary culture wars as wars of ritual (2012, p. 30). As I have argued, deeply significant rituals locate humans within a particular place in time and space, i.e., within history or within a particular culture or religion, revealing those who belong to the religion and those who are sundered from it or alien to it, as well as educating regarding specific practices, meanings, and understandings of reality.

As illustrated, changes in ritual practice often signal shifts in metaphysical or epistemological assumptions, social and political frameworks, or taken-for-granted moral understandings; e.g., man as in dominion over nature vs. humans as only equal members of a biocentric reality; ritual kosher butchering of animals vs. vegan animal liberation; marriage as the mystical union of one man and one woman vs. the attempt at same gender contractual marriages; cosmic history as beginning with God's creative act, reaching through the Fall, the Incarnation, and Redemption, and as on its way to the Second Coming of Christ and the restoration of all things vs. an empty, cooling, universe trapped within the horizon of the finite, devoid of God and deep meaning. Which rituals and whose culture should frame public social reality? The choice is not neutral.

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Chapter 5
Why the West Spurns Medical Rituals

Griffin Trotter

5.1 Introduction

North America's greatest philosopher-scientist, Charles Sanders Peirce, proposed that the universe is a continuum consisting of highly-interactive, psychically-charged signs that tend imperfectly to recapitulate particular interactions until these interactions become habits. As habits form, psychic intensity decreases and the likelihood of novelty diminishes, such that extremely-habituated signs begin to operate very predictably. Peirce's term for signs that have petrified most completely into law-abiding habits is "matter."

Peirce's cosmology strikes an odd note when contrasted with the scientific materialism that dominates contemporary biomedicine in his native country (we will call the latter "biomedical materialism," or simply "BM"). On the one hand, Peirce's outlook and BM are highly congruent in: (1) their employment of hypothetical inference; (2) their mutual esteem for experimentation and other empirical methods of inquiry, (3) their evolutionary account of the development of species, and (4) their focus on physiological accounts of human function and dysfunction. On the other hand, Peirce diverges radically from orthodox BM in holding that: (1) mind is more primordial than matter; (2) mind is an indelible feature of matter (but not vice versa); (3) sociality affects physiology just as profoundly as physiology affects sociality; (4) minds and bodies evolve not unidirectionally (from bodies to minds), but interactively; and (5) chance thoroughly permeates evolution, thought, physiology, and even the interactions of atoms.

Though this chapter deals only peripherally with Peirce, its two leading ideas are distinctly Peircean. The first leading idea is an assumption that will not be defended in this chapter: that systems theory, governed by doctrines of continuity and chance, is better vindicated by contemporary scientific

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investigations than the atomistic determinism structuring BM. In fact, Peirce's accounts of continuity (synechism) and chance (tychism) precede, predict, and illuminate cutting-edge work in contemporary chaos, complexity and systems theories – theories that experimental biologists outside biomedicine have grasped and appropriated while many biomedical researchers languish in discredited Newtonian/Darwinian thought patterns. The second is a factual claim that is offered as a preliminary assumption, but also will be elucidated and defended to some degree in the subsequent discussion: that social processes profoundly affect human physiology and, hence, can be harnessed in correcting physiologic malfunctions.

The focus in this chapter is on a specific category of social processes – namely rituals. Considered from the standpoint of social anthropology, ritual may be defined as "formalized, socially prescribed symbolic behavior" (Winthrop, 1991, p. 245). This version will be the operational concept in this chapter. Rituals are formalized in the sense that they involve "a relatively invariant sequence of actions."[1] They are social in the sense that they embody shared understandings characteristic of a given society or moral community. They are symbolic insofar as they exhibit a relationship between two entities or signs such that one represents or mystically embodies the other either "by convention or through the recognition of common or analogous properties" (Winthrop, 1991, p. 286).

For the purposes of this chapter, I will introduce a distinction between two types of ritual. Sacred rituals, the first type, are characterized by symbolic connections to objects that are hallowed for their divine or metaphysically transcendent nature. Secular rituals, on the other hand, are (at least ostensibly) bereft of such sacred connections. My fourfold thesis is (1) that Western medicine, based as it is in BM, repudiates the notion of sacred ritual and holds secular ritual in disdain, even though it is ritual-laden, (2) that non-Western medical traditions consciously and often effectively employ the healing power of sacred and secular rituals, (3) that rituals, and especially sacred rituals, are potent healing devices, and (4) that the effectiveness of non-Western medical traditions is imperiled when they acquiesce to the anti-ritualistic dogmas of BM. In the process of defending these theses, I will develop an account of the "placebo effect" that is superior to its traditional description as a "non-specific effect of a medical treatment."

However, this is all in the service of showing the cardinal importance of rituals, as well as why Western culture both discounts their presence and fails to support their important place in human life. The violent events of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars not only broke the fabric of many of the traditional rituals that integrated the West (e.g., the coronation of kings and the public celebration of religious ritual), but it was also associated with a reductive

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[1] The reader should note that relative invariance is enough. To be considered rituals, action sequences need not be codified or otherwise formally prescribed, and they need not be devoid of variance.

scientific commitment that sought to replace ritual with a form of knowledge in which ritual had no place. In context, then, the orientation of biomedicine toward ritual manifests a much more complex social hermeneutic that dates back several centuries.

5.2 Clinical Ritual and the Placebo Effect

The "placebo effect" is generally defined as any "non-specific" beneficial effect of a clinical intervention (Brody, 1982; Spiro, 1986; Shepherd, 1993; Shapiro and Shapiro, 1997).[2] These effects are thought to be non-specific in the sense that they are not produced by specific physiological processes that the treatment is designed to elicit. The placebo effect is manifested, for instance, when patients improve more quickly on antibiotics that are prescribed inappropriately for viral bronchitis than they would have improved on no treatment at all. Because antibiotics are not active against viruses that cause bronchitis, this improvement is attributed to a "non-specific" effect accruing in the process of taking the pill. (Benson and Friedman, 1996) The giving of antibiotics has become an important and ubiquitous clinical ritual.

The first thing we should observe is that the description of such placebo effects as "non-specific" is spurious. We know, for instance, that some placebo effects are mediated by specific mechanisms, such as endorphin release (Levine et al., 1978). More importantly, there are numerous proposed general mechanisms of the placebo effect – such as psychosomatic interactions or the effects of classical conditioning – that seem fairly specific (Kienle and Kiene, 1996, 1997). Certainly such mechanisms are regarded seriously and studied extensively (rather than written off as "non-specific") when they are believed to be causes of disease. Why should the case be different when they are mechanisms of healing?

Because the concept of a "non-specific" effect is itself very non-specific, there is much controversy about the nature of the placebo effect (Trotter, 2000, p. 64). What most accounts seem to share is an (often implicit) assumption that placebo effects are mediated through consciousness – regardless of the presence or absence of other mediators. Unconscious patients are never accused of benefiting from the placebo effect. For reasons that we shall soon examine, consciousness is generally viewed in Western biomedicine as a "non-specific" phenomenon.

However, not all healing effects of consciousness are regarded as placebo effects. If someone experiences an improvement in health due to an improved outlook generated, for instance, by religious conversion, this improvement is not attributed to the placebo effect. Religious activity, as Western biomedicine understands and classifies it, cannot produce placebo effects because it is not a clinical activity.

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[2] "Nocebo effects" are non-specific deleterious effects of clinical interventions.

   Placebo effects, without exception, are products of secular clinical rituals. Placebo effects occur when formal clinical routines established within the culture of healing (such as pill taking, surgical maneuvers, placing the stethoscope on the chest, and injections) are effective due to their symbolic properties. The auscultation routine, for instance, which involves a placing of the stethoscope on the chest and various other points of the patient's anatomy, with intent listening, has strong symbolic significance in Western culture. It manifests the physician's ability to perceive patients' inner workings and apply esoteric knowledge in their interpretation, as well the physician's earnestness about healing.

   Generally such routines are regarded as second-order instrumentalities. That is, they are employed not as direct means of healing, but rather as means of elucidating or introducing the means of healing (these latter being the primary instrumentalities). The placebo effect is the phenomenon in which clinical routines, as rituals, exhibit first-order instrumentality. It should be defined not as a non-specific therapeutic effect, but rather as a therapeutic effect of clinical ritual.

5.3 The Placebo Effect in Biomedical Research

The ubiquity and significance of placebo effects is generally acknowledged in Western biomedicine. However, rather than seeking to cultivate and maximize placebo effects, it tends to regard them as a nuisance. One of the explicit goals of medical research in technologically advanced Western nations (TAWN) is to control for placebo effects and develop medical treatments that work through physiologic mechanisms that do not require the conscious participation of patients (except with regard to second order, treatment-initiating behaviors such as seeing the physician or taking the prescribed pill).

   This goal is appropriate when researchers are concerned with determining whether a highly expensive clinical intervention is worth the expense. Researchers correctly assume that if expensive medical products are no more effective in clinical applications than inexpensive, physiologically inert substitutes applied in the same manner, then they are not worth the expense. Indeed, in the lucrative industries of Western medical therapeutics, the evaluation of expensive treatments is the prevailing concern.

   Nevertheless, unwarranted general conclusions have followed from this focus on the evaluation of expensive therapies. The clinical conclusion seems typically to be that if nothing is better than the ritual itself, then nothing is effective at all and medicine has nothing to offer. But when the ritual is itself effective, then this conclusion is false. When all we have is ritual, then perhaps a study of ritual is in order.

   But for some reason, the aforementioned false conclusion has insinuated itself into the collective ethos of Western medicine, such that the medical-industrial complex in TAWN is loathe to study ritual, or to even to

acknowledge its vast potential in medical therapeutics. One obvious reason for this false dogma is that the generation and marketing of medical rituals is not lucrative (or, at least, it is not widely recognized as lucrative). But that is only a small part of the puzzle. As I will explain in more detail below, the aversion to clinical applications of ritual is largely based on an implicit commitment to biomedical materialism that structures the clinical thinking of medical practitioners as well as the theoretical thinking of researchers in TAWN.

The preoccupation with evaluating expensive products and with distilling out the effects of medical ritual (i.e., controlling for placebo effects) has produced research methodologies that are ill-suited for certain potentially important research ends. Specifically, the tenets of appropriate study design are inappropriate for the investigation of so-called "alternative and complementary medicine" – especially when the alternative therapies in question are imbedded in diverging medical traditions that work in radically different ritualistic contexts.[3]

Medical researchers in TAWN are concerned with avoiding errors of false-confirmation. The most elementary error of false-confirmation is alpha (type I) error, which occurs when a study hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected erroneously. The corresponding most elementary error of false-repudiation is beta (type II) error, which occurs when the study hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted erroneously.

The emphasis in TAWN on avoiding alpha error is justified in several legitimate ways. First, most of the treatments studied in TAWN are somewhat dangerous. The principle of nonmaleficence would indicate that the patient not be endangered without good reason – which would include due diligence in avoiding alpha error. Second, as we observed above, most the treatments studied in TAWN are expensive. Honesty and good stewardship requires that such treatments should not be recommended without sufficient evidence that they are effective.

Both of these considerations, however, are less relevant for treatments (including most ritual-centered treatments) that are non-dangerous and inexpensive. Especially when non-dangerous, inexpensive treatments are the only available, potentially effective treatments, the priority should shift away from concern about false-affirmation toward concern about false-repudiation. In fact, the evaluation of interventions based in alternative medical traditions is

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[3] Some of the approaches that count as part of "alternative and complementary medicine" (for instance, chiropractic medicine, therapeutic touch, homeopathy, and massage therapy) have adopted most of the rituals of ordinary clinical medicine as it is practiced in TAWN (Trotter, 2000, p. 63). For the most part, contemporary medical researchers have done a creditable job of investigating these approaches, often debunking exaggerated claims. On the other hand, certain approaches are imbedded in cultural beliefs and standards that are radically at odds with the beliefs and standards that structure ordinary clinical medicine in TAWN. Examples include Navajo medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, and Ayurveda. When I refer to "alternative medical traditions," these are the sorts of approaches to which I refer.

fraught with the hazard of beta error and with the hazard of more general errors of false-repudiation. To help us see why, I will introduce the concept of external validity.

For our purposes, a clinical study Y of some treatment φ is externally valid for a specific practice setting P when the efficacy (or lack thereof) of φ in Y is straightforwardly translatable into accurate judgments about the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of φ in P. There are two important reasons that biomedical studies of treatments deriving from alternative medical traditions are likely to be externally invalid: (1) treatments will not be efficacious in the studies because the studies fail to incorporate important ritualistic elements, and (2) treatments will not be efficacious in the studies because the study group does not respond to rituals or symbols that are effective in populations that typically seek the treatment being studied.

Suppose, for instance, that a group of mainstream medical researchers in TAWN undertake to study the clinical effects of Navajo treatments for asthma. These researchers attend a Navajo Way (the "Way" is a ceremonial healing ritual) performed to heal an asthmatic patient. They observe that certain herbs are employed, apparently producing the desired improvement. Subsequently they design a study in which patients presenting to their practices are prescribed the herbs in question, comparing this intervention group to a group of placebo controls. Because the herbs have been wrenched in such a study from their ritualistic context, any ritualistic-pharmacological synergism present in the Way would be eliminated. Hence, beta error could result because of the first of the aforementioned threats to external validity. Furthermore, it is possible that patients presenting to the researchers' practices are insufficiently conditioned to the symbols prevailing in Navajo culture to respond to the rituals in the Way. Hence, even if the researchers effectively reproduced the Way, it might be ineffective in the particular study population. A lack of efficacy in their study therefore would NOT translate into valid conclusions about the effectiveness of the treatment in the Navajo population. Attempts to declare the treatment "disproved" on the basis of such a study would be instances of false repudiation due to the second of the aforementioned threats to external validity.

Even studies in TAWN that purport to exhibit the effectiveness of treatments from Alternative Medical Traditions are typically incomplete. Consider, for instance, the attempts to demonstrate the effectiveness of Chinese herbal medicine for the treatment of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), a common condition that does not respond well to conventional treatments offered in TAWN. In 1998, Bensoussan and colleagues published the results of a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of Chinese herbal medicine for IBS (Bensoussan et al., 1998). For their study, they recruited patients from two teaching hospitals and five private gastroenterology practices in Sydney, Australia. Chinese medical practitioners conducted the treatments in the traditional manner at their own offices (thus mostly precluding worries about the first of the aforementioned threats to external validity – an exceptional achievement). Patients in the

treatment group improved more than those in the placebo group, indicating in the authors' opinion the effectiveness of the Chinese approach.

Though the Bensoussan study is in many respects laudable, and effective in demonstrating the effectiveness of the Chinese herbs for IBS, it leaves many questions unanswered. Only 33% of the patients in the placebo group improved – apparently indicating that the beneficial effects came from the herbs rather than from the Chinese ritual. But would the results have been different if the researchers recruited patients from a population that regularly consults practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine? And what about the 33% who improved on placebos? Did these patients benefit from the placebo effect – i.e., from the therapeutic effects of ritual – or does their improvement merely demonstrate regression to the mean? A non-treatment control group would have provided an answer to this latter question; but it was not included in the study – just as non-treatment control groups are regularly excluded from clinical studies in TAWN.

Medical research practices in TAWN, in summary, are ill-suited for the study of the therapeutic effects of ritual, especially as they arise in the context of alternative medical traditions. The therapeutic effects of rituals are regarded derogatorily as placebo effects – something that researchers must control for rather than study or cultivate. Furthermore, researchers in TAWN typically fail to incorporate potentially important ritualistic elements when they study the alternative traditions.

5.4 Clinical Applications of Ritual in TAWN and in Non-Western Medical Traditions

In TAWN, good clinical medicine is typically equated with evidence-based medicine. Evidence-based medicine, in turn, is conceived as medicine that employs treatments that, so far as possible, have been vindicated in randomized, placebo controlled studies – that is, treatments that have been shown to work by means other than the operation of ritual. As a consequence, notions of effective clinical medicine in TAWN are dissociated from ideas about the effective employment of clinical ritual. It is a matter of pride for most mainstream clinicians in TAWN that they do not heal through the performance of clinical rituals.

As I mentioned earlier, the imperative for financial profit and the principle of nonmaleficence are only part of the explanation for the emphasis in TAWN on placebo controls and the application of non-ritual-centered treatments. One might also invoke the inefficiency of ritualistic therapy (presumably an elaborate ritual will take more time than dispensing a pill) and the difficulty of enacting uniform standards for ritualistic treatments (i.e., it would be more difficult to educate physicians in their application and significantly more difficult to assess physician performance). But, again, this is only part of the story. Physicians in TAWN are trained to undertake numerous procedures that are

difficult to learn and nearly impossible to assess in a systematic manner. Auscultation of heart sounds, palpation for pulses and masses, and assessment of skin turgor are examples. Medical students learn to apply many of these procedures in contexts where there is little or no evidence from clinical trials that they improve medical decision-making or outcomes.

The characteristic that differentiates rituals that are acceptable to physicians in TAWN from those used in other medical traditions that TAWN finds suspect is the manner in which the accepted rituals cohere with materialistic assumptions that structure clinical paradigms in TAWN. The assessment for a bounding or hammer pulse, for instance, applies knowledge of fluid and pressure dynamics, and our understanding of the effects of catecholamines on myocardial contractility. The assessment of pulses in Traditional Chinese Medicine, on the other hand, applies theories about the flow of energy conceived as *qi* – a concept that defies Western biophysics. For biomedical scientists in TAWN, the materialistic account of human pathophysiology is authoritative, while accounts based on *qi* flow or on the interaction of polar forces (such as *yin* and *yang* or, for Navajos, *sa'ah naagháí* and *bikeh hózhq*) are at best useful fictions.

In other words, Western biomedicine is committed to biomedical materialism, and presumes that any therapy based on assumptions contrary to BM is deficient. This posture is problematic insofar as BM has not been proved and, in fact, all of what the West knows about human physiology and disease processes is consistent with non-materialistic theories such as the aforementioned panpsychic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. BM portrays mind or consciousness as essentially an epiphenomenon – i.e., as an effect of physical processes that is, of itself, non-causally-efficacious. If epiphenomenalism is true, then everything that can be known about human physiology and human psychology is explicable in terms of the operation of the laws of chemistry and physics as they apply to biological processes. Consciousness is merely an accretion of these processes – supervening but never intervening.

Rituals and their effects – which by definition involve the operation of consciousness – are for BM explicable as physical processes, if only we understood these processes sufficiently. In truly scientific medicine, then, only the physical account matters. Even in psychiatry this presumption has taken hold. Psychiatrists in TAWN still occasionally employ psychoanalytic and behaviorist methods; but these are viewed as stopgap measures, pending a more adequate understanding of neuropsychiatry and its sister discipline, psychopharmacology. Techniques from alternative traditions such as acupuncture and the assessment of *qi* are analogous. That is, they are thought at best to be provisional – perhaps useful for certain practical purposes when nothing more orthodox works as well, but with conceptual underpinnings that ultimately need revision to bring them in line with the fundamental assumption defining BM. Matter comes first.

Alternative traditions such as the Navajo and Chinese reject this ontology altogether. They straddle the Western mind/matter divide by founding their

account of human physiology in concepts (such as wind and *qi*) that exhibit both psychic and material properties. Mind and matter, on these accounts, are indistinct expressions of something metaphysically more primordial – of something sacred. Neither is the fundamental cause of the other. BM is rejected.

As a consequence, Navajo, Chinese and Ayervedic healers are just as keen to harness psychic forces, consciousness and spirituality as they are to harness physical forces – and often they make no distinction between the two techniques. Sacred and secular rituals, then, are just as valid in these traditions as surgery or medication – and often superior in that they generate fewer risks or side effects. Healers sometimes prescribe the individual practice of ritual (as, for instance, in Yoga, meditation and certain chants). Also, and perhaps more importantly, they employ social rituals.

Navajo medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, and Ayurveda all subscribe to some variation of the notion that life energies are transferable interpersonally. Beneficial transfers can be facilitated through healing social rituals. For the traditional Navajo, individual illnesses are signs of social disharmony. Medical treatments are consequently undertaken in a social context, healing individuals and communities together in ceremonial chants, "sings," or "ways." The social tendency is less robust in Chinese medicine and Ayurveda, but the latter nevertheless attend seriously to the exchange of energies between healer and patient.

5.5 The Healing Potential of Secular and Sacred Rituals

In a notable departure from the practice of not studying placebo effects, American researchers recently conducted a randomized controlled clinical trial comparing two types of placebo treatment in patients with persistent arm pain (Kaptchuk et al., 2006). Those receiving sham acupuncture showed greater subjective improvement in pain and symptom severity than those receiving placebo pills (controls received acupuncture and amitryptilene, respectively, during a run-in period, and signed consent forms appropriate to these modalities), leading the researchers to conclude: "Placebo effects seem to be malleable and depend on the behaviours embedded in medical rituals" (Kaptchuk et al., 2006, p. 391).

This study shows that the therapeutic effectiveness of rituals will vary according to the type of ritual, and coheres with the common-sense (but unstudied) hypotheses that more elaborate and metaphysically meaningful rituals have greater healing potential. The common-sense hypothesis is conceptually plausible in that: (1) placebo effects probably result from symbolic meanings embedded in the clinical rituals that produce them, (2) symbols associated more intimately with healing are likely to produce greater healing effects, and (3) more elaborate and metaphysically meaningful symbols are probably, on the whole, more intimately associated with healing insofar as the notion of health is linked with metaphysically pregnant ideas of overall well being.

If the common-sense hypothesis is true, then sacred rituals would generally possess greater healing potential than secular rituals – at least within the social systems in which they arise and remain meaningful. This hypothesis is supported anecdotally by the long history of religious healing rites, with their enumerable reported successes, and the historically intimate association between spirituality and healing. And it suggests that the diminution of sacred ritual – not merely in the West, but increasingly elsewhere across the globe – may result not only in spiritual impoverishment, but also in negative health consequences.

In Western polities like the United States, interest in alternative traditions is often associated with "New Age" spirituality – that is, with an attempt to reclaim lost religious groundings through the elaboration of a fairly superficial, but less secularly offensive, ecumenical pan-spiritualism. The prospects for this project are dubious, given the many conceptual confusions it manifests. For instance, the emphasis within New Age philosophy on attaining "inner peace" by accepting and indulging "natural" impulses, such as the impulse to fornicate, contains no coherent account[4] of the existence or source of negative, peace-disrupting features of natural inclinations, and thus begets no useful means for distinguishing between generally acceptable and generally reprehensible forms of sexual, emotional and narcissistic self-indulgence. Further, the attempt by New Age spiritualists to synthesize a diversity of incompatible and incommensurable moral traditions leads inevitably to a loss of metaphysical grounding (manifested in ridiculously superficial, typically hedonistic accounts of human growth, moral evolution, God, and the afterlife)[5] and to a loss of historical foundations. Unfortunately for New Age spriituality, the power of sacred ritual seems to coincide with these qualities of metaphysical richness and historical groundedness.

That such a limited approach to the linkage between spirituality and healing should proliferate in the West is not surprising. As Western attitudes become

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[4] The multitude of incoherent accounts is too vast to consider in this chapter. On one version, self-indulgence is acceptable when it is effected lovingly. But, love, on such accounts, is typically incoherent, in that it involves a kind of synchronized self-indulgence, amounting essentially to conflict avoidance. No recognition is possible of the fact that human impulses are deeply contradictory at both the intra-personal and interpersonal levels, and that many human impulses are aggressive or otherwise destructive. If love is ever to transcend self-indulgence, it will be through an account of a proper human end, or *telos*, which is precisely what New Age philosophy repudiates.

[5] My observations about New Age spirituality are based on my perusal of non-scholarly books at bookstores. Though I hesitate to impugn any particular work, some representative titles speak for (or perhaps against) themselves. Consider: *When God Winks on Love*, by Squire Rushnell (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), which provides instruction on how to interpret "godwinks" – i.e., "silent messages from the universe" which lead people to romantic love, and *Healing with Angels*, by Doreen Virtue (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 1999), which explains the tenets of "angel therapy" and provides prayers for healing pets, releasing stress and enhancing business (the same author has another book which explains how to heal with fairies).

more deeply imbued with the perspective of biomedical materialism, and traditional religion is scorned for its dogmas, superstitions, and excessive demands, a sanitized, incoherent hodgepodge like New Age spirituality looms as the only tangible vestige of the sacred for those within the cultural mainstream. Even traditional Western Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have devolved, to a large extent, into ecumenical, New Age thinking. For many Westerners, the insights of clinicians and scientists are felt to run deeper than those of theologians and saints. Insofar as biomedical materialism manifests or bears a connection to a robust moral-ontological vision (as in secular humanism), its leaders come to substitute for the high priests of old. Physicians are among the most conspicuous and prominent of these contemporary high priests, and their clinical routines often provide the only substitute – paltry as it may be – for liturgical rituals that structured the lives of their ancestors.

Yet, as Ruiping Fan notes (2008), the marginalization of moral traditions is also evident (though to a lesser degree) in Eastern societies such as China. Fan links this development to the influence of Western biomedicine, and on this point he is certainly correct. In closing, I join Professor Fan in urging caution regarding the marginalization of moral tradition under the influence of Western biomedical materialism. Western biomedical materialism, and its clinical manifestations, are not worthy of the deference now extended, almost globally, in their direction. The fundamental theses of BM are less rigorously supported by current scientific investigations than alternative accounts, such as Peirce's, that leave far more space for rituals, both sacred and secular. Contrary to the sentiments of a predominately secular humanistic elite in TAWN, science does not require the repudiation of traditional religion or traditional healing. In abandoning tradition, much is lost, not merely in healthcare, as I have argued in this essay, but also in the conduct of human life. These losses should be soberly assessed.

Until better research methods are developed and tailored to the study of ritual, "empirical verification" of ritual-centered treatments will consist mostly of the experience garnered through generations (and often centuries) of practice in the traditions that use them. It would be foolhardy to discount these approaches – and currently they may offer the best options in some circumstances, even for patients who are not familiar with the ritualistic context.

This situation reflects the more general circumstance that rituals command a centrality in human life because they reflect the incarnate, symbol-rich character of human existence. Humans in general act in ways that extralinguistically acknowledge a rich web of meanings. Formal rituals summarize these meanings and focus them in ways that not only communicate a message but evoke profound psychological and physiological responses. Humans are beings who frame their lives in and through ritual.

The taken-for-granted expectations that were born of the late Enlightenment West discounted ritual to the detriment of society in general and medicine in particular. A robustly truncated view of knowledge and reality, when combined with the anticlericism associated with the laicism of the New Europe, made the

appreciation of the importance of ritual difficult. Now at the beginning of the 21st century, we will need critically to examine this heritage and re-explore the power and importance of ritual.

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Part II
Confucian Insights: Ritual as the Fabric of the Moral Community

Chapter 6
Ritual: Meaning and Recognition

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6.1 General Meanings of Ritual

What is ritual? There can be many answers to this question reflecting the different perspectives of different scholars (this can be demonstrated if one regards the perspectives of different scholars, such as V. Turner, M. Mead, E. Freud, E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer, Levy-Bruhl, Malinowski and the so-called Cambridge School of Criticism including J. Harrison, G. Murray, A. B. Cook and F. M. Cornford). While it is difficult to determine a unified and comprehensive definition of ritual, a close examination of its general meanings enables one to grasp its essence and begin to answer the question, "what is ritual?".

From the perspective of Chinese Confucianism, the concept, "Li" (礼), is similar to "ritual", however, traditionally, Li was often explained as a principle and its practice, which was true at least in Zhou Dynasty (黄仁宇, 1992, p. 13). In most cases, Li was also translated as polite, courteous, protocol, gift, ceremony or rite in Latin. However, Confucianism treats Li as the fundamental means of both governing the state and cultivating a moral sense. For example, the important Confucian classic entitled, *Book of Filial Piety*, points out: "Nothing is better than music at changing prevailing habits and customs, nothing is better than Li at keeping the State in order and governing the people" (《孝经. 广要道》). As far as its function is concerned, Li keeps the political and social order in place by putting into practice a system of behavioral norms. In the process of exercising Li, individuals keep a tight rein on their feelings, emotions, and desires as a means to restraining their behavior to meet the standards of communal life. For example, in the Chinese ceremony of jubilation, the participants usually avoid expressing their unhappy emotions and do not speak unfortunate words. For this reason, Confucius insists that self-restraint is a precondition for returning to rites. As rite (Li) and music are only two of the basic tools or means of realization of Ren (humanity),

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Confucius also thinks we should not see, hear, talk or do anything that is not in accord with rite (孔子《论语.颜渊》). Centered on Ren, Li is not just a sensible, external and prescribed act, but the real bearer and embodiment of the spirit of Ren.

Practically, in a Confucian society, a well-ordered government depends upon the effective exertion of Confucian moral principles ritualized through a set of fixed standards consisting of gestures, language, tools, and other symbolic elements. Philosophically, the Confucian idea of Li is based on its view of the world and a theory of human nature. In accordance with Confucianism, the nature of ritual lies in various orders including the order of mind, the order of community and the order of society. Similar to Spinoza's conclusion that the order of the mind is correspondent to the order of the external world because of their common origin, from the Confucian principle of the unity of Heaven and Earth, one can deduce that Li (ritual) is the embodiment of the cosmos. This conclusion can be observed in *The Book of Rites*, which describes: "Music is the harmony of Heaven and Earth; ritual is the order of Heaven and Earth. Because of harmony various things change; because of order all things differentiate from one another" (《礼记.乐记》). It is from this idea that Cheng Yi, a Confucian philosopher of China's Song Dynasty, developed the conception that "complete comprehension of both god and the change of all things derives from the perfect knowledge of ritual and music" (程颢, 程颐, 1981, p. 225). According to Yi, rituals exist everywhere. Even robbers and thieves have rituals. If ritual is destroyed, the state will be on the brink of collapse because ritual brings about order, peace, and regulation by constraining the terrible and destructive power that originates from personal impulses.

It appears that ritual provides us not only with the basic patterns of our ordinary lives, but also with a source of creative inspiration for myth, dance, music, drama and painting. Many Chinese cultural achievements find their origins and motivation for further development in a variety of rituals. Rene Gerard has even made the assertion that "all religious rituals spring from the surrogate victim, and all the great institutions of mankind, both secular and religious, spring from ritual." (Gerard, 1977, p. 306). In ancient China, the ritual of public punishment fulfilled the Confucian principle of Justice under normal social conditions; rituals of oath fulfilled the principle of Loyalty; and the rituals of offering sacrifices to ancestors reinforced and still strengthen the principle of Filial Piety. In others words, Chinese rituals may be understood as the bearers and guardians of the Confucian system of morality.

It is a well-known fact that in the long history of China the Lingqing System lasted for more than 2,000 years. According to this system, once an Emperor died they were to be carried into a huge mausoleum with a vast cemetery, which was built far in advance of the Emperor's death, where special officials from the fixed administrative organ were to offer daily sacrifices in accord with the Confucian principle that "the living generation should respect and serve the dead ancestors as if they were still living". In almost every Chinese dynasty, important political activities were related to this system in some way, including

a series of rituals that embodied the Confucian ideas, such as those of family, order, state, Humanity, Justice, Loyalty, and Filial Piety.

According to Confucianism, a country is a big family. In fact, the Chinese term "国家", meaning "country" in English, is the combination of the Chinese word "国" (country) and the Chinese word "家" (family). The ancestral memorial tablet and the correspondent ritual of offering sacrifices on festival and other important days, such as a marriage or the birth of a baby, can often be found in the hall of every Chinese family in the vast countryside and serves as a microform of the Lingqing System. Without the ritual of offering sacrifices, that is without offspring, one is in serious violation of filial piety because to be without offspring means to be without the burning of incense or a memorial tablet and one is therefore unable to continue the family lineage. To be unable to continue the family lineage is referred to as being "without burning incense or joss stick" and is consider to be an evil curse in areas of the Chinese countryside. Even today, the continuation of the practice of burning incense is a cultural element that continues to influence the social governance of China. The Chinese ritual of offering sacrifices strengthens the Chinese principle of filial piety and therefore the continuity of family lineage whose symbol is the continuous burning of incense before a tomb or memorial tablet. Only after one is familiar with this ritual and its significance can one understand the cultural reason why many Chinese peasants desire sons, making population control difficult in the Chinese countryside. However, an additional reason why peasants desire sons in the countryside is because they are the primary bearers of physical labor.

It is well recognized that the great majority of rituals are carried out by a collective, group, or community, not by a single individual. Even if some rituals appear to be performed individually, they should still be recognized as an individualization of a collective experience because they are nothing more than the repetition of a common experience or procedure shared by every person. This is certainly the case in China when an individual offers sacrifices to one's ancestors. Therefore, ritual is essentially a collective activity that follows certain fixed patterns and procedures. This is recognized by Durkheim's view of ritual as an expression of the collective conscience and by Hans H. Penner when he states, "Ritual is a certain kind of action which represents, or presents once again, a collective emotion or desire which has been blocked even though the emotion is intense" (Penner, 1996, pp. 334–335).

The definition of ritual as formulized gestures or procedures with sacred meanings, which highlights one main dimension of ritual, is fundamentally derived from research pertaining to the religious experiences of primitive societies, as is found in William James, and clearly fails to recognize secular rituals and their differentiations from religious rituals. However, despite these differences, most secular rituals can be traced back to ancient religious rituals because almost all human activities in ancient China were closely related to the gods. This latent connection between secular and religious rituals can be seen by our etymological examination of Chinese term "礼仪" (Liyi), which roughly corresponds to the English word "ritual". Just as the term "ritual" has undergone a

slow change of its signification, the Chinese term, "礼仪", has had a continuous renewal of meanings. The expression "礼仪", a combination of two Chinese words "礼" (Li) and "仪" (Yi), appeared very early in the first collection of Chinese poems entitled, *Poems*. Although the words li and yi initially had similar meanings, li stresses the intrinsic aspect of ritual while yi emphasizes the extrinsic aspect of ritual. However, in most cases, ancient Chinese scholars used the words li and yi separately. According to textual research conducted by Wang Guowei, "礼" (Li) was the same as "禮" (Yi) in ancient times. Some inscriptions were found on bones and tortoise shells from the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th B.C.–11th. B.C.) in which the right part of the word "禮" took the shape of "豊" in which "豆" signified the sacrificial vessel (not "bean" in modern sense), "丰丰" signified "two strings of pearls", and "凵" referred to the sacrificial utensil. Because "示" signified "god", "礼" meant to respect the gods by offering pearls to them (王国维, 1959, pp. 290–291). In the Western Zhou Dynasty (c.1100 B.C.–C.771 B.C.), "礼" was gradually bestowed with the meaning of "respect for person" and corresponded in meaning to the French word "etiquette" and the English words of "courtesy", "protocol", and "ritual" (顾希佳, 2001, p. 70). As Li Anzhai aptly states, the "Chinese word '礼' seems to include folkways, mores, institutions, ceremonies and government decrees" (李安宅, 2005, p. 3). Furthermore, before the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C.–206 B.C.) "Li" also included a series of moral norms and standards of right and wrong. Therefore, at that time, "li" had a more content-full meaning than the English term, "ritual". If one extracts out the general character of multiple rituals, including political, military, educational, medical, diplomatic, even economical rituals, one may find that ritual is not only the expression of individual or collective emotions, but the expression of social relations. In this way, ritual is not only concerned not with the relationship between individuals and groups to which they belong or the relationship between humans and nature, but with one's encounter with ultimate reality. The word, "ritual", embodies within it the quartet of Heaven, Earth, humans, and gods. One might even say that ritual is, to a certain degree, the embodiment of morality and ideology and a response to nature and the rhythms of life (think of the rituals of birth, coming-of-age, marriage, and death).

Due to the enlightenment turn towards rationality and secularization in modern society, the quartet previously mentioned is in a state of disintegration. As a result, many rituals have become external procedures or "empty shells" due to their lack of sacred significance and mythic value. As human beings become the center of all creatures, more people lose reverence for the gods, Heaven, and Earth. It has even become the case that symbols of sacredness, such as oblations and altars, have lost their significance in the eyes of many to the extent that rituals, which should be bestowed with sacred meanings in festivals, have become pure plays. Due to this tendency, some rituals have become increasingly formalized. As ritual continues to be commercialized in modern society it creates a market and, in turn, turns itself into a market. Today, an example of this may be found in Korea and China where the younger generations contract

with ritual companies to cry the mourning rituals when their parents pass instead of performing the ritual themselves. These individuals says that they have no time to cry or are unwilling to cry, even though crying was part of the mourning ritual of the Confucian tradition, which was even medically affirmed as therapeutic. Given the subtle changes of the attitudes of modern individuals towards traditional rituals, one must take into consideration the impact of their ways on modern social life and its formation.

As is commonly recognized, there are two diverse approaches to ritual, one taken by extreme romanticists, like J.J. Rousseau, and the other, a pan-moralist attitude taken by the Confucians. According to the extreme romanticist's approach, ritual is a non-natural performance that suppresses the nature of the person, stifles his individuality, ruins his purity, and causes hypocrisy. When the performance of ritual becomes second nature, all individuals must wear their masks to live in a value-community, which is harmful to one's liberty, honesty, and vitality of spirit. Accordingly, in his famous paper, "On Science and Art", J.J. Rousseau wrote: "There is an evil and hypocritical uniformity prevailing in our custom as if the minds of all persons were founded after the same model. We are always forced to act by ritual and continue to live under the orders of custom. We never follow our own nature but follow these kinds of custom" (Rousseau, 1964, pp. XXII–XLI).

Alternatively, according to Confucianism, human beings are beings of ritual. As a symbol of morality and civilization, ritual embodies the value and dignity of human beings. As a tacit normative performance, ritual unites individuals and serves to distinguish human beings from other animals by embodying a universal moral framework and providing social regulation. This is demonstrated in the well-known sayings of Confucius in *The Book of Rites*. He said, "it is by ritual that human beings exist as human beings" (《礼记.冠义》); "a man is unable to be a real person, unless he knows ritual"(孔子,《论语.泰伯》) and "a man is unable to be a real person without learning ritual" (孔子,《论语.尧曰》). However, it is most important to acknowledge the moral dimension of ritual stressed by Confucianism. For example, Xunzhi considers ritual as the highest point of humanity (《荀子.礼论》). Other Confucian philosophers differ in their perspective of Ren (Humanity) and ritual, but all of them stress the impossibility of morality and Ren without ritual.

The constantly renewed idea of ritual reflects the historically varied motivations, which led to various changes in the social life as well as a reconstruction of its ideology. It is necessary to examine how society could be conceived of without ritual and, consequently, why ritual is needed for social organization in a broad sense.

Confucianism becomes a substantial approach when one recognizes that it encompasses not only a theory, but practice and practical wisdom. In this sense, rituals constitute the structure of Confucianism. Therefore, the decay of ritual is tantamount to the decay of Confucianism. As a result, one can see how the gradual disappearance of those rituals in China associated with the theoretical and practical aspects of the Confucian system has a negative impact.

Neo-Confucianism has not been influential in modern society because it neglects the great importance of ritual and limits itself to the realm of abstract theory. As a result, it appears that the renaissance of Confucianism and the development of Neo-Confucianism depends upon whether their rituals can be carried out in modern society. This observation may be more readily understood if one looks to three classic Confucian books, the *Yili* (《仪礼》, *Rites*), the *Zhouli* (《周礼》, *Rites of Zhou Dynasty*) and the *Liji* (《礼记》, *The Book of Rites*), which provide detailed discussion of almost all rituals. Additionally, other Confucian classics discuss the essence, significance, and function of ritual.

Theorizing about ritual is as old as Confucianism. Malinowski's (1926) remarks on myth are also true of the Confucian view of ritual, "It expresses, enhances and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for efficiency and contains practical rules for the guidance of man" (Kluckhohn, 1996, pp. 346–354). In effect, Confucian rituals (li) "were constituted in imitation of perceptible cosmic rhythms as a means of strengthening the coordination of the human being and his natural and spiritual environment. They were used to reinforce a sense of human participation and context in the regular process of existence" (Hall and Ames, 1986, p. 86). In the Zhou Dynasty, the focus of ritual shifted from man's relationship with the supernatural to the relationship among social members. However, these rituals never lost their sacred significance. On the one hand, they regulated the interpersonal relations in the courts and on the other they functioned as a coordinator among members on all levels of society. Within the scope of this chapter, it is not possible to discuss the various aspects of Confucian theories of ritual, but it is possible to say that for Confucianism, generally, ritual not only has pedagogical value, but also a normative significance, it not only serves as a means to displaying and developing communication among social members, but also serves as a means for self-cultivation and individual expression of emotion. Additionally, ritual is a vehicle for establishing political authority, realizing social control, and changing or defending tradition. In other words, ritual is a structured pattern of actions for dealing with the relationships among human beings, gods and nature.

However strange it is, ritual is a part of human life. There is good reason to believe that wherever a human community exists, ritual also exists. Ritual will remain indispensable to humans so long as they live a religious life, encounter ultimate reality, require coordination and cooperation among group members, are in need of a collective identity, seek the realization of self-esteem and a sense of value from their community, require security, and anticipate social order, stableness and foresightedness for their future.

Naturally, everyone has a different image, experience, and understanding of ritual. As a structured social practice, ritual indicates different meanings for different groups. For instance, kneeling down has different meanings at different times in China. Sometimes, it means high respect, sometimes supplication, sometimes humiliation, and sometimes loyalty. Consequently, ritual is a formalized perspective of the world and a programmed representation of life ideas embodied in a well-organized series of behaviors. Due to ritual's formal

character, changes in ritual occur very slowly in comparison to social life. An example of this is the fact that there has been no significant change to the rituals of marriage or mourning in the Chinese countryside for thousands of years.

A great deal of anthropological evidence suggests that almost every important human activity was ritualized in primitive societies. In primitive tribes, ritual was seen as providing refuge for the spirit as well as providing the power with which they could face risks and survive the challenges of their environment. Even today one can observe the influence of ritual on human production and life. Consequently, one may accept the following explanation of ritual: "Ritual is a human phenomenon. It makes human mutuality possible through dealing with basic issues of existence. It leads to assurance and order, as well as death. It enables the world to become simpler and more manipulable, and thus makes decision-making easier" (my translation from German, Cf. http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual).

Since ritual belongs to a group, organization or community, there is no private ritual in a real sense. Even though some rituals appear to be performed by the individual, they should still be regarded as a kind of individualization of the collective because they are constituted by nothing more than the repetition of common experiences or procedures. For instance, one may observe an individual offering sacrifices to an ancestor in front of a tomb, which you often see in China, but the ritual should still be regarded as public because the individual's performance of the ritual is completed in a fixed way, familiar and common to the community to which he belongs.

Ritual is a symbol of the rhythm of human life and production. As is well known, there are many festivals in almost every country, which usually have corresponding rituals of celebration. In the past, these rituals have been connected to the change of seasons and agricultural production, the birth and/or death of religious figures, or significant historical events. At present, some rituals are celebrated at the beginning and end of big projects, however these rituals appear to be more and more for public entertainment. The strongest case for demonstrating how ritual works as a symbol of the rhythm of life is the "rite of passage". Undoubtedly, the rituals for birth, coming-of age, marriage, and death not only signify the different stages of life, but also demonstrate how these stages are not simply natural events, but social events signifying one's entrance into new social relationships with others. In this case, ritual has the double role of transforming individual affairs into public affairs and natural events into social events.

As a language of behavior, ritual is not only a dialogue of bodies, but a dialogue of minds. According to *The Book of Rites*, ritual originated from human eating activities. However, ritual is also the coordinator among minds, which can bring one pleasure, warmth, kindness, and affinity, while also bringing one a sense of distance, mystery, sublimity and even sacredness. The goal here is not to work out a psychology of ritual, but to explain how ritual overcomes the naturalness or wildness of human beings by helping to constrain natural desire and overly strong passions. Ritual helps to decrease the

psychological pressures of persons by reducing psychological distance, elimi-
nating the strangeness or otherness many feel, and promoting confidence and
friendliness among them. In this sense, one can conclude that ritual is a means
to social cohesion, to use Durkheim's terminology, because it promotes the
unity and harmony of a group. In addition, one can see that ritual functions as a
kind of ideology, making social control possible. we can conclude that ritual is a
"social cohesive means" in the terminology of Durkheim because it promotes
the unity and harmony of a group. In addition, ritual functions as a kind of
ideology that makes social control possible.

6.2 Ritual and Symbol

Although there is agreement among some scholars who regard ritual as similar
to non-cognitive myths for different reasons, this chapter will take a different
approach by considering ritual to be a system of symbols conveying limited
cognitive meanings with reference to actual and historical human conditions. In
a sense, ritual can be considered a symbol of our life, regardless of whether the
original meanings of some rituals are forgotten or misunderstood. Even simple
ritual acts, such as an oath, a handshake or a farewell, show their symbolic
meanings. Some anthropologists like Victor Turner, including Margaret Mead,
find the symbol to be the smallest unit of ritual. According to Mead's definition,
ritual is "the repetition of those symbols which evoke the feeling of that
primordial event which initially called the community into being with such
power that effects our presence at that event – in other words, represents the
primordial event" (Mead, 1972, p. 127). In an overwhelming majority of rituals,
especially those that are religious, symbols are used to create or evoke deep
emotions or to purify the minds of the participants. The role of catharsis is
played by such symbols as mask, gesture, and incantatory language by drawing
the participants away from their ordinary lives and developing their capacities
for reflecting upon and understanding the experienced event even if they do not
know the exact symbolic meanings of the ritual. This explains the old maxim,
"symbols give rise to thought".

   In ritual, the various objects, images and gestures are well organized into an
overarching symbolic system. Just as a word may have no meaning apart from a
sentence or context, an isolated act may be meaningless when taken apart from
the symbolic system of ritual. This perspective is in agreement with Israel
Scheffler's statement that "Rites are multiple rather than singular symbolic
entities. That is, rites are identified by practice not with single performances,
but rather with groups of performances satisfying certain specifications."
(Scheffler, 1982, p. 151). As a matter of fact, the symbolic system itself may
be reinforced by every performance of ritual. It is through such a symbolic
system that ritual is capable of providing institutionalized gratification for the
various emotional, political, and social needs of a particular society. In the
absence of codified law and a perfect moral system, ritual helps to preserve

social cohesion through the symbolic system. This is illustrated by Clyde Kluckhohn with his statement that, "Ritual is an obsessive repetitive activity, often a symbolic dramatization of the fundamental 'needs' of the society, whether 'economic', 'biological', 'social' or 'sexual' (Kluckhohn, 1996, pp. 243–278).

Historically speaking, the symbolic meanings of ritual are determined by a particular culture. For this reason, the same object used in different rituals has different symbolic meanings under different cultural conditions. For example, "white" is a symbol of pureness for Western weddings, while it is often avoided in Chinese weddings because it symbolizes sadness for many Chinese. Similarly, the color red is used in many Chinese celebratory rituals because it symbolizes good luck, along with the numbers four, seven, eight, and nine.

Because ritual is a living framework of culture, the change of the ritual roughly implies cultural change. Even the decay of a ritual can lead to the disappearance of its symbolic system, as is seen with young couples from big Chinese cities accepting Western wedding practices. However, changes in ritual is slow in comparison to other cultural components because, as a series of prescribed acts, ritual provides one with a pattern of action, a vision of the world and a kind of mutual enlivenment through the different symbols that constitute a relatively stable structure rooted in one's ordinary life, ideas and customs. Usually, the more important a ritual is, the more magnificent its occurrence is, and the more complex its procedures are, the more power it generates from its symbolic gestures and objects. The Chinese mourning ritual for the death of male elders, which tends to last many days in the Chinese countryside, demonstrates this. To explore this, take an example from the author's experience:

In 2005, my family, properly speaking, my clan composed of hundreds of members, held a burial ritual for my father who had passed away in 2003. This ritual lasted two days, although a longer mourning ritual with very complex procedures had already been held previously in 2003. Due to limited space, I cannot give a detailed description of the first mourning ritual for my father and expound on its enigmatic symbolic meanings. But, I will explain the symbolic process that proceeded in the second ritual for my father by offering a picture of my experience.

In May of 2005, I was informed of the date of the ritual, which was determined by a famous local specialist who was believed to be able to choose the location of the tomb after a complicated assessment of the omens. In November of 2005, a burial ground for my father was meticulously chosen.

The morning the burial ritual was held, the coffin for my father was carried on stout poles by four people from its temporary resting place to the eternal burial ground, followed by my brother, my sisters and me as well as other relatives, friends, and members of my clan. First, the coffin for my father was opened after the president declared the beginning of the burial ritual, and when we saw the white bone of my father we were very sad, but we were not allowed to cry. This was quite different from what had happened during the first ritual in 2003 because this burial ritual was meant to signify that we had found the

eternal place for the peaceful sleep of the dead, which we were supposed to feel happy about, even though we still wore white clothes symbolizing mourning on our heads. In this case, the seemingly contradictory acts of the ritual symbolized the complex emotions in our hearts. However, our sadness was much more substantial than our happiness at that time.

To my astonishment, after the president very carefully washed the skull of my father with alcohol, I was asked to take a little blood from my finger and to put it on the nose bone of my father while an umbrella shaded the sunlight, which is said to be bad for the dead in either world. Immediately after the coffin was closed again the second procedure, called "heating the grave", was undertaken with the noise of a firecracker, meant to imply that the dwelling place for the dead was warm and comfortable enough to live in. Next, the coffin was slowly removed into the grave. We were asked to go down on our knees, repeating "Father, please accept this place!" over and over again while kowtowing towards the grave.

During the third procedure, many meaningful gestures were made as the president sang a mournful song, spoke incantatory words and threw us a lot of rice and bean meant to symbolize fortune and riches.

Lastly, the participants in the ritual were provided with noodles and meatballs, which were said to symbolize long life and happiness respectively. The grave was filled with much slaked lime and soil after the president expressed good wishes to us. Once the tombstone with the epitaph was set up, the burial ritual ended. It was suggested that all of us should return with a few tree branches to symbolize the riches, as riches and timber have the same pronunciation in Chinese.

In the above ritual, there appear to be two worlds: one is the intuitable world composed of those prescribed acts and objects and the other is the ideal world the actor and participants share through the performance of ritual as a symbolic process. The intuitable world hints at inherent, durative and latent meanings that are not naturally manifest to every participant. Those latent meanings may be looked upon as transcendent meanings, which may need to be explained to some people. Consequently, the intuitable world becomes the index that leads people to think about their own past and future, which can be interpreted as a case of ritual uniting the past with an uncertain future with symbolic language. In this case, the ritual symbols are both the mimesis of the past and the bearer of anticipation. Here, the present, visible objects and acts open up to the absent, invisible world. And thus, it is through the ritual symbols that presence and absence and past and future are united. Gauvin writes:

> It is quite evident that a rite is composed of both the prescribed gesture and of its theological significance, which goes far beyond that. In Catholic liturgy the gesture has a deep symbolic and mystic value: it actualizes in the present time of the ceremony, a past or future event that is thus mysteriously recreated or anticipated. The Catholic rite par excellence is the Mass, which can be said to reconstitute systematically the mystery of the Redemption by the death and Resurrection of Christ. (Gauvin, 1977. pp. 128–140).

It is worth noting that Gauvin points out the relevance of symbolic meanings for mystic value in terms of ritual, although his discussion is confined to Catholicism. When a common belief in the transcendent meanings of ritual is established, its gestures and acts are generally bestowed with mystic value. In this way, a thing is not only itself, but also something more than itself. For example, a Kasaya is not just a piece of clothing. It uncovers a sacred and mystic world, just as the rice and beans are not just meant to be eaten in the burial ritual above.

According to Paul Ricoeur's explanation, a symbol is a sign, but all signs are not symbols. He states, "the symbol is a sign in that like all signs it goes beyond something and signifies something (Ricoeur, 1969, p. 285). Among the various signs, technical signs and symbolic signs occupy two opposite poles. The former is apparent and univocal in representing only what it signifies, whereas the latter is opaque and equivocal in what it refers to because the signified varies from culture to culture.

As seen in the burial ritual described above, some natural objects can become symbolic signs only when taken in the context of certain rituals. In some cases, a symbol can be a double sign, like a dream within a dream, which I call the sign of signs. For example, "Hitler" is both the name of a historical person and a symbol of evil. "Round Moon" is a sign referring to a celestial body and is also the symbol of perfection and reunion in Chinese culture. A hand gesture in the shape of a "V", which is often called Churchill's gesture, is a symbol for victory. It is obvious that in these cases there are two meanings: one that is the literal, patent, and primary meaning, and another that is the symbolic, latent and secondary meaning. The primary meaning is not parallel to the secondary meaning, which will be referred to a "parasitic" because "the symbolic meaning is constituted in and by the literal meaning, which operates the analogy in giving the analogue" (Ricoeur, 1969, p. 286).

The life of symbols consists in its continuous exercise and explanation. Ritual can provide us with extensive possibilities for the institutionalized exercise of symbols. Whether participants in a ritual can understand the meanings of the symbolic acts and objects depends upon whether they can realize the passage from the primary to the secondary meanings of the symbols. Therefore, this realization also depends upon whether one has assimilated to the symbolized.

Symbol is a kind of concretized abstraction. It is through the process of abstraction that symbolic acts and objects become not only themselves, but references to something beyond themselves too. In terms of semiotics, the symbol is both significant and signified. It is significant because it is a sign to be bestowed with certain meanings however, in some cases this sign takes on a double structure of intentionality, which connects the original human experience to current emotions and ideas. For instance, the King's cane usually symbolizes not only the genitals of a male, but the unity of country and the highest authority (陈荣富, 2004, p. 40). Therefore, the same symbolic object has different referents or signifiers and thus develops different intentional relations simultaneously.

Ritual calls for and depends upon repetition. Ritual's persistence is attributable to the repetitiousness of its symbolized gestures and objects, as well as its fixed procedures in the social community, which reminds us of the world of experience and the world of the transcendent, the familiar and unfamiliar. Familiarity means accessibility, while unfamiliarity results in mystique. In a strict sense, this kind of familiarity is requisite for ritual. The certainty and validity of a ritual is determined by the repletion of its symbolic acts, whereas the procedure and fixed pattern are the determinate aspect of ritual. For this reason, any great change or innovation to a ritual naturally causes controversy among many people, especially when such a change effects the symbolic social status and authority of participants in the ritual.

6.3 Ritual and Recognition

Performing a ritual is a process of recognition and, therefore, the history of ritual is also the history of recognition. The identical role that ritual plays in our social life has something to do with recognition (Anerkennung, in Hegel's sense). One might even say that ritual is an elementary form of social recognition and the collective identity of individuals with a value-community.

Ritual serves to demarcate between recognition and rejection. That is, when one is allowed or invited to participate in a ritual, it indicates that one has been accepted as a member or guest of the community. This is true at least in religious and cultural groups, military and political organizations, and certain professions, such as doctors and police officers. In a hierarchical society, ritual provide participants with the opportunity to demonstrate their social position or role within their community so that it may be recognized by more and more people. This enables participants to engender self-respect, self-confidence, and a sense of value for themselves. Due to these benefits, this is why honor is typically bestowed upon a member of the social community through the practice of ritual. In these types of ritual, the order of time and space is meaningful because the order of seats, speeches, and movements serve to recognize the social position of persons among the many other attendees. Additionally, age and seniority should be considered in those rituals related to the affairs of a family or clan in traditional Chinese society. A failure to take these details into account, may result in an individual being puzzled, unhappy, or angry.

In ancient times, rituals were the primary or even unique form of social recognition, which served as unwritten law. In ancient China, ritual was a necessary condition for the legal recognition of a couple as husband and wife, however, in modern times, a couple can be recognized as husband and wife before the law without carrying out the associated ritual. *The Book of Rites* states, "without temple presentation the woman is not a legal wife" (Cf. Ku Hungming, 1915, pp. 83–85). The "temple presentation" referenced here is one of six traditional rituals or marriage ceremonies in China. In traditional Chinese society, the six legal marriage ceremonies included: first,

the Formal Proposal for Marriage (问名, literally, asking for the name); second, Betrothal (纳彩, literally, receiving silk presents); third, Fixing the Day for Marriage (定期); fourth, Fetching the Bride (亲迎); fifth, Plighting Troth (奠雁), namely, pouring libations before the wild goose as a symbol of faithful love), sixth, Temple Presentation (庙见). Most of these ceremonies have been kept with the Chinese countryside areas, although some are simplified in order to save time, energy and money. These six ceremonies are a combination of the practices of secular and religious marriage, but the last two ceremonies remain the most important. According to Confucianism, marriage is not only about the couple, but the family as a whole. The act of marriage consists of the couple entering into a family in addition to a social relationship with others and, therefore, they must take responsibility for the family and gain formal recognition from others. At the same time, marriage also means practicing the anticipation of ancestors and thus requires the bride and groom to have a spiritual tie to their ancestors. The fifth ceremony involves the bride and groom vowing to love each other like faithful geese while going to their knees towards Heaven and Earth in hopes of their recognizing and bearing witness of them. The next step is for the bride and groom to go to their knees towards their parents and each other to recognize and promise mutual respect to each other in front of all those in attendance of the ceremony. The final ceremony, that of the temple presentation, involved the father or closest senior to get to one's knees before the ancestral memorial tablet in the hall or the ancestral temple and to announce to his ancestors the coming of a new member to the family in hopes of gaining recognition from them. In this sense, marriage and its recognition are bestowed with sacred meanings.

Some young people today seem to be bored by the trifling traditional ritualistic services. Due to the development of other forms of social recognition, they find it unnecessary to be recognized within a value-community through religious ritual. This phenomenon appears to originate from the secularization of rituals in modern times, reducing their sacredness, mystery, and control over people's minds. Similarly, in the past, the "rite of passage" of an individual required one to undergo a series of rituals related to birth, maturation, marriage, disease, and death, representing the different life stages. The individual was publicly recognized only through these rituals. Here, it is important to ask why some rituals have been omitted or simplified today. It appears that the simplification of these rituals is not only due to the secularization of rituals, but also with the change in forms of recognition. In order to give a rational explanation for this, it is necessary to analyze the different forms of recognition and its relationship to ritual.

In accordance with different orientations, there are two primary classes of recognition: individual recognition and mutual recognition. Individual recognition involves a person or group taking action to accept other individuals or groups. For example, a father recognizes his natural son and a country recognizes the independence of a new state. Mutual recognition involves a proper reciprocal recognition of the feelings, dignity, value, and status of other social

agents. For example, persons exchange gifts as a means of interpersonal communication, members of the armed forces salute each other, and countries exchange ambassadors.

A meaningful and helpful contribution to the analysis of the relationship between rituals and recognition is that of the distinction between three modes of recognition given by Axel Honneth, a German philosopher. According to Honneth, love, law, and solidarity are the three main modes of recognition, the opposites of which are rape, deprivation of rights, and shame. Honneth succeeded in finding the key to understand the secret of recognition when he developed the young Hegel's concept of Anerkennug and treated "love", broadly construed, as the primary form of recognition based on the positive studies of Donald W. Winnicott and Jessica Benjamin. In his book, *Kampf um Anerkennung* (*Struggle for Recognition*), he describes the complex structure of recognition-relation, which has three dimensions, including "support in feeling", "respect in knowledge" and "high valuation in social communication". Without even discussing the relation between ritual and recognition, his description of the structure of recognition is also true of the characteristics of ritual. In other words, ritual not only shows the support of one person given to another through feeling, but also demonstrates one's respect for others and one's appreciation of the social value of others. Mutual recognition expresses the symmetrical valuation between independent subjects, while mutual and symmetrical valuation encompasses the reciprocal observation and appreciation of independent subjects in light of value, enabling the abilities and nature of the other to be meaningful for common practice (Honneth, 2003, pp. 209–210).

Whether it is unilateral or bilateral, ritual is closely related to action, feeling, value, status, and the moral ideas of a person or group. From this, it can be concluded that there is a deep connection between ritual and recognition. For instance, a rite of passage reflects the change of a social role for one person through one's different life stages and requires the recognition of each social role by one's community members. Alternatively, the ritual of marriage is the public recognition of the different social roles of one person, such as a husband or a wife, a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law, etc. This is why a marriage held without ritual has had difficulty in being recognized by the social community, especially in China ("不庙见, 不成妇", means "unable to become a wife without the ritual of Temple Presentation"). Due to the power of law in modern society, the wedding ritual as a mode of recognition has lost its original effect. However, like love, solidarity, handshakes, and the exchange of gifts, it includes the logic of mutual recognition, indicating social identity and respect (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 294).

Generally speaking, all individuals strive for the recognition of others because it is an affirmation of one's social role, abilities, status, value, and dignity as a person. In a hierarchical society, ritual expresses respect for authority and reflects the demand for unequal status through its ordering of space and time. On the contrary, in a free society, ritual embodies the demand for equality. Sometimes ritual can serve as a symbol of acceptance and

elimination. For example, an individual who is excluded from an organization or institution will not be allowed to participate in those rituals unique to the institution or organization. The Buddhist ritual of head-shaving acknowledges that a person has been admitted into the rank of monks, just as the Christian ritual of bathing recognizes one's place in the church.

As a face-to-face action, the marriage ritual implies that the couple formally receives public respect, appreciation and recognition by one another. Meanwhile, the performance of the ritual provides the couple with the opportunity to be witnessed by others to strengthen the publicity, openness, and community of recognition and thus demonstrates that the couple accepts an immaterial and invisible bond from the ritual. Despite its non-coercive character, this ritualized public action can be internalized as an effective experience for the person, which will influence one's intentions and decisions and will embody a meaning similar to a promise or tacit convention. It is in this sense that ritual provides us with so-called "tacit knowledge" in terms of Polanyi. There is good reason to believe that the exchange of keepsakes between the bride and bridegroom, in addition to their performance of the ritual of kowtowing towards each other, plays the role of mutual recognition for the new couple in the Chinese marriage ceremony. In fact, Marcel Henaff regards the exchange of all gifts as a symbol of the mutual recognition of people. Similarly, handshakes, greetings, and farewells in ordinary life are the primary signs of mutual recognition from which one can recognize the sprouts of recognition at the moral, legislative, and political levels.

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Chapter 7
An Analysis of the Consciousness of Filial Piety Through the Perspective of Time

Xianglong Zhang

7.1 Introduction

Confucian ritual originates in the family life, which is centered around the relationship of parent and child. For this reason, when Zhu Xi edited the encyclopedic treatise on Confucian ritual, consisting of seven books and bearing the general title of *Comprehensive Explanations of the Canon and Commentaries of Yi Li* (儀禮經傳通解), he devoted the first book to *Family Rituals* (Zhu, 2002).[1] However, the primary emphasis of Confucianism is on the connection between parent and child and filial piety. Therefore, one cannot appropriately characterize Confucian ritual without a proper understanding of filial love. As a result, the following will attempt to define Confucian ritual with significant consideration of how filial love shapes this definition.

In the *Analects*, "Fan Chi inquired about humanity (*ren* 仁), and Confucius said, 'Love human beings'" (*Analects* 12.22).[2] Confucius' answer, "Love human beings," does not refer to "self-love", the Christian notion of "love your enemy" (*Mathew* 5:44), or Mo Zi's "universal love". In *The Book of Rites*, it is found that Confucius said, "The origin of love is that between parents and children (*li ai zi qni shi* 立愛自親始)..., therefore the most precious thing for people is the parent-child relation." (ch. 24, trans. Yang)[3] It states that "love" must begin and establish itself from "*qin*" (親), which signifies the relationship between parents and children, including both the love of parent for child and that of

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[1] Cf. Chapter 8, Section 8.2.

[2] The Ames and Rosemont (1998) English translation of the *Analects* is the primary translation used in this essay. However, alterations have been made to suit the terminology employed in this essay.

[3] Yang (1997). When citing from this book, only chapter number is given in the parenthesis.

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child for parent.[4] Therefore, "humanity" or "*ren*" (仁) cannot be understood *merely as* "doing one's utmost (*zhong* 忠) and putting oneself in the other's place (*shu* 恕)" (*Analects* 4.15). As a result, the so-called "golden rule" of morality (found in 6.30, 12.2, 15.24 of the *Analects*) must be traced back to the sense of "loving human beings" constituted by the reciprocal love of parent and child. Otherwise, humanity loses its origin. For this reason, Confucius claims that "through self-discipline and observing ritual property (*li* 禮), one becomes *ren* or a man best embodying humanity" (*Analects* 12.1).

In *The Mean* (*zhong yong* 《中庸》), Confucius is taken to have said: "Humanity lies in human [relations] (*ren zhe ren ye* 仁者人也), therefore taking the parents-children relation as the parents-children relation is of the utmost importance. (*qin qin wei da* 親親為大)" (ch. 20, trans. Zhang).[5] It discloses quite relevantly the etymological and fundamental senses of "humanity" and the "parent-child relationship" (*qin* 親). The nature of "humanity" (*ren* 仁), for which the Chinese word is composed of "two" (二) and "human" (亻), is regarded as neither superior nor inferior to the living human, it is simply constituted by what makes a human human, that is, "*da* (大)" or "the utmost", whose Chinese character is composed of "one (一)" and "human" (人), meaning a human being who unifies with another. To be sure, this "unification" is defined by the parent-child relationship, or the "*qin* (親)", which etymologically signifies "seeing intimately (亲-见) one's parent or child (其親)". As a result, the *Scripture of Filial Piety* (*xiao jing* 《孝经》) is seen as insisting that "Loving others while not loving one's parent or child is dis-excellent or immoral (*bei de* 悖德)" (ch. 9, trans. Hu [1996]).

One must now consider why Confucianism, differing from most religious, philosophical and ethical doctrines in the world, singles out the "parent-child love" (*qin zi zhi ai* 親子之愛) from all the "loves of human beings" as the origin of humanity. Does this choice merely reflect the historical reality of ancient China or does it have legitimate philosophical underpinnings? If the latter is the case, then how does one explain the recognition of parent-child love as primary exclusively within Chinese thought? Additionally, considering that parent-child love bifurcates into parental love (*ci ai* 慈愛) and filial love (*xiao ai* 孝愛), what is the relationship between them? Above all, the most important question appears to be whether the consciousness of filial piety is natural or artificial. In other words, is it derived from human instinct or from cultural traditions and/or social institutions? Or, alternatively, could it be the case that it is found in a more primordial dimension of human existence? This essay seeks to answer these questions through the analysis of the temporality of human existence from a phenomenological perspective.

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[4] In the paper, "love" means the springing-up of meaning caused by experience-process itself rather than by the result of the process. It is a non-self phenomenon, implying that meanings are produced and transmitted in a way of transcending individual consciousness. One conclusion of this view is: even if there is genuine "self-love", it exists in the way of overriding individual consciousness.

[5] Zhong (1985). Translations by Zhang, Xianglong, the author of this chapter.

7.2 The Naturalness and Uniqueness of Parent-Child Love

Before engaging in a critical analysis, it is beneficial to understand some general facts about the parent-child relationship. Parent-child love (PCL) is founded within human child-bearing and the typical family life.[6] However, it should be recognized that not all child-bearings lead to family life and not all family lives presume child-bearing by the parents themselves. For instance, adopting children may result in a typical family life. However, it has been the case that until recently a causal relationship between child-bearing and family life has existed.

Regarding the biological world generally, the "child-bearing" of gender-differentiated plants does not entail family life because once the seeds mature they leave the mother plant and seek a fortune on their own. Birds and mammals both partake in child-bearing and child-nurturing, but as soon as the child becomes independent, the parent-child relationship (PCR) ends. The ancient Chinese believed in "the re-nurturing of their parents by crows' children (慈乌反哺)", but they also claimed that "if a person had no filial piety, he or she would be no different from birds and animals (*qin shou* 禽兽)". The social lives of baboons and gorillas have a generational structure in which parental love can be observed, however, it appears to be limited primarily to the nurturing period. What is most important to recognize is the fact that *filial piety is absent in all animals except homo sapiens.*

In natural pregnancy, female human beings become pregnant only through sexual intercourse and give birth after a gestation period of approximately nine months. The *Analects* find that it is "three years until an infant can finally leave the parents' bosom" (*Analects* 17.21) and only after the age of 15–20 is one capable of being independent. The remarkably longer period of dependence for human babies on their parents distinguishes them from plants and other animals[7] and also extends and deepens the intimate contact between parent and child. Given these facts, it appears that this relationship should have an important impact on the formation of human consciousness since, according to phenomenology, consciousness is primarily related to the structure of inner time experiences. Additionally, the exchange of matrimonial partners was the prevailing practice in the ancient world, which recognized a universal taboo against choosing a matrimonial partner from one's own tribe. Another human

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[6] The concept of the "typical family" is meant to refer to a family centered on the parent-child relationship.

[7] For instance, in *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology* (Lenski and Lenski, 1982), it states: "The human infant is born in a condition of extreme immaturity and helplessness. In fact, for its first year it experiences growth patterns (e.g. bone ossification, brain growth) that are part of *fetal* development in other primate species. Maturation proceeds at a slow pace: children require much longer to reach maturity than the young of other species (e.g., even the anthropoid apes reach sexual maturity by about the age of nine)." (p. 22) However, western scholars understand this fact as indicating that human beings are "*dependent on the societal mode of life*" (p. 22) rather than dependent on the PCR and the family mode of living.

feature is the lack of seasonal restriction on sexual relations allowing for partners to maintain their relations continuously. Taking all of these facts into consideration, a crucial anthrop fact is recognized: the universal existence of family life. In the words of Levi-Strauss, a famous anthropologist, "'[F]amily life', in the sense that we ourselves give to the phrase, exists in all human societies" (Levi-Strauss, 1996, p. 5). Additionally, in the book, *A History of Family*, the authors claim: "[T]he family is a natural phenomenon, that it is, like language, an attribute of the human condition" (Burguiere, Klapisch, Segalen, and Zonabend, 1996, p. 10). These scholars use the evidence provided by 20th century research to contradict some of the conclusions of Lewis Henry Morgan, which include the supposition that "a supposed 'primitive promiscuity' preceded the emergence of the family in the history of mankind" (Burguiere et al., p. 5). No matter how diversified the formation of the family has been, the anthropic practice of marriage has shaped basic human relations, among which the parent-child relationship (PCR) is fundamental.

Admittedly, the PCR itself (e.g. the intimacy between father and son) has been affected by customs and the concrete structure of marriage, however, some basic facts can be identified. First, most PCRs are generated through the process of marriage, maternal delivery and nurturing a child. Despite the fact that adoption can generate a genuine PCR, the archetype of this relationship remains a natural or genetic PCR. The ideal for the case of adoption is to cultivate a relationship as close as possible to a natural PCR. Consequently, PCR occupies a special position among all family relations such as those of couples, siblings, cousins, etc. The parent-child relationship, being that of *direct producing/produced* and *nurturing/being-nurtured*, it is the closest, purest and most spontaneous. Regardless of the different social colors that tint it, generally speaking, the direct PCR is the richest and truest love of all human relationships. Therefore, the primacy of the PCR can explain why Confucius considered "the origin of love [as] that between parents and children".

It should be noted that the primacy of the PCR in western philosophy and ethics has received almost no attention.[8] The basic virtues espoused by Ancient Greek philosophers do not include filial piety. Moreover, Christian theologians find that the love between God and an individual is primary and even contemporary western philosophers, such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and feminists, who emphasize life-experience as the spring of all truths, neglect the idea of filial piety as family love.

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[8] Dr. Xiaosi Yang (杨效斯) was the first to point out this fact in his "The Philosophical Outline of Family" (Yang 2002, pp. 267–335).

Henry Sidgwick states: "We not only find it hard to say exactly how much a son owes his parents, but we are even reluctant to investigate this" (Sidgwick, 1966, p. 243).

Since the end of the 1970s, some American ethicists have discussed the essence of filial *obligation* in terms of "rights and duties". It appears that the dominant approach has been to deny that such an obligation is a duty. For additional information cf. Chenyang Li's book, *The Dao Encounters the West: Explorations in Comparative Philosophy* (Li, 2005, chapter 5, pp. 200–215).

7.3 Filial Love and Parental Love

The parent-child love (PCL) is divided into parental love and filial love. It appears that throughout history Confucianism has emphasized the later most. Therefore, one must consider whether filial love is more primordial and/or important than parental love. For Confucius, it appears that this is not the case. For example, he found that the reason one must maintain a "three-year mourning period upon the death of one's parents" is the aforementioned anthropic fact that it is "three years before an infant can finally leave their bosom" (*Analects* 17.21). In the same chapter, he further judges a person by the way in which one recognizes the PCR, that is, seeing it as either a fundamental human fact or as an empirical or pragmatic fact. From this, we can sense the subtleties of Confucius' saying in *The Mean* (*zhong yong* 《中庸》): "Humanity lies in human [relations] (*ren zhe ren ye* 仁者人也)".

Therefore, although filial piety is praised as the foundation of all virtues in the *Scripture of Filial Piety*, the perspective of genuine Confucianism must have a complementary connection to parental love or care. In other words, it comes solely from the matrix of the PCR. Then, why is there the parental love? One popular response is to attribute parental love to human instinct and the gene that is necessary for maintaining the existence of the species,[9] making this love a product of evolution. However, we can imagine other means of efficiently sustaining human groups through the evolutionary process, such as non-genetic reproduction. Perhaps a more appropriate perspective from which to interpret the primacy of parental love is to show its intimate connection (as well as its time implication) to human consciousness and intelligence. From this perspective, one can demonstrate that the *one* way of successfully choosing human groups within evolution is to choose parental love or humanity (*ren*).

To establish this, one must consider what the unique character of human consciousness or the human essence is. The Ancient Greeks held it to be "rational" or "dialectical," while modern science attributes it to the function of human brain, distinguishing humans from other animals. The Ancient Chinese espoused a different view found in the text of *The Book of History* (《尚书・周书・泰誓》): "Heaven and Earth are the parents of all beings, among which humans are the non-ready-made genius (惟天地万物父母, 惟人万物之灵)" (Zhong, 1985, p. 65, trans. Zhang). As one can see, the Chinese view does not single out a specific ability to explain the uniqueness of human beings, but rather endows human existence with a special position: the *ling* (灵) or the non-ready-made (nicht-vorhanden) genius. It is not a particular ability, but a non-ready-made means of existence, one that allows all human beings to live prosperously by building upon one's potential. According to the philosophical insights of the Ancient Chinese, *ling* means to be existentially empty (*xu* 虚),

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[9] For instance, Chenyang Li holds this view (Li, 2005, pp. 116–117).

which in turn makes people potentially genitive. Defined as such, the so-called "non-ready-made genius among all beings" signifies human life as that which is non-ready-made and non-substantial, always demanding a becoming. Therefore, humans are distinguished from other animals by this non-ready-made ability. Unlike insects, frogs, sharks, birds, cats, etc. humans have no specific ability to maintain life. Instead, humans have to *learn* the arts or techniques (the first being language) through the *long period* of family and community life (lineage in ancient time). This closely relates the aforementioned features of the PCR. Mencius states:

> The ability possessed by men without their having acquired it by learning is innate ability [*liang neng* 良能], and the knowledge possessed by them without deliberation is innate knowledge [*liang zhi* 良知]. Young children all know to love their parents. As they grow, they all know to respect their elder brothers. To have filial affection for parents is humanity [*qing qing wei ren* 亲亲仁也], and to respect elders is righteousness. These feelings are universal in the world, that is all (*Mencius* 7A:15, trans. Chan, 1963).[10]

Both humans and animals possess innate abilities, but the innate abilities of humans are not ready-made. For example, to "love their parents" and to "respect their elder brothers", is developed in living together with them and learning how to deal timely with their environments. As a result, the non-ready-made, innate abilities derived from the PCR "are universal in the world".

7.4 Yin-Yang, Husband and Wife and Children

The above citation from the *Book of History* regards "Heaven and Earth" as the parents of all beings. The human genius is superior to all other beings because human infants long for their parents most extensively and profoundly making them closest to the original state of Heaven-Earth's child. In ancient Chinese terminology, Heaven and Earth are designated by yin and yang, or *qian* (乾) and *kun* (坤) (*Book of Changes*, The Appended Remarks, Part I, ch. 1; Part II, ch. 16, trans. Wilhelm). Given this, the key to reaching a philosophical understanding of the PCR is to determine the significance of *yin/yang* in the formation of the PCR and the PCL.

Only in light of *yin/yang* as the Ultimate (*taiji* 太极) can the saying, "Heaven and Earth are the parents of all beings", become comprehensible in terms of *yin/yang* the Ultimate producing and nurturing all beings. The *yin/yang* is not a ready-made being, that is, it does not comprise the basic elements of the world, but a pair of distinctive features necessary for allowing something to happen originally. Therefore, the Confucian principle of "distinguishing husband from wife" (*fu fu you bie* 夫妇有别) is not only a reflection of the taboo regarding the choice of a spouse that bears biological, ethnological or sociological meaning,

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[10] Amendments to the translation have been made by the author of this chapter.

but also the embodiment of the *yin/yang* principle in the *Changes* that is ontologically genetic. Accordingly, *The Book of Rites* insists,

> Only when Heaven meets Earth, all beings in the world appear and prosper. Hence marriage is the starting fountain of a thousand generations. And so it is necessary to take a spouse from the groups with different family names in order to carry out the principle of connecting with the remote and cherishing the different (Yang, 1997, ch. 11, trans. Zhang).

This passage reflects the true *yin/yang* thought and its structure of differing-meeting-generating-maintaining. From this perspective, a well-known passage in *The Appended Remarks on the Book of Changes* (Part I, ch. 5) can be read:

> The successive meeting of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the Dao or Way (道). What issues from the Dao is good, and what realizes it is the natural essence. The human being of humanity (*ren*) sees it and calls it humanity. The human being of wisdom sees it and calls it wisdom. And common people act according to it daily without knowing it. . . . It promotes all beings without sharing the anxiety of the sage (Zhong, 1985, p. 58, trans. Chan, 1963, p. 266).[11]

The meeting of *yin* and *yang* is the inceptive "marriage" of Heaven and Earth, the Dao, and thus must "produce and further produce" (*sheng sheng* 生生).[12] The produced is the big family or lineage of "all beings". What follows the genetic structure of the *yin/yang* is "good", and what realizes it is the "essence" of all beings. The *yin/yang* contains humanity-parental love and wisdom-innate ability, and therefore is used unconsciously by common people all the time.

In practical life, the relationship between husband-wife to parent-child is a transition from what Strauss calls "horizontal" to "vertical" connection, that is, from the social relation of marriage to the innate relation (the PCR) between generations. From the perspective of *yin/yang* as the Ultimate, this transition is an inner progression of the *yin/yang* structure. The "spatial" meeting of the man-woman from different lineages produces a genetic, generational, family-lineage structure. The structure of trigrams in the *Book of Changes* is thus interpreted by the *Commentaries on the Book of Changes* (The Discussions of Trigrams, chapter 10):

> The *qian* (乾) is Heaven, therefore it is called the father. The *qun* (坤) is the Earth, therefore it is called the mother. [The *qian* and *qun* meet and mutually exchange their *yin* and *yang* lines.]
>
> In the trigram of *zhen* (震), the *qun* or the mother seeks for the first time [or on the first line from bottom] the power of *qian* and receives a son. Therefore, the *zhen* is called the eldest son.
>
> In the trigram of *xun* (巽), the *qian* seeks for the first time the power of the *qun* and receives a daughter. Therefore the *xun* is called the eldest daughter.
>
> In the trigram of *kan* (坎), the *qun* seeks for a second time and receives a son. Therefore it is called the middle son.

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[11] This translation has been slightly altered.

[12] Same chapter as the previous citation. Chan's translation of this phrase is: "production and reproduction" (Chan 1963, p. 266)

In the trigram of *li* (離), the *qian* seeks for a second time and receives a daughter. Therefore it is called the middle daughter.

In the trigram of *gen* (艮), the *qun* seeks for a third time and receives a son. Therefore it is called the youngest son.

In the trigram of *dui* (兌), the *qian* seeks for a third time and receives a daughter. Therefore it is called the youngest daughter (Wilhelm, 1969, trans. Bayne, p. 274).[13]

According to this passage, the meeting of *qian* (composed of pure *yang* lines) and *qun* (pure *yin* lines) entails the exchange of the *yin* or *yang* lines, and thus produces new trigrams or "offspring". At the level of a trigram, it produces three sons, three daughters and forms a family with eight members. Looking at the pictures in the *Changes* (*yi xiang* 易象), one can see that parents and children are all patterns of *yin/yang*, and the process of "producing" is that of *yin/yang* exchanged between the husband (*qian*) and wife (*qun*).

☰ 乾   ☷ 坤   ☳ 震   ☴ 巽
☵ 坎   ☲ 離   ☶ 艮   ☱ 兌

In this way, we can observe the flowing of *yin/yang*-time or existential time. Therefore, it is written in the *Appended Remarks* (Part II, chapter 1): "The firm [*yang*] and the yielding [*yin*] displace and thus interplay with each other, in which change happens. ... The firm and the yielding are the origin of the hexagrams and all beings. The change and its transformed patterns are what pursue the proper times" (Zhong, 1985, p. 64, trans. Zhang).[14]

7.5 The Time of the PCR: A Criticism of Heidegger

The previous discussion has served to provide some insight into the time meaning of parental love as a spontaneous flowing of *yin/yang* from parents to children through the genetic nature of the *yin/yang* structure. The "flowing" has two senses: (1) the *yin/yang* exchanges between husband and wife give birth to children and therewith generate the flowing; (2) infants and young children (impure patterns of *yin/yang*) are not yet proper individuals and, therefore, the relationship between children and parents is not between individuals but that of genetic *yin/yang*. Both mother and father have an intimate *yin/yang* relationship

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[13] This translation has been altered.

[14] "剛柔 [阴阳] 相推，变在其中矣。......剛柔者，立本者也。变通者，趣 [趋] 时者也。" This translation is the author's, but refers to Wilhelm (1969, p. 326).

with their children rather than one of *yin/yin* or *yang/yang*. Therefore, something new is continuously happening with the PCR causing this "flowing".

In the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger, the most primordial flowing of human experience is time. The concept of time employed is not that of physical time, but of phenomenological time constituted by spontaneous human actions, that is, spontaneously intentional or existential acts that render meaning and existence. For Husserl, it is "inner time" constituted by the intentional acts of human consciousness. It is a "river" (Husserl, 1966, section 4, 24) or a "stream of consciousness" (Husserl, 1966, section 34), produced by the interweaving of the retentional and protentional horizons circling the original impression (*Urimpression*). Therefore, what has come to pass and what is yet to come are presented intentionally rather than self-consciously. As a result, we can remember, expect, and live in a life-world that pre-reflectively endows meaning to all human actions including those that are scientific or theoretical. Heidegger amplified Husserl's horizontal approach to time and the life-world but amended his theory by dismissing the superiority of the original impression to retention and protention and the transcendental subjectivity of the time-horizon itself. For Heidegger, time is the existential temporality (Zeitlichkeit) of factual human experiences (Dasein), which precede all dichotomies, such as subject and object, form and material, universal and particular. Time, being thoroughly ecstatic (i.e., standing out of "itself" to be itself), is the pure inter-playing or trans-playing of moments of having-been (original past), presenting, and coming-to-be (original future). Due to the primacy of the time-horizon over any impression and the ideal of making the "presence" the most privileged dimension of time in traditional western philosophy, for Heidegger, the primordial dimension or "ecstasy" of Dasein is future time (Zu-kunft). Future time is disclosed in *authentic* life experiences such as being confronted with one's own death. Despite the differences between Husserl and Heidegger, the original time for both is the matrix of meaning and consciousness (including the marginal or what W. James calls "flying" consciousness). Consequently, from this perspective, time is not an empty form or an empirical feeling, but the orientation of original "care" (Sorge). Therefore, the flow of time is a stream of non-objectifiable meaning.

The temporality of the PCR should also be understood in this manner. It is constituted by the most intimate experiences – birth, growth, love, mating, happiness, sadness, hope, anxiety, aspiration, despair, devotion, aging, death, etc. – and precedes the inter-subjectivity and dichotomy of I and you or I and she. Flowing and back-flowing among the generations, it functions as the field in which meaning is generated and maintained and that from which our life-world obtains its basic rhythms and dynamic structure. From this view, the meetings of the human *yin/yang*, such as marriage, pregnancy, birth, nurturing, family-teaching, etc., are both the most normal and abnormal, quotidian and atypical, preservative and creative experiences of original time, led primarily by *possibilities* rather than by *ready-made-ness*. As a result, there must be a flood of

the most spontaneous meaning-streams between parents and children. As it has been said, *the river of this time is the main stream of the meanings of our life*.

Heidegger discovers the existential time of Dasein but, due the Christian and modern Western philosophical concept of the person, he is constrained by individualistic or so-called "authentic" experiences, such as the confrontation of one's own death, understood to be "*Dasein's ownmost possibility – non-relational, certain and as such indefinite, not to be outstripped*" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 303). He fails to see those time experiences that are *both authentic and relational* including the experience of the PCR. This experience internally relates to death and, as a whole, is a thorough Being-towards-death *and* Being-towards-birth. The "dread and trembling" experienced by those who face the deaths of their parents, children, or family, is deeper, stronger and ecstatically more disclosing than that faced by those confronting their own death. An indication of this dread is found in Mencius' saying that "there are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them all" (*Mencius*, 4A:26, trans. Chan, 1963). Additionally, in the *Analects* one finds: "The Master said, 'Children must know the age of their father and mother. On one hand, it is a source of joy; on the other, of trepidation" (*Analects* 4.21). The "joy" is connected with the past life of one's parents and the "trepidation" to the future death of them. The interweaving of joy and trepidation is one experience of the "age" (*nian* 年) or time in the PCR. Again, one finds in the *Analects*, "A person who for three years refrains from reforming the ways (*dao* 道) of his late father can be called a filial son (*xiao* 孝)" (*Analects* 1.11, 4.20). In this statement, the conceptual principle of right and wrong must be ceded to the time principle of the PCR. The three-year "retention" of one's late father's ways may have some connection to the three-year experience of an infant in its parents' bosom (*Analects* 17.21). In sum, the lives of the older generation constitute the time of the PCR with their coming deaths (in the 4.21) and re-coming lives (in the 1.11). The coming deaths and reserved lives of one's parents enlighten the filial son or daughter no less than one's own coming death. In the case of parents facing the possible death and life of their children, these possibilities change their own lives and cause "anticipatory resoluteness" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 356) in an even more radical sense. Therefore, the life and death experiences of the PCR can be authentic (eigentlich) because they are generated from the relation itself and are endowed with primordial understanding or conscience.

7.6   The Time of Parental Love and Filial Love

In ancient China, Chinese cultural leaders "taught people to pursue filial piety", but it remained the case that "people practiced more parental love than filial piety" (*The Book of Rites*, ch. 30; Yang, 1997, p. 886, trans. Zhang).[15] Given that parental love and filial love are both part of the PCR, one must question why it

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[15] The original Chinese: "民犹薄于孝而厚于慈"(《礼记·坊记》)。

is much less common for filial love to appear. One prevailing view, as partially mentioned in the third section, is to understand parental love as a human instinct whereas filial love is the result of cultural influences and education. In other words, the former is natural and the second is artificial making the former much richer than the latter. However, distinguishing the two loves by opposing the natural and the artificial is problematic. If we regard parental love as natural, there is no sound reason to deny a natural tendency towards filial love, which is demonstrated by the fact that "there are no young children who do not know loving their parents". (*Mencius* 7A:15, trans. Lau, 1970, p. 184). Alternatively, if we deny the naturalness of filial love by pointing out unfilial cases, then the naturalness of parental love can also be rejected because there is no logical rule to guarantee all parents have parental love. To be sure, there is *quantitative* difference between them, as one is richer than the other, however, the reason for this does not lie in human genes or biological instincts but in the time modes of the two loves.

If it is true that time, whether existential or physical, flows in a general direction, that is, it flows from past to future (Heidegger asserts future as the primary dimension as well), then the time mode of parental love is flowing with the current, while filial love goes against it. As such, parental love flows towards the future or new life, while filial love flows towards the past or the aged, the dead generations. As *The Book of Rites* tells, filial piety means to "serve the dead as serving the lived" (ch. 31, Yang, 1997, p. 909, trans. Zhang). Therefore, the quantitative superiority of parental love over that of filial love is understandable and should be ascribed to the time structure of the PCR.

Nevertheless, as was established in the previous section, one crucial difference of inner time, especially when comparing existential time with physical time, is its non-linear and interweaving structure. The three dimensions of existential time are essentially intertwined and united to constitute a meaningful life-world. This is key for Heidegger's and Husserl's phenomenological approaches to time. As Heidegger states, "*Temporality is the primordial 'outside-of itself' in and for itself*" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 377). "The character of 'having been' arises from the future, and in such a way that the future which 'has been' (or better, which 'is in the process of having been') releases from itself the Present. The phenomenon has the unity of a future which makes present the process of having been; we designate it as '*temporality*'" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 374). So, from a phenomenological perspective, having a directional flow of time from past to future does not suggest that time flows away without ever coming back. On the contrary, in the stream of time, the future requires the past and, by merging with the future, it releases the present. In his later works, Heidegger designates "Appropriation" (Ereignis) as the genuine sense of time and Being, which indicates that through the interplay of two distinctive features two distinctive beings obtain their own identities and or selves respectively. Therefore, for Heidegger, time never flows homogeneously and uniformly away, but in various vortical structures, including the "origin always coming to [meet] us from the future" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 10).

In this time horizon, the old generation is the "hav-*ing*-been" of a family, which has not passed away in the phenomenological sense, but rather

constitutes the future-children and present-adults. In Husserl's terminology, old generations or even ancestors are not "re-membered" by the present members of the family, but rather function as the "retention" or "primary memory" (Husserl, 1990, pp. 43, 33) that is innately necessary for the perception of the present and future, "the original temporal field" (Husserl, 1990, p. 32). Grandparents and ancestors are the present members of a natural, healthy family. Family is the life embodiment of "the original time field" with three mutually required and interpenetrated dimensions.

Therefore, one may further argue that the stream of existential time, which makes parental love possible, must also contain the vortex or upstream flow that authorizes filial love. In other words, the filial love of children for adults and adults for the old generations are not merely artificial or empirical, but are also grounded in the time structure that makes humanity possible. Accordingly, the statement of Mencius regarding the naturalness of filial love (*Mencius* 7A:15) is essential for understanding human beings.

It may appear strange that Heidegger's existential view of time did not accommodate the phenomenon of filial love in its perspective of Being-inquiry. One "technical" reason for explaining the absence of the PCR is the character of the time structure he exposes. His structure puts so much emphasis on the "limited future" (i.e., the future with an end) as the primary dimension of time that it loses the appropriate balance between it and the past (the having-been). As a consequence of this imbalance, it is only the experience of an individual's own coming death that is authentic and radical enough to be the original phenomenon of human existence, making any *relation* with the past or others (old or future generations) capable of tarnishing the purity of the limited-future experience. In the pure future, there is only coming-death rather than coming-life, which violates the *interweaving* principle of the phenomenological approach to time phenomenon. Alternatively, the time structure given by *The Book of Changes* thoroughly interweaves the past and future. The interpretation of *The Appended Remarks* states:

> The *Changes* illumine the past and interpret the future. They disclose that which is hidden and open, that which is dark (Part II, ch. VI, section 3) (Wilhelm, 1969, p. 344).
>
> The past contracts. The future expands. Contraction and expansion act upon each other; hereby arises that which furthers (Part II, ch. V, section 2) (Wilhelm, 1969, p. 338).

This is so because the *yin/yang* perspective structurally requires this interplay. Further:

> The Book of Changes contains the measure of heaven [*yang*] and earth [*yin*]; therefore it enables us to comprehend the tao [Dao] of heaven and earth and its order. . . . Going back to the beginnings of things and pursuing them to the end, we come to know the lessons of birth and of death (Part I, ch. IV) (Wilhelm, 1969, pp. 293–294).
>
> Therefore they called the closing of the gate the Receptive [*qun, yin*], and the opening of the gate the Creative [*qian, yang*]. The alternation between closing and opening they called change. The going forward and backward without ceasing they called penetration (Part I, ch. XI, section 4) (Wilhelm, 1969, p. 318).

From this perspective, no dimension of time is primary. There is neither the Husserlian "original impression-present" nor the Heideggerian "anticipatory resolution-future", but only that of the "acting upon each other" of past and future, and of "the going forward and backward without ceasing". Consequently, the trigram-family (see Section 7.4) does not merely demonstrate the *yin/yang* stream of time from parents (*qian* and *qun*) to children (other six trigrams), it also established the counter-stream from children to parents because the *yin/yang* relationship between them guarantees a reciprocal structure. Therefore, the ancient Chinese philosophers who followed the word of the *Changes* (e.g., Daoists and Confucians) conceived of life and death as essentially intertwined in every dimension. For instance, for a filial son or daughter, the future contains the coming death of one's parents and the coming birth and growth of one's children and both are "on one hand. . .a source of joy [and] on the other, trepidation" (*Analects* 4.21).

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Chapter 8
Confucian Rites of Passage: A Comparative Analysis of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*

Ping-Cheung Lo

8.1 Introduction

> the typically American ways [my husband and two sons] keep ritual to a minimum in our family served to remind me that I was studying a phenomenon [sc., Confucian family rituals] relatively far from my own experience. (Patricia Buckley Ebrey, [scholar on Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*] 1991, p. x)

Traditional Confucian family rituals are far away not only from Ebrey's experience, but also from most contemporary Chinese experience. I submit, however, that this topic is worthy of studying. In this topic I shall examine critically a very important and widely influential Confucian manual of family rituals, viz., *Family Rituals* compiled by Zhu Xi more than 800 years ago. I shall seek to analyze the manual in the light of contemporary studies of rituals, especially the rites of passage, and provide some comparative reflections.[1] Before I embark on this task, I want to provide, first, a brief panoramic view of rituals in ancient China and, second, a holistic perspective on Zhu Xi and Confucian rituals so that we can understand his *Family Rituals* in the proper light.[2]

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[1] Patricia Buckley Ebrey has marvelously translated the *Family Ritual* into English (*Chu Hsi*, 1991) and simultaneously produced an erudite monograph (Ebrey, 1991). As the subtitle of the latter work indicates, her approach is that of a social historian. She explains how her approach to the study of *li* differs significantly from that of Chinese philosophers, *viz.*, "I look at ritual not from within the Confucian tradition, where *li* is seen as a virtue, an undeniably positive force, but from a contemporary Western viewpoint in which the role of ritual in society is not analyzed in moral terms. Second, I pay less attention to Confucian scholars' most general statements about ritual and more to their concrete ideas about what to do..." (Ebrey, 1991, p. 10). My approach, obviously, is different from hers.

[2] Just a note on language. As many of us know, there is an ambiguity with the Chinese word "*li*," (禮) which can be rendered as rite, ritual, propriety, etc. In these two sections I shall use all

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8.2 Rites/Rituals in Ancient China

According to the Confucian tradition, the Former Zhou Dynasty (1046–771 BC) was a Golden Age of ancient rites because the empire and society then were ordered entirely by rites. It is subsequently known as "the rule by rites" (禮治). As pointed out by many scholars, the Confucian term "*li*" (禮) means "rites, propriety, or rules of proper conduct"; "law, morality, religion, and other social institutions, insofar as they require compliance with formal procedures, may be said to be concerned with ritual propriety" (Cua, 2003, pp.370–371). This Golden Age left behind a heritage, viz., the "Three Canons of Rites" (*San Li*, 三禮), written in different stages, that recorded and interpreted these rites, and these canonical writings are: *Zhou Li* (周禮 *Li in Zhou Dynasty*), *Yi Li* (儀禮 *Book of Ceremonial Li*), and *Li Ji* (禮記 *Collection of Treatises on Li*). There were eight frequent ancient rites that were instructed in the "Three Canons of Rites" and mentioned in other ancient writings, viz.,

   i. capping (冠)
  ii. marriage (昏)
 iii. mourning (喪)
 iv. offering/sacrifice (祭)
  v. drinking festivity in local districts (鄉飲)
 vi. banquet and archery (燕射)
 vii. interchange of missions between different states (聘食)
viii. to be received by the emperor (朝覲)

These rites can be classified in various ways. First, they are rites of passage and social-political rites (1st–4th, and 5th–8th respectively). Alternatively, they are familial, social, and national rites (1st–4th, 5th–6th, 7th–8th respectively). The learning of rites were so important in that period of Chinese history that the foundational "six arts" (六藝, *liu yi*) for an educated person, comparable to the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of High Middle Ages in the West, begins with rites, to be followed by music, archery, riding, writing, and arithmetic (禮, 樂, 射, 禦, 書, 數).

With the collapse of "the rule of rites" in subsequent years (770–206 BC), Confucius set himself the task of reviving Zhou Dynasty rites, and this project was transmitted later by the tradition of Xunzi. In Han Dynasty, 206 BC–220 AD, Confucianism became the government established school of thought. Hence there were continuous effort to re-establish rites and re-interpret their meanings, a good example was the appearance of *Li Ji* (禮記 *Collection of Treatises on Li*) in the Former Han. It is a massive anthology that consists of

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three English expressions. However, when I start analyzing Zhu Xi's *Family Ritual*, I shall largely use the word ritual; the reason for doing so will be provided in that section of the paper.

expositions of the meaning of rites in general (that which is proper to do), explanations of individual rites, and some short Confucian writings.[3]

Eventually an irony emerged. On the one hand, Confucianism was the established school of teaching in the empire. On the other hand, ancient Zhou rites, which were rather elaborate and ornate, were said to apply only to the educated people (士), and there was an ancient saying that "*li* does not reach down to the commoners" (禮不下庶人). With the rise of Daoism and the transmission of Buddhism into China in subsequent dynasties, both religions became popular folk religions and provided rituals simple enough for the use of the common people. Though in the imperial court of each dynasty there was still a Board of Rites (禮部), the Board dealt with largely the rites of the royal family and the rites of imperial court proceedings, without much care about whether these practicing rituals were faithful to the ancient Zhou rites or not.

8.3 Zhu Xi as a Master of Ritual Studies

8.3.1 Zhu Xi's Scholarly Interests in Rituals

Things started to turn around with the rise of Neo-Confucianism in Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD). Neo-Confucians aspired to revive and re-interpret early Confucianism in such a way that the Confucian school could be competitive with Buddhism and Daoism, which were gaining an upper hand in intellectual influence. At the same time, there was a consciousness to revive and simplify ancient Zhou rites so that these rites would be commoners-friendly as well.[4] Two significant reformers were Sima Guang (司馬光, 1019–1086) the imperial court minister, and Cheng I (程頤, 1033–1107) the philosopher. Their writings on rites influenced Zhu Xi, and the *Family Rituals* that we are going to study in later sections was indebted to their pioneering work.

Zhu Xi (formerly transliterated as Chu Hsi, 朱熹, 1130–1200) has been widely acknowledged as the most influential Confucian philosopher since the time of Mencius. He was not just an individualistic philosopher; he was fully conscious of the mission of reviving Confucianism, which he carried out partly by reforming the Confucian canons. *The Thirteen Classics* were reduced to *The Four Books*, for which he compiled and wrote commentaries. This set of commentaries was officially designated as the standard reference for civil examinations for government degrees in 1313 (Yuan Dynasty). This policy was retained in both the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Hence Zhu Xi's interpretation of Confucianism influenced all students in China until 1905 when the civil examinations for government degrees were abolished. He not only molded

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[3] Two books of the "Four Books," the neo-Confucian simplified Canon, came from this important volume. This volume was translated into English in its entirety about a century ago by James Legge, and has since then regrettably not been re-translated.

[4] For a concise descriptions of this consciousness and movement, see Wang (2002).

Chinese institutions and thought for 582 years, but also made a strong impact on those of Korea and Japan as well. (Hence some Chinese Roman Catholic scholars nickname him as the Thomas Aquinas of Confucianism.)

Though Zhu Xi has simplified the Confucian Canon, throughout his life he was a dedicated student of the older Canon, especially the nucleus of *The Five Classics* (五經). The "Three Canons of Rites" were dear to his heart during his final years. He was not just a speculative philosopher; he is concerned with embodying Confucian teachings into praxis and with civic education. (cf. Qian, 1971, IV: 112–179.) He admitted that ancient rites were too archaic and too ornate, which needed to be adapted and simplified to suit social life then. (Qian, 1971, IV:114, 126–128, 155–156) Throughout his life he heatedly debated with many officials (especially those in the Board of Rites) on the proper rituals in the imperial court and offered advice on family rituals to friends and disciples (Chan, 1987, pp .149–150). He repeatedly asked the government to promote the practice of Confucian rituals. He lamented that at his time there was virtually no scholar who was well-versed in the "Three Canons of Rites," so he had to take on this task himself. (Qian, 1971, IV:131) "He conducted research into funeral rites, temple rites, funeral dresses, portraits, direction of temples, sacrificial rites, wedding ceremonies, rites between the sovereign and ministries, sitting, bowing and kneeling, formal and informal dresses, impersonation of the dead in sacrifices, dining customs in private families, etc. . . . It is significant to note that in both the Chu Tzu yu-lei and the Chu Tzu wen-chi, there are more discussions on rites and similar subjects than on the Great Ultimate, principle, or material force" (Chan, 1987, pp.151–152)! In virtue of the lack of a contemporary manual on Confucian funeral rites, Zhu reluctantly made concessions to let his students use Daoist or Buddhist funeral rites for their deceased parents so long as the corpse was not cremated. This was because he recognized that human emotions needed to be expressed adequately through rituals. (Qian, 1971, IV:128–129).

He remarked, "Though ancient rites and music have been in disarray for about two thousand years, from a long perspective it is not too late to revive them." (Qian, 1971, IV:140)

Hence he took on an heroic project of editing, with updates, an encyclopedic treatise entitled *Comprehensive Explanations of the Canon and Commentaries of Yi Li* (儀禮經傳通解), which is a creative synthesis of the "Three Canons of Rites" and their commentaries in subsequent dynasties. (Qian, 1971, IV:138–139, 140, 142–143; Cai, 2004, 434–453). It is both a systematic and innovative re-arrangement of ancient Zhou rites and an organized exposition of their rationales. There are altogether 7 books, with the first 5 covering five categories of rites, encompassing all aspects of social life [for a male!] (family, local community, school, nation, imperial court), and the other 2 covering two most solemn human rites (funerals and sacrifices). The table of contents of this huge anthology is as follows. It is worthy of being listed because it shows the complete picture of Confucian ritual types according to Master Zhu. (I have

never read the complete table of contents in Chinese secondary literature, not to say in English.)

Book One: Family Rituals (家禮, 8 chapters)

- Capping (士冠禮)
- Meaning of Capping (冠義)
- Marriage (士昏禮)
- Meaning of marriage (昏義)
- Pattern of the Family (內則)
- Conduct of the Family (內治)
- Five Clans (五宗)
- Relatives (親屬記)

Book Two: Local District Rituals (鄉禮, 7 chapters)

- Meeting and Greeting (士相見禮)
- Meaning of Meeting and Greeting (士相見義)
- Game of Pitch-pot (投壺)
- Drinking Festivity in Local Districts (鄉飲酒禮)
- Meaning of Drinking Festivity in Local Districts (鄉飲酒義)
- Archery Competition in Local Districts (鄉射禮)
- Meaning of Archery Competition in Local Districts (鄉射義)

Book Three: School Rituals (學禮, 17 chapters)

- Regulations of Learning (學制)
- Meaning of Learning (學義)
- Obligations of Students (弟子職)
- Demeanor of Juniors (少儀)
- Rules of Propriety (曲禮)
- Minister Rites (臣禮)
- Regulations of Bells (鐘律)
- Meaning of Regulations of Bells (鐘律義)
- Poetry and Music (詩樂)
- Record of Rites and Music (禮樂記)
- Calligraphy and Arithmetic (書數)
- Record of Learning (學記)
- Great Learning (大學)
- State of Equilibrium and Harmony (中庸)
- Royal Teacher (保傅傳)
- Royal Ascension (踐阼)
- Five Studies (五學)

Book Four: Nation Rituals (邦國禮, 10 chapters)

- Banquet (燕禮)
- Meaning of Banquet (燕義)
- Grand Archery (大射禮)

- Meaning of Grand Archery (大射義)
- Interchange Of Missions Between The Ancient Feudal States (聘禮)
- Meaning of Interchange Of Missions Between The Ancient Feudal States (聘義)
- Civil Servants Rites (公食大夫禮)
- Meaning of Civil Servants Rites (公食大夫義)
- Feudal Princes Visiting the Emperor (諸侯相朝禮)
- Meaning of Feudal Princes Visiting the Emperor (諸侯相朝義)

Book Five: Imperial Court Rituals (王朝禮, 18 chapters)

- To be Received by the Emperor (覲禮)
- Government Affairs (朝事義)
- Calendar (歷數)
- Divination (蔔筮)
- Seasonal Change (夏小正)
- Proceedings of Government in Different Months (月令)
- Regulations of Music (樂制)
- Record of Music (樂記)
- Royal Regulations A (王制甲)
- Royal Regulations B (王制乙)
- Royal Regulations C (王制丙)
- Royal Regulations D (王制丁)
- Royal Regulations E (王制戊)
- Royal Regulations F (王制己)
- Royal Regulations G (王制庚)
- Royal Regulations H (王制辛)
- Royal Regulations I (王制壬)
- Royal Regulations J (王制癸)

Book Six: Funeral Rituals (喪禮, 14 chapters)

- Mourning Costumes (喪服)
- Mourning Rituals (士喪禮)
- Offering of Repose (士虞禮)
- Mourning Matters (喪大記)
- Cessation of Wailing (卒哭祔練祥譚記)
- Additional Costumes (補服)
- Changing of Mourning Costumes (喪服變除)
- Regulations on Mourning Costumes (喪服制度)
- Meaning of Mourning Costumes (喪服義)
- General Pattern of Mourning Rituals (喪通禮)
- Variations of Mourning Rituals (喪變禮)
- Condoling the Bereaved (吊禮)
- Meaning of Mourning Rituals (喪禮義)
- Illustrations of Mourning Rites and Mourning Costumes (儀禮喪服圖式)

Book Seven: Sacrifices (祭禮, 13 chapters) –

- Offering of Beef and Pork (特牲饋食禮)
- Offering of Mutton (少牢饋食禮)
- Removal of Sacrificial Food (有司徹)
- Moving into Ancestral Temple (諸侯遷廟)
- Liturgy of Sacrifice (祭法)
- God of Heaven (天神)
- God of Earth (地示)
- Hundred Other Gods (百神)
- The Royal Ancestral Shrine (宗廟)
- Sacrifices on Special Occasions (因事之祭)
- Tradition of Sacrifice (祭統)
- Objects of Sacrifice (祭物)
- Meaning of Sacrifice (祭義) (See Zhu et al., 1996)

He applied for "research grants" (Ching, 2000, p. 76; cf. Chan, 1982, p. 189; Qian, 1971, pp. 138–151, Cai, 2004, pp. 439–440) from the government to support this massive project without success. Hence this final scholarly project of his life was not entirely finished before he died. A few chapters for the first five books were missing, and the last two books were eventually completed by his two disciples (Huang Gan, who was also his son-in-law, and Yang Fu).[5] American scholars mostly know Xunzi as a major Confucian advocate of rites. "Boston Confucianism" states clearly that they pay a higher respect to Xunzi than to Mencius because of the emphasis on rites by Xunzi (Neville, 2000, pp. 9, 93–96). We should broaden our mind. Master Zhu is not only a Master of neo-Confucian philosophy, he is the Master of Confucian rituals, and might well be the greatest master of rituals in the whole pre-modern world!

Zhu Xi was not an arm-chair scholar on rituals, as "he approached the subject both as a scholar doing historical research on classical texts and commentaries and as an aspiring practical reformer wishing to offer a new ritual system for his own age." (Ching, 2000, p. 72) As a scholar he revived, restored, and re-interpreted the ancient rites, earning a place in the history of interpretation of Confucian classics. As a reformer, he simplified, adapted, and compiled user-friendly manuals for various occasions. In his original conception he wanted to compile contemporary and simplified manuals for family rites, school rites, district-social rites, nation rites, and imperial court rites. (Qian, 1971, IV:144, 150) But he managed to finish compiling only the first one, which was an unrevised draft. Hence his *Family Ritual* needs to be read in the context of a full set of ritual manuals that encompass school life, district-social life, national life and government life.

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[5] I do not know of any in-depth investigation, not even a journal article or book chapter, into this ambitious project of Zhu Xi (though there are some preliminary studies in Qian, 1971, Kao, 1986, and Cai, 2004). It should be an excellent topic for doctoral dissertations, the absence of which is indicative of the level of interest people have on this topic

8.3.2 Zhu Xi's Personal Practices in Rituals

According to an expert study Zhu Xi was the only neo-Confucian philosopher-official in and before his time who performed sacrifice to Confucius on various occasions throughout his life (Chan, 1987, p. 142). He wrote reports to Confucius on these occasions and "asked Confucius for guidance, for inspiration, and for pardon," as "he believed that the spirit of Confucius existed somewhere" (Chan, 1987, pp. 144–145). Like other deceased human beings, the presence of Confucius' spirit "can be invoked by the sincerity of the worshipper" (Chan, 1987, p. 145). While he was serving as a local government official, he officiated many prayer meetings to pray for rain during droughts, for sunshine when there was too much rain, and for good harvests when locusts invaded the place. During the worst natural disasters he even went up to the mountain to pray (Chan, 1987, pp. 146–47). "[H]e rejoiced that the local prefectures still celebrated sacrifices to the gods of the earth and grain, of wind and rain and thunder, because, he reasoned, without these celebrations all ancient rituals would be lost" (Ching, 2000, p. 86).

Besides observing these public rituals, Zhu Xi observed rites in great detail in his daily life. According to the biographical account of his son-in-law student, Master Zhu

> got up before dawn, dressed formally, and worshipped before the ancestral altars and that of Confucius before going to his study to sit down in a correct position....In all sacrifices, he was sincere and reverent. If he had deviated from any rule, he would be unhappy all day but if he observed all rules correctly, he would be overflowingly happy (Chan, 1987, p. 155).

From another contemporary account we learned that

> the Master rose up early. As students struck the drum in front of the central hall, the Master would open his door and lead the pupils to the hall to bow and offer incense. One pupil would then go to offer incense to the altar of the God of Ground. Then the pupils would follow the Teacher to ascend to the tower and bow before the portrait of Confucius before going to the school where the Teacher would accept the greeting of bowing by pupils and drink some broth. (Chan, 1987, p. 155).

Furthermore, "Chu personally made prayers and offering to ancestral spirits and ritually reported cetain of his actions to the sages." (Ching, 2000, p. 85)

8.3.3 Zhu Xi's Elucidation of The Nature of Li

First of all, Zhu Xi accepted the thesis of "li (禮) is lü (履)" – rite is praxis (Qian, 1971, IV:137). Then he related li (禮, rite) to tianli (天理, "Principle of Heaven") – a key notion in Zhu's metaphysics and ethics. As Wing-tsit Chan helpfully explains,

> Traditionally, Confucianists had equated li, rite, with li, principle....But Chu Hsi regarded that equation as unsatisfactory, for he felt that li (principle) is abstract, whereas li (rites) is concrete. According to him, rites are the operation of the Principle

of Heaven. 'Every instrument, every human relationship, every act of eating and drinking, and every clothing in summer or winter, are the operations of this Principle of Heaven in its dynamic expression.' Therefore he defined *li* [rite] as the. . .constraint and ornament of the Principle of Heaven and the rules of human affairs [天理之節文, 人事之儀則]. . . The expression 'constraint and ornament' is old; . . . . But to define *li* (rites) in terms of the Principle of Heaven is new (Chan, 1987, pp. 153–154).[6]

Accordingly, this new understanding of rites by of Zhu Xi can be construed as a cultural analogue of "liturgy is theology" in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church traditions. As I shall analyze and explain below, the family rituals compiled by Zhu Xi are religious as well as ethical.[7]

8.4 Background and Analysis of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*

8.4.1 Background

In the Qing Dynasty there was a debate about the authenticity of Zhu Xi's authorship of this book (see Kao, 1986, pp. 317–318; Cai, 2004, pp. 415–424; Ching, 2000, pp. 78–79; Ebrey, 1991, pp. 102–144). Most scholars now agree that this book was the authentic work of Zhu Xi. This treatise was compiled earlier in his life, around age 40, during the mourning period over the death of his mother (Chan, 1987, p. 149), which was meant to be a first draft for subsequent revision. Unexpectedly it was stolen shortly after it was completed. It did not re-appear until shortly after Zhu's death when the funeral ritual for him was under preparation.

This book has been deemed the most frequently used manual of liturgy in the last 800 years, either in its original form or in a great many locally adapted or abbreviated forms all over China.[8] The aura of Master Zhu lent support to its authoritative status. Hence though the original title of the book was simply *Family Ritual* (家禮, *Jiali*), subsequently this book has been known as *Master Zhu's Family Rituals* (朱子家禮, *Zhuzi Jiali*). It was influential in Vietnam, Japan, and Korea as well.[9] In the cases of Japan and Korea, the story was

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[6] Cf. Ching (2000, p. 73; Cai, 2004, p. 457).

[7] In the neo-Confucian philosophical glossary compiled by Zhu Xi's student Chen Chun (陳淳), "*li*" as rites is defined this way: "The Principle of Heaven is but the principle in human affairs and embodied in the mind. The Principle of Heaven is in the center and manifested in affairs, while human affairs are outside but rooted in the center. The Principle of Heaven is substance while human affairs are function. . . There must first be the constraint and beautiful ornament according to the Principle of Heaven before there are the form and law of human affairs. It means that both must be fulfilled before the meaning of propriety becomes complete." (Chan, 1987, pp. 154–155; cf. Chan, 1986, p. 73) This is a good summary of Zhu's thought on this topic.

[8] Much more work is needed to fill in the details from social historians and from scholars in folklore studies. One fine example of local research I know of is Li (2002).

[9] At lease one Korean scholar has published a book on this topic (Lu, 2000). On a brief account of its influence in Japan, see Wang and Gong (2003).

more or less the same as in China; *Master Zhu's Family Rituals* was once used by Confucians to combat the influence of Buddhist rituals. Accordingly, though this chapter is a study of a Confucian ritual manual, in virtue of the widespread influence of this manual, this chapter is indirectly a study of Confucian rituals in East Asia.[10]

This book is a manual, with running commentary, of four rituals[11]: capping and pinning (initiation), wedding, funeral, and rituals to ancestral spirits.[12] The first three are equivalent to what anthropologists call "rites of passage."[13] These four were called Family Rituals because they were performed at home. The book was prefaced by a section of "General Principles of Ritual," which covered three topics: (i) the Ancestral Hall, (ii) regulations on the "long garment," and (iii) a collection of miscellaneous instructions on family life.

In the very beginning of the book (according to the edition I am using which is dated back to the Qing Dynasty) are a large number of illustrative diagrams: floor plan of the ancestral hall, various designs of long garments and other mourning costumes, seating plan of the ritual of capping, marriage procession floor plan, objects for use during wedding ceremony, various seating and floor plans for different stages of funeral, design of ancestral spirit tablet, offering seating plan, etc. This arrangement clearly shows the concerns for ritual space, ritual objects, ritual garments, and ritual procession. Rituals need to be seen; hence ritual manuals need to contain visual guides.

8.4.2 "General Principles of Ritual"

This phrase "General Principles of Ritual" is a misnomer (bear in mind that this text was meant to be a draft to be revised); this section consists of three topics.

The first topic is on the Ancestral Hall (祠堂).[14] In the initial commentary Zhu Xi explains the reason for placing this section at the very beginning of the

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[10] On a study of Zhu Xi's practice of family rituals in his own family, see Su (2004).

[11] In the edition I use the commentary was largely composed by Zhu Xi, with a few sections by his disciples.

[12] In the encyclopedic project during his last years, funeral rituals and rituals to ancestral spirits were taken out of the category of "family rituals" and received independent treatment on a par with the five categories of social rituals, which indicates the paramount importance of these two rituals.

[13] Though the Chinese world "*li*" (禮) can be translated as rite, ritual, propriety, rules of proper conduct, and even etiquette, I agree with Julia Ching that *li* in this manual is to be understood "primarily in its connotation of ritual practices and only secondarily including the meaning of moral propriety or correctness." (Ching, 2000, p. 73). This conclusion should be obvious to readers of this chapter once they finish reading this section. However, since people also get used to the phrase "rites of passage," I accept the customary use and do not change my terminology to "rituals of passage." In spite of the phrase "rites of passage," these rites in the context of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* should still be understood as prescribed, formal, ritual behavior, rather than as simply morally proper actions.

[14] Ebrey's translation of "the Offering Hall" is not accurate enough.

manual, "Now I have purposely placed it here, making it the first subject, because its contents form the heart of 'repaying one's roots and returning to the beginning,' the essence of 'honoring ancestors and respecting agnatic kin,'.... My arrangement will let the reader sense that what is placed first is the most important." (Chu, 1991, p. 6). This sentiment of honoring one's origin is religious, as I shall explain more below. Chu then explains the setting up of the Ancestral Hall, daily liturgy therein, daily reports to the spirits of ancestors, and festive offerings of food. Furthermore, in the four subsequent chapters, reporting to one's ancestors in the Ancestral Hall is a key segment in each of the four rituals. Such an emphasis on the Ancestral Hall as the ritual space *par excellence* reinforces some sinologists' identification of "ancestral-oriented family rituals as keys to Chinese culture" (Ebrey, 1991, p. 3).[15]

The second topic is a very brief section on the regulations of the long garment. Zhu Xi probably regarded the contemporary long garment as unfaithful to the Zhou Dynasty costumes of two thousand years ago; hence the need for the section.

The third topic is a collection of miscellaneous instructions on family life taken from Sima Guang, the first Confucian ritual reformer of his time. These instructions can be viewed as a code of conduct regulating family life (the basic unit of all families then was an extended family). Here *li* is more in the mode of propriety rites than formal rituals. For example, "Younger members of the family should always obtain permission from the family head for anything they do, large or small, and at no time act on their own....Sons and daughters-in-law must never keep private property." (Chu, 1991, p. 25) Sons and daughters should serve their parents with daily meals and help them with getting up and getting into bed. "Whenever one has nothing to do, he or she should go to wherever the parents are to attend to them." (Chu, 1991, p. 27) "Should their son or daughter-in-law not be respectful or filial, the parents should try not to take an immediate dislike. Instead they should teach him or her. If he or she remains intractable, they should try rebukes. If there is still no improvement, they should try flogging. If, after many floggings, he or she still cannot behave properly, then they should expel their son or have their daughter-in-law divorced." (Chu, 1991, p. 29) The parents are the moral center of gravity in such a way that even the marital status of the daughter-in-law hinges entirely on her relationship with the heads of the house. "Even if the son likes his wife very much, if his parents are displeased with her, he should divorce her. On the other hand, if the son dislikes his wife, yet his parents say that she is good at serving them, then the son should fulfill his duty as husband for the rest of his life." (Chu, 1991, p. 29).

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[15] Some Chinese homes in Hong Kong still have a small ancestral altar in the living room today. Many traditional villages of "indigenous inhabitants of the New Territories" in Hong Kong have common Ancestral Halls in which formal offerings are still being made in some important days of the year. Ancestral spirit tablets of at least twenty generations are preserved therein.

Zhu Xi explained the reason of placing these instructions from Sima Guang in the first chapter of the *Family Ritual* as follows.

> This section was originally at the end of the chapter on wedding. It concerns ordinary matters of living at home and deals with the basis for rectifying personal relationships and principles and deepening kindness and love. Indeed, their foundation is entirely here. Only someone who has mastered what is described here will have attractive ceremonial behavior. Otherwise, even if the details are fully provided for, the basic essence will be missed, something no man of virtue can respect. Therefore, I have also put this essay in the first chapter so that readers will recognize priorities. (Chu, 1991, p. 24)

In other words, the fundamental concern of family rituals is family ethics. Behind the ceremonial elegance and splendor of various rituals should be the moral virtue of reverent love for one's family, which is the foundation of family rituals, as explained in the Preface as well. (Chu, 1991, p. 3). Daily moral-spiritual discipline in family life is needed in order to cultivate sincerity which is indispensable in carrying out, rather than acting out, the four rituals.[16] In short, rituals and virtues mutually reinforce each other.[17]

8.4.3 Capping

The rite of initiation for males is capping, which should take place when the young man is between the ages of 15 and 20. It is to take place in, of course, the ritual space *par excellence*, the Ancestral Hall. It consists of three ritual actions: the sponsor (i) puts the head-cloth on the initiant, (ii) puts the hat, black robe, leather belt on him and tie his shoes, (iii) helps him to put on the scarf-cap, official robes, a leather belt, boots, and official plaques, or alternatively the scholars' robe and boots. (Chu, 1991, pp. 40, 42) There are ritual pronouncements to accompany each ritual act, viz., (i) "On an excellent day of an auspicious month, you wear head gear for the first time. Set aside your childish ideas and comply with the virtues of manhood. Then your years will be blessed, and your fortune will be great." (ii) "At this excellent hour of this auspicious day, we add to your garments. Be careful in your demeanor; be pure in your virtue. Then your years will be everlasting and you will be blessed with good fortune." (iii) "In this excellent month of this proper year, we complete your clothing. Your brothers are all here to complete your virtue. May you live forever until your hair turns from white to yellow; may you receive heaven's favor." (Chu, 1991, pp. 40–42) The climax of this ritual is the pronouncement of the adult name (字) and the explanation of its meaning.[18]

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[16] Note that gender differentiation does not begin with the rite of initiation. Toward the end of this section are instructions on the different educations boys and girls receive starting from age 6.

[17] Robert Cummings Neville says it well, "Unlike moral rules and good will, propriety is lodged in the habits of bones and muscles and in the deepest schemes of imagination" (Neville, 2000, p. 10).

[18] One cannot but think of the ritual of baptism, appointment of godfather, and the giving of Christian name of Christian rituals in many Christian churches.

This ritual resonates with the puberty rites in other cultures in its significance, *viz.*, it "introduces the novice into the world of spiritual and cultural values and makes him a responsible member of society. . . .the candidate passes beyond the 'natural' mode of being – of the child – and gains access to the cultural mode; that is, he is introduced to spiritual values." (Eliade, 2005, p. 4476) Zhu Xi's quotation of Sima Guang in the introductory explanation of this manual says it well,

> The ancients performed capping at twenty as a ritual through which a youth was charged with acting as an adult. That is, 'one then expected of the young man the conduct of a son, a younger brother, a subject, and a junior.' Therefore the ceremony had to be treated seriously. In recent times, people are flippant in their attitude toward it. Very few boys are still wearing 'hair horns' beyond ten. What can such boys know about expectations of the four kinds of conduct? All too often they are uniformly foolish from childhood to maturity, for they know nothing of adult ways. (Chu, 1991, p. 36).

In other words, this ritual confirms the view of contemporary Ritual Studies scholars on the significance of initiation, *viz.*, "inculcating a society's rules and values to those who are to become its full-fledged members." (Meyerhoff et al., 2005, p. 77–98).

Besides precise instructions of ritual space, ritual actions, and ritual pronouncements, the respective ritual positions of the people involved are also specified, illustrated with a diagram layout. What is particularly noteworthy is that, unlike initiation in many other cultures, which is a social event, capping here is strictly a family affair. Only one guest is invited to attend the ritual in the capacity of the sponsor for the young man. When the ritual is completed, "the initiant goes out to be presented to local elders and his father's friends." (Chu, 1991, p. 45).

A very brief section on female initiation at age fifteen, in a ritual of pinning, is also specified at the end of this chapter.[19]

8.4.4 Marriage

The second family ritual is marriage. There is a series of ritual actions to take, both before and after the wedding ceremony. Zhu Xi made sure that they would conform to ancient Zhou rituals, but simplified the procedures. Again, reporting to ancestors in the Ancestral Hall is to take place several times in the ritual process.[20]

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[19] For an ethnograhical study of the practices of the rite of initiation among various ethnic groups of Chinese in 1900-1950, see Wan (2005, pp. 349–370).

[20] I shall not probe deeper into this ritual as apparently there is a lack of noteworthy features for the purpose of this chapter. For a very detailed, ethnograhical study of the practices of the wedding rituals in China 1900–1950, see Wu (2005).

8.4.5 Funeral

The third family ritual is funeral (in the broad sense), which includes mourning, mortuary, funerary, and memorial rituals. This is the longest section of the manual, with 22 subsections, probably for two reasons. For one thing, this ritual had a prominent place in ancient Confucian China. For another, it was this ritual that Confucianism faced the biggest competition, primarily from Buddhism and Daoism. As I explained before, this manual was occasioned by the death of Zhu Xi's mother, and Zhu Xi tolerated the usage of Buddhist funeral liturgy by his students because there was no uncomplicated, user-friendly Confucian funeral liturgy. Hence in this section of the manual there is an explicit prohibition of performing a Buddhist liturgy (Chu, 1991, p. 79), and in the commentary there is a refutation of the Buddhist rituals which putatively can facilitate the deceased to leave hell's torture and enter paradise. (Chu, 1991, pp. 79–80).

Since this is the most elaborate set of rituals in the manual, there are luxuriant and meticulous specifications of ritual sequence, ritual actions, ritual gestures, ritual procession, ritual etiquette, ritual offerings, ritual costumes, ritual space, ritual time, ritual objects, ritual language, ritual writing, and ritual sound. The ritual sound is not music, which is also absent in the other three rituals, but wailing.[21] The stipulations of when to wail, when to increase the volume of wailing, when to stop wailing, when to resume wailing, and when to wail in turn "so that the sound never stops" (Chu, 1991, p. 83) are very precise.[22] No wonder that, as I mentioned before, in the *Comprehensive Explanations of the Canon and Commentaries of Yi Li* which Zhu Xi compiled during his final years, Funeral Rituals stand out as an independent category on a par with Family Rituals, Local District Rituals, School Rituals, Nation Rituals, and Imperial Court Rituals.[23]

8.4.6 Offering

The last family ritual is offering.[24] Unlike the previous three rituals, which are one-off events, this set of rituals is to be repeated throughout the year – the second month of each season (for all ancestors), at winter solstice (for the

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[21] The West has Mass or Requiem music for funerals. Even Buddhist and Daoist funeral liturgies have music to go with. Not so for Confucian funerals. This puzzle needs further study which cannot be done in this chapter.

[22] Thirty years ago when I attended college in Taiwan I eye-witnessed the public playing in large volume of tape-recorded wailing in the funeral vehicle on the road! Even today, wailing is considered such an important ritual sound that some people in Taiwan and in mainland go to the excess of employing a team of surrogate wailers for funeral rituals.

[23] For a very detailed, ethnograhical study of the practices of the funeral rituals in China 1900–1950, see Shi (2005). A similar English study is Watson and Rawski (1988).

[24] Ebrey has wrongly translated "*ji*" here as sacrifice, and I shall explain later why it is wrong.

earliest ancestor), at the first day of Spring (for early ancestors), in the last month of autumn (for immediate ancestor), during the "taboo days," i.e., days of death (for all ancestors) and in early March (grave visit and offerings). Except the last occasion, all offerings to ancestors are to take place, of course, at the Ancestral Hall. Besides such prescription of ritual time and ritual space, there are also instructions of ritual utensils and ritual offering objects (meat, fish, rice, noodle, grains, fruit, vegetables, and wine). Ritual procedures are not exactly the same for each occasion, but the common denominators are as follow. Taking out the Spirit Tablets, invoking the arrival of the spirits, greeting the spirits, offering of food and urging the spirits to eat, closing the door, opening the door, receiving the offered food, excusing the departure of the spirits, putting away the Spirit Tablets, and clearing away the remains.

Zhu Xi seems to believe that the spirit of a dead person is still around somewhere. In the earlier chapter when he refutes the Buddhist funeral liturgy, he explains, "The body has entered the yellow regions where it rots and disappears like the trees and stones. On the other hand, the spirit whirls like the wind and fire, going who knows where." (Chu, 1991, p. 79) But both in the manual and in the commentary, there is no evidence of suggesting direct communion with the ancestors' spirits. Why are such offerings to be made then? Zhu Xi's answer is that "the emphasis is on fulfilling sincere feelings of love and respect" (Chu, 1991, p. 166). Once again, the point of family rituals is both to cultivate and to express filial virtues. Hence once in a while we should treat our ancestors nice meals as if they were around.

In the process of offerings, a liturgist makes several ritual pronouncements or speeches: (i) on behalf of the descendents to invite the ancestor spirits to be present in the Hall, (ii) on behalf of the descendents to invite the spirits to enjoy the food, and (iii) on behalf of the spirits to bless the descendents. The last ritual pronouncement is a ritual benediction and it is particularly noteworthy. It says, "The ancestors instruct me, the liturgist, to pass on abundant good luck to you filial descendents and calls you, filial descendents, to approach and receive riches from Heaven, have good harvests from the fields, and live a long life forever, without interruption." (Chu, 1991, p. 164) It is clear then, for Zhu Xi, the ancestors are not deified; they are at most equivalent to the saints of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, who are intermediary between humans and God. The spirits of ancestors can help the descendents to "receive riches from Heaven," but not from the spirits themselves.

8.5 Overall Comparative Observations

I have two sets of comparative observations to make. The first has to do with religiosity, and the other with the rites of passage.

Zhu Xi's neo-Confucian philosophy is well-known, but there is a certain religious or at least quasi-religious dimension of his thought which has been much neglected in both Chinese and English scholarship on Zhu Xi, with the

exception of Wing-tsit Chan (1982, pp. 181–204, 1987, pp. 139–161) and Julia Ching (2000, pp. 72–90). On the foundation of their studies I offer in this chapter an in-depth analysis of his *Family Rituals*, which probably has more social influence than any of his other works. I submit that the *Family Rituals* contains a definite religiosity which is not in principle incompatible with Christian religiosity.

First, a clarification of the issue of "ancestor-worship" is in order. According to some scholars in Religious Studies, a hallmark of "ancestor worship" is that "ancestors may be regarded as possessing power equivalent to that of a deity and hence may be accorded cult status... Ancestors may be prayed to so as having the power to grant boons or allay misfortune" (Hardacre, 2005, p. 321). However, as I have just explained in the last section, Zhu Xi carefully does not accord such a deity status and power to the ancestors. Hence the offering ritual to ancestors cannot be called ancestor worship; "ancestor respect or reverence," or even "ancestor devotion," is more accurate.[25] For a similar reason, to translate this term "*ji*" (祭) as "sacrifice" is wrong in this context. The major elements of the ritual of sacrifice as identified by scholars in Ritual Studies are not here, the idea of consecration in particular (the word "sacrifice" is derived from the Latin expression *sacer facere* – to make holy) (cf. Bell, 1997, pp. 108–114).

One pivotal event in the history of Chinese Christianity is the so-called "Rite Controversy." As the Vatican was persuaded by the Franciscans and the Dominicans that the practice of "ancestor worship" was incompatible with Christian faith, Pope Clement XI issued a decree to condemn the practice in 1715. According to the papal bull *Ex Illa Die*, whether at home, in the cemetery, or during the time of a funeral, a Chinese Catholic was not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. Such a ritual was condemned heathen in nature regardless of the circumstances. In return Emperor Kangxi issued a decree in 1721 prohibiting the missionary work of all Catholic missionaries in China (see, e.g., Ross, 1994, pp. 190–199). How misinformed the Pope was on this issue! The Confucian ancestor devotion is based on the mindfulness of one's contingent origin, and ancestor reverence is a reverence out of gratitude. (See the discussion on the Ancestral Hall earlier in this chapter.) To me such sentiments are compatible with the Christian religiosity of creaturehood and spirituality of gratitude and thanksgiving. In fact, Matteo Ricci and his Jesuit companions in China often described God as our Great Father and Mother so that the Confucian spirituality of parents devotion can lead to the Christian spirituality of reverence of God (Ricci, 1985, p. 131). Some Jesuit Chinese writings of that time also wrote on the topic of offerings to ancestors and they understood the practice along the line of Zhu Xi's interpretation. The 17th century Jesuits in

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[25] In the article on "Ancestors: Ancestor Worship" in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Hardacre, 2005) Zhu Xi's *Family Ritual* is used as an illustration of Confucian ancestor worship. How illinformed the view is!

China had a better understanding of the Confucian virtue of, and ritual for, ancestor devotion than the Dominican and Franciscan counterparts.[26]

It is noteworthy that to this day the Taiwanese Chinese consider "remembering the source of one's happiness and prosperity" and "being mindful of one's origins" (飲水思源, 慎終追遠) a common feature of all Taiwanese folk religions.[27] The religiosity of ancestor devotion is thereby fully articulated, and it should be obvious that such a religiosity has no conflict with classical Christian theology.

As to the topic of the rites of passage, there is very little in-depth study and comparative analysis of Confucian rites of passage in Chinese or English.[28] The limit of my study is that it is confined to a widely used manual; I did not study the rituals in practice. Since many of the prescribed rituals are no longer in practice today, this limitation can only be overcome by social historians and ethnographers. With this limitation in mind, and in addition to the isolated observations in the last section, we are still able to see some significant differences between the rites of passage in Confucianism and those in other cultures.

The first striking difference is that in Confucianism the rites of passage are considered family rites, not social or communal rites. They are occasions primarily for family bonding rather than for socialization. They all take place at home, and the Hall of Ancestors is one key ritual space. As explained before, the ritual of initiation has only one invited guest, who will be the patron for the young man. The rituals of offering to deceased ancestors (except the grave visit), are all held at home and are strictly home affairs. Though people outside the family are also involved in the rituals of marriage and of funeral, the fact remains that they are family rituals which take place at home, in the Ancestral Hall in particular (rather than in a church, in City Hall, and in a funeral home). As I have explained under the heading of "General Principles of Rituals" in Section (D) above, Zhu Xi makes it very clear that the internal good of family rituals is the inculcation of family ethics. Behind the elaborations of "ornaments" of these four family rituals is the virtue of reverent love for the family and its head. In contemporary Western studies on rituals, however, "family ritual" is not even listed as one ritual type (Grimes, 1996, pp. 570–572).

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[26] The papal bull of 1715 was revoked in 1939. On Chinese New Year Day 1979 Cardinal Paul Yü Pin of Taiwan officiated a special mass which incorporated the Confucian rituals of offering to ancestors. I was fortunate to be there to witness this milestone. This practice of the indigenization of rituals continues today among some Catholic churches.

[27] I obtained this information from the exhibition of Museum of World Religions, Taipei. Taiwan, November, 2006.

[28] Yao's short piece on Chinese rites of passage (1994) is too general; he does not distinguish between Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and other folk beliefs. Lin's Chinese book (1997) is a helpful textual and historical study; it offers no comparative analysis either.

Secondly, many early ritual theories regard the rite of initiation as the paradigm of other passage rites.[29] In Confucian rites of passage studied in this chapter, however, it is the funeral rite that is the rite *par excellence*![30]

Thirdly, though the rite of birth has been practiced in Chinese society for at least a millennium before Zhu's time, for some unknown reason it had no significant place in ancient Zhou rites ("Three Canons of Rites") and was totally absent in Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*. This is indicative of another significant difference between Confucian rites of passage and rites of passage in many other cultures.[31] This absence in the book notwithstanding, Catherine Bell, a contemporary scholar in Ritual Studies, spends a few pages on Chinese cases as the *only* illustrations of the rite of birth in her explanation of the various rites of passage (Bell, 1997, pp. 95–98). Further investigation into this unusal discrepancy is needed.[32]

8.6 Conclusion: Cultural Disarray and Renewal

Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, though once the most widely read book in East Asia, is no longer in print as a manual in Chinese (Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan), which is an indication of its extent in practice.[33] This is one symptom of the predicament of Confucianism in modern China which has received attention and explanations by many scholars already. But there is one particular reason to explain for the demise of Confucian rituals, or any traditional rituals for that matter in today's world.

There is something we can learn from ritual studies scholars in their explanation about the nature and function of rituals. First, the view of Catherine Bell:

> Today we think of "ritual" as a complex sociocultural medium variously constructed of tradition, exigency, and self-expression; it is understood to play a wide variety of roles and to communicate a rich density of overdetermined messages and attitudes. For the most part, ritual is the medium chosen to invoke those ordered relationships that are thought to obtain between human beings in the here-and-now and non-immediate sources of power, authority, and value. Definitions of these relationships in terms of ritual's vocabulary of gesture and word, in contrast to theological speculation or

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[29] According to Stephenson (2005, p. 7801), Arnold van Gennep, Mircea Eliade, and Victor Turner all hold such a view.

[30] The sad fact is, however, Confucian funeral rite is unavailable in Hong Kong funeral homes today, whereas Buddhist and Daoist funeral rites still are!

[31] In fact, there is also the difference within Chinese culture between Confucian rituals on the book and actual rituals that occur at homes.

[32] Since this chapter is only the first of its kind, more research on the topic can still be carried out. For example, one can use the Confucian rites to test out the explanatory power of various theories of rites of passage (e.g., those of the Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, of the Romanian historian of religions Mircea Eliade, and of the British anthropologist Victor Turner). We should also compare Confucian rites of passage with the counterparts in Buddhism and Daoism, with which Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* were meant to compete against.

[33] It is only recently reprinted as part of a 27-volume of *Complete Works of Master Zhu* in 2002; all the visual guides, however, are omitted.

doctrinal formulation, suggest that *the fundamental efficacy of ritual activity lies in its ability to have people embody assumptions about their place in a larger order of things.* (Bell, 1997, p. xi; emphasis added)

Patricia Buckley Ebrey also tries to sum up the view of social scientists,

Anthropologists studying a wide variety of societies have repeatedly shown how rituals create and convey basic cultural premises. Through the performance of rituals people act out many of the most fundamental structures of meaning in their society, the sets of ideas and discriminations that help them interpret themselves and their relations to others. *Ritual action, thus, helps reproduce culture, especially the realm of culture that seldom enters into conscious choice, the realm taken for granted, left outside the limits of debate.* The principles conveyed in this way frequently serve to legitimate the social and political structure, making social distinctions part of what is taken to be in the nature of things. *Participation in rituals is a public and bodily way to acknowledge these social and cosmic orders.* (Ebrey, 1991, p. 4; emphasis added)

I submit, in the "postmodern" aspect of today's society (or in a subculture of modern society which is eager to bury things past), it is precisely the shared "assumptions about their place in a larger order of things" (Bell) that is becoming an endangered species. The realm of culture "that seldom enters into conscious choice, the realm taken for granted, left outside the limits of debate" (Ebrey) is increasingly put under suspicion. When there are no more shared values, there will be no more common rituals. As the mighty forces of market economy and consumerism are pushing society to invent new rituals and the pluralism in today's society urges "let a hundred flowers bloom" in novel rituals, it is not surprising to find traditional rituals in disarray in some communities. For those communities which cherish the idea of "families come in all shapes," it is hard to expect the survival of traditional family rituals.

Fortunately, though, not all Chinese communities have embraced postmodernism. Non-metropolitan Chinese communities in mainland China, Taiwan, and even Hong Kong are still conserving some ritual practices of traditional China. Though Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, as a manual, is no longer in print in Chinese, some ritual practices Zhu Xi prescribes still survive. The family ritual of offering to ancestors, in particular, is still widely practiced in some local, non-metropolitan communities in Taiwan and less widely so among the "indigenous inhabitants of the New Territories" in Hong Kong.

Chinese society needs another revival of Confucianism and another Zhu Xi to revise and revive Confucian rituals.[34] Some contemporary neo-Confucians (e.g., Tu Wei-ming at Harvard University, Chungying Cheng at University of Hawaii, Liu Shu-hsien at Academica Sinica, Taiwan) advocate a "third stage of

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[34] The rite of initiation, especially for young women, is still widely practiced today in Japanese and Korean societies. In Japan the Coming-of-Age Day (*Seijin no hi*) Festival takes place every year on the second Monday of January. All young men and ladies who have turned 20 in the previous year celebrate reaching the age of official adulthood at which they can vote, drive, smoke, and drink alcohol. They start their day with a Shinto shrine visit and have celebrations all day long. It is sad that this rite is no longer observed in Chinese societies in mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or Macau.

development of Confucianism." But these neo-Confucians are interested only in Confucian philosophy, not in Confucian practices. Unlike Zhu Xi, they do not practice Confucian rituals personally. Many other advocates of the revival of traditional Chinese culture also show little interests in rituals. Though there have been vocal voices to revive and renew traditional virtues both in the government and in society of China, there has been little suggestion to revive and renew traditional rituals. I think they are wrong; such a cultural and moral renewal requires, *inter alia*, a renewal of traditional rituals, which help inculcate and manifest traditional virtues.

Traditional Confucian family rituals inculcate and manifest familial virtues. Human beings are not atomistic individuals; they are, above all, family-members all their lives. Family is a very important part of one's socially embedded identity. Accordingly, in addition to talking about family values, we should also talk about family rituals.

8.7 Epilogue: A Plea for Family Rituals from Boston

Robert Cummings Neville is a distinguished philosopher and theologian in his own right and is an author of numerous books. One of his latest books (Neville, 2000) is particularly significant as he tries to argue that Confucianism can become a world philosophy and take home in a multicultural city as Boston. Boston needs Confucianism as much as the latter needs the former. He speaks not as a sinologist and that makes his pleas more worthy of listening.[35]

One feature of Confucianism that appeals to Neville most is the idea of *li* as propriety, rite, or ritual. This emphasis on the contemporary relevance of *li* contributes to the nuanced difference between Boston Confucianism south of the Charles River and that north of the Charles (Neville, 2000, p. xxv). He understands that American culture historically is not particularly fond of ritual propriety and that needs to be changed. As he says,

> Propriety or ceremony, however, has been a more difficult notion for Americans than humanity [*ren*, the virtue of benevolence]. Although Confucian propriety has been presented to the West as akin to good manners and polite behavior, there is a deep-seated hostility in North Atlantic cultures since the late eighteenth century to the stylized manners of courtliness. European Enlightenment egalitarianism distrusts manners that have to be learned from others through imitation (Confucius admitted this takes a life-time). Rather, peasants and poor people are just as excellent as cultivated people if their heart is sincere, according to the typical American. To a Confucian this is to assert that humanity by itself is sufficient without propriety" (Neville, 2000, p. 9).

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[35] Neville here is following the footsteps of Herbert Fingerette. He is the first modern American non-sinologist who tries to discern the deepest meaning of the thought of Confucius and its application to America. The first chapter of the book is "Human Community as Holy Rite" (Fingerette, 1972).

He appreciates the Confucian attention to rituals and argues that ritual propriety is constitutive of humanity. Western ethical and political theories, accordingly, need to be re-oriented to reflect this new understanding of human nature.

> If ritual conventions are constitutive of individuals because they allow individuals to act with shared meanings, and thus to be individual by being social, this suggests. . .that ethical attention ought to be focused on the ritual structures of gesture, language, interpersonal behavior, and social institutions. Western ethical theory has tended to focus on individual acts and the principles or goals of such actions, that is, on deontology and teleology; Western political and social theory has focused on actual historical institutions and social structures. . . . Often what is important about individual actions is not their particularity but their conventionally structured possibilities. . . What is important about social institutions is not always their historical particularity but the general ways they make action and production possible through conventional social habits. (Neville, 2000, p. 95)

In a very interesting section of the book Neville offers a three-fold "Confucian critique for Boston" (Neville, 2000, pp. 15–21), the last of which is on how families should be organized. He first summarizes the Confucian view of the family, "the family is the matrix within which people find the home to become fully human in all the dimensions of their life, and the care and affection appropriate for the family should consist in the social habits fostering this." (Neville, 2000, p. 19) In spite of the differences between East and West, and those between ancient and modern, Neville emphatically calls for a renewal of American families by learning from Confucian family rituals.

> American families by and large do not have the civilizing rituals they need to integrate school and home life, to acknowledge women with careers who also are mothers and homemakers, to cope with mature men who can be consumed by job responsibilities or out of work completely, to mediate the passing on of family traditions with what children learn at school and work, to dignify retirement while keeping family ties, and so forth. American families still need to cope with the fact that so many family members live alone, separated from the family. The modern American family enjoys many advantages of opportunity and, in certain circumstances, has obvious problems to be addressed by more and better jobs or better housing arrangements. But even if the advantages were celebrated and the problems overcome, there are insufficient rituals of family for it to be the home in which people can be supported in working out the issues of wholeness in their lives. (Neville, 2000, p. 20)

Neville does not seem to know Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, but he knows enough Confucianism to make this plea.[36] In short, a renewal of the Confucian family rituals is needed not only for the renewal of Chinese society, but also for the renewal of American society as well.

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[36] It is rather ironic that Neville does not know Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals*, but he makes this plea. On the other hand, Ebrey, the translator of and scholar on this treatise, just observes that there is a gulf between the phenomenon she studies and her experience at home (see my quotation at the beginning of this chapter).

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Chapter 9
Confucian Ritualization: How and Why?

Ruiping Fan

9.1 Introduction

Anyone familiar with Confucian Chinese tradition understands the importance of *li* (禮) in the tradition. When you visit a Chinese family, the host and hostess will ask their children to call you "Uncle Smith" or "Aunty Alice". It is not in the *li* for the children to address you as "Mr. Smith" or "Ms. Alice". When a student hands something to her teacher, she should use her two hands to do it. It would violate the *li* if she uses only one hand. Such *li* has been functioning in the Confucian tradition for thousands of years. I will adopt the English words of rituals and rites interchangeably to translate the Confucian word of *li* in this essay.

In one of the Confucian classics of the *li* compiled two thousand years ago, the *Records of Li* (*Liji*, 禮記) (Legge, 1967), the *li* is explicitly divided into two types: ceremonial rituals (*yili*, 儀禮) and minute rituals (*quli*, 曲禮). The Confucian ceremonial rituals include a series of important Confucian rites performed at various levels of society, such as the family rites of capping, wedding, burying, mourning, and sacrificing, the village rites of drinking, banqueting, and archery, and the state rites of interchanging missions, visiting the emperor, and offering sacrifices to Heaven. Another ancient Confucian classic, *Yili* (儀禮) (Steele, 1966), provides the detailed descriptions of some of these ceremonial rites. On the other hand, the Confucian minute rituals denote everyday small behavior patterns, such as various Confucian quasi-ceremonial manners, decorums, etiquettes, and customs. Confucian individuals adopt these quasi-ceremonial manners to address and treat each other in their everyday lives. These small rites can be understood as the Confucian ceremonial rites exhibited partially or employed in a small degree in everyday interactions and activities of the Confucian people (Cf. Legge, 1967, Vol. I, p. 16). It is reported that the Confucian

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community in ancient times had practiced approximately 300 ceremonial rituals and 3,000 minute rituals (*Liji*: *Liqi* 禮記: 禮器; Legge, Vol. I, p. 404).

Accordingly, by the Confucian rituals this essay means both the ceremonial and the minute rituals. The next section shows how the Confucian life is ritualized. It explains in what ways this characterization – the ritualization of the Confucian life – is both legitimate and meaningful. From the Confucian view, rituals are meaningful because they are necessary for virtue cultivation. This point is defended in Section 9.3 by further developing the account of virtue offered by Alasdair MacIntyre. Then the issue is whether general moral principles can replace the role of rituals in directing human actions. Section 9.4 argues for the indispensability of rituals for virtue acquisition and manifestation by drawing on the classical Confucian resources. A general implication of these points is covered in the concluding remarks.

9.2 How Is The Confucian Life Ritualized?

The Confucian rituals, like rituals performed in other cultures, are social practices. They are not the activities conducted for seeking natural objects or effects for human survival, such as hunting to obtain animals for food. Instead, a Confucian ritual is a social practice that was created to pursue a social, spiritual, and even sacred result.[1] It is the Confucian belief that the rituals were created by the Confucian sages to exert their indispensable functions for accomplishing the authentic way of human life. In fact, as the *Records of Li* discloses,

> At the first use of the *li*, they began with meat and drink. They roasted millet and pieces of animal meat; they excavated the ground in the form of a jar, and scooped the water from it with their two hands; they fashioned a handle of clay, and struck with it an earthen drum. [Simple as these arrangements were], they yet seemed to be able to express by them their reverence for spiritual beings (*Liji: Liyun* 禮記: 禮運; Legge, 1967, Vol. I, p. 368).

How could such simple arrangements express human reverence for spiritual beings? In other words, how could the Confucian sages transform such apparently "natural" activities to become ethical and spiritual rituals? In analysis, it is helpful to recognize that the rituals are governed by a system of ritual rules in that in performing the rituals people are observing the rules. Such rules are special, and they determine certain natural objects and ordinary behavior to bear symbolic meanings in proper contexts. In other words, such rules are

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[1] Although this essay focuses on the ethical, rather than religious, functions of the Confucian rituals, it is necessary to note that some crucial Confucian rituals (such as sacrifices to Heaven and ancestors) are obviously religious. Moreover, the Confucian rituals as a coherent whole system representing the Confucian way of life exert an essential role of connecting the human life to the divine and therefore elevating and even sanctifying the human life.

constitutive rather than regulative.[2] For example, the rule that directs a Confucian sacrificial ritual to ancestors is in the format that "doing such and such things in such and such ways constitutes the sacrifices to the ancestors." More importantly, if a ritual as a practice has a primary goal to accomplish, the goal is disclosed by its constitutive rule. For example, a Confucian sacrificial ritual to one's ancestors has the primary goal of "offering a sacrifice to one's ancestors," and this goal is clearly defined by the constitutive rule of the ritual: "providing an animal in such and such ways counts as offering a sacrifice to one's ancestors." In contrast, a regulative rule does not identify the primary goal of any practice. It only regulates an already existing practice. Accordingly, it is reasonable to understand that the Confucian sages created the rituals by establishing a system of the Confucian constitutive rules.

The importance of the primary goals of the Confucian rituals explains why the rituals are more important than many other activities in the Confucian community. Sports, such as the basketball and football games, are enormously popular "social practices" in today's Chinese society, but they cannot be taken as rituals. Neither can they be considered as important as the rituals. Why not? The reason lies in the difference between their primary goals. The primary goals of the Confucian rituals, such as "getting married properly," "burying the dead seriously" and "offering sacrifices reverently," are the central and irreplaceable elements for a meaningful Confucian way of life. In contrast, the primary goal of the football game, "shooting the gate" (which is identified by the constitutive rule of the game that "doing such and such things counts as shooting the gate"), can by no means be essential to the meaning of the Confucian culture. Confucians will remain being Confucians without playing this game, no matter how popular it is in a time. But the Chinese culture will no longer be Confucian if the Chinese people stop performing the Confucian rituals of wedding, funeral, sacrifices, and so on, just as Americans will no longer be Christians if they stop going to church regularly.

The Confucian life is ritualized in the following way. First, the Confucian rites are a special type of practices, different from other types of practices. Of course, many practices other than the rites are also important in a Confucian society. For example, farming, crafting, medicine, and arts may each be necessary for the flourishing of the Confucian way of life: each of these practices must be employed by some individuals in society in order for the society to do well. However, it is also necessary that each of these practices must not be employed by all the people in society: a division of labor is not only important, but also necessary, for these practices to exert their total functions in society. If one

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[2] John Searle's distinction between constitutive rules and regulative rules is helpful for us to understand ritual practices. A constitutive rule is in the form that "x counts as y" or "x counts as y in context c," while a regulative rule is simply in the form that "do x" or "if y, do x" (Searle, 1969, pp. 34–35). In performing rituals people may not be aware of all the important rules they are following. Nevertheless, rituals are impossible without constitutive social rules.

wants to become an excellent medical doctor, one cannot spend most of the time in artistic work, while both good medical doctors and good artists are needed in the society. However, the rituals, as special practices, are different. Confucianism holds that the rituals must be performed by everyone in order to live a normal human life, no matter what else one employs. One may be a farmer, a crafter, a medical doctor, or an artist, but one must engage in the practices of the capping, wedding, burying and sacrificing rituals as well. Accordingly, it is the Confucian rituals, rather than other occupations or professions, that are the real universal Confucian social practices, universal in the sense that every individual in the Confucian community must learn and exercise these rituals in order to live an authentic Confucian life. Moreover, as mentioned, the Confucian tradition emphasizes the importance of not only the formal ceremonial rituals, but also the numerous minute rituals. The Chinese people are firmly committed to both the ceremonial and minute rituals in shaping their everyday familial and social relations as well as conducting various activities. As a result, the Confucian life world is ritualized.[3]

9.3 Why Ritual Practices Are Necessary for Virtue Cultivation?

Why are the Confucian rituals necessary for the Confucian way of life? This section will argue that only through the Confucian ritual practices can the Confucian virtues be cultivated. Given that the Confucian virtues are the power or quality that essentially sustains the Confucian way of life, the role of the Confucian rituals is indispensable. If this argument is sound, then the message should be heuristic not only for Confucian society, but also for other societies. I will deploy my argument by developing Alasdair MacIntyre's account of virtue offered in his seminal volume *After Virtue* (1984). From the Confucian perspective, MacIntyre's exploration must be furthered in order to appreciate the significant role of a special type of practices (like the Confucian rituals) for virtue acquisition.

In order to provide his account of virtue, MacIntyre explores a series of relevant concepts, including practices, internal and external goods, and institutions. To begin, MacIntyre understands a "practice" as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized" (p. 187). The examples of practices he offers include arts, sciences, games and politics (p. 188). A practice has both internal and external goods attached to it. The external goods of a practice are those contingently attached to the practice, such as prestige, status, and money. But the internal goods of a practice are those specified only in terms of conducting this particular practice and can only be

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[3] For more detailed analyses and arguments for the views expressed in this section, see Fan (2010, chapter 11).

recognized by the experience of participating in this particular practice (pp. 188–189). Meanwhile, MacIntyre warns us not to confuse practice with institutions. "Chess, physics and medicine are practices; chess club, laboratories, universities and hospitals are institutions" (p. 194). Institutions are the bearers of practices. They are concerned with the external goods of practices: "they are involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards" (p. 194).

Importantly, in MacIntyre's account, virtues are significant for pursuing the internal goods of practices. "A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (p. 191). For him, without a range of key virtues, such as justice, courage and honesty, the goods internal to practices will be barred to us, because such goods can only be achieved in our relationship to other practitioners:

> We have to accept as necessary components of any practice with internal goods and standards of excellence the virtues of justice, courage and honesty. For not to accept these, to be willing to cheat..., so far bars us from achieving the standards of excellence or the goods internal to the practice that it renders the practice pointless except as a device for achieving external goods (p. 191).

MacIntyre recognizes that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for practitioners to pursue the goods internal to practices without having proper relationships with each other. He also recognizes that a whole range of virtues, such as honesty, courage and justice, is essential for forming and keeping proper human relationships. This is because "the virtues are those goods by reference to which, whether we like it or not, we define our relationships to those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards which inform practices" (p. 191). Now the question is how it is possible for individuals to acquire the virtues for good human relationships in the first place? MacIntyre fails to address this issue adequately in the book. Presumably, his view is that one learns and acquires the virtues by participating in practices with other practitioners. As an Aristotelian Thomist philosopher, he understands that individuals are not able to acquire the virtues simply through theoretical study without practice. Rather, the virtues are acquired through habituation: we become just by performing just actions and courageous by performing courageous actions. This requires that one come to recognize and enjoy the goods internal to a practice one attends. Indeed, one may enter into a practice not for the goods internal to the practice, but for some external goods attached to it, such as money. MacIntyre gives an example of a highly intelligent seven-year-old child who begins to learn playing chess for getting candy, and who may cheat in order to win and get candy. But there will come a time when the child begins to enjoy the internal goods of the game of chess, trying to excel in whatever way the game demands. In this process he acquires the virtue of

honesty (p. 188). Moreover, practitioners of a shared practice come to genuinely care about each other, and genuinely caring about others means a willingness to risk harm or danger on their behalf, and that is what courage is. Finally, "justice requires that we treat others in respect of merit or desert according to uniform and impersonal standards," the standards that are part of a practice (p. 192). In short, for MacIntyre, the virtues are learned and acquired by the practitioners in participating in such practices.

Is this a convincing story of virtue acquisition through practice for individuals living in society? From a Confucian perspective, MacIntyre is right in emphasizing that a range of virtues is essential for maintaining good human relationships, and in participating in such practices as games, arts and sciences, the practitioners' good relationships with each other are generally necessary for them to pursue the internal goods of the practices. However, a puzzle remains: how can the virtues for good relationships necessarily come out of these practices that are concerned primarily not about the goods of human relationships, but about the goods of the skills, techniques, and strategies that can be used to conduct the relevant practices well? If, as MacIntyre points out, "the virtues are those goods by reference to which…we define our relationships" (p. 191), then the virtues are essentially the goods of relationships. However, the internal goods of the practices pursued by the practitioners under MacIntyre's discussion are primarily not the goods of relationships. For example, the goods internal to the game of chess that one can accomplish in playing the game are primarily the goods of skills, techniques, and strategies, the possession of which will enable one to play the game excellently. Although the goods of relations with other players are involved, they are not primary for playing the game well. Similarly, the internal goods that one can accomplish in drawing paintings are the excellence of the products as well as the good of, according to MacIntyre, one's "living out of a greater or lesser part of his or her life as a painter" (p. 190), while the good of a relation with other people involved in one's painting life, although relevant, will not be primary for drawing one's paintings well. This is to say, even if the goods of human relations involved in such practices are part of the internal goods of these practices, they are not the primary internal goods. It is not the case that the better a relation one has with other chess players, the better a player one will be in performing the game. It is also not the case that if one does not virtuously treat others involved in one's painting life, one will never produce a great painting product.

It is evident that in order to perform these practices well, the practitioners' primary goals are not the goods of human relationships involved, but having high skills to win the game or producing excellent paintings. In this case the goods of human relationships that are involved seem to serve only as means for society as a whole to achieve the primary internal goods of these practices.[4]

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[4] In this case MacIntyre's account of virtue seems also suffering from a dilemma that Gary Watson has described of virtue ethics: in explaining virtue in terms of something else one renders virtue only secondarily important in one's account, although virtue should have been primarily important in virtue ethics (Watson, 1997).

If everyone is virtuous in treating others, it would be most efficient and effective for the entire society to pursue the internal goods of these practices. However, is it the case that it would also be most efficient and effective for an individual to pursue the internal goods of a practice when he or she is always virtuous in treating others?[5] The answer is unfortunately negative. In order for one to obtain necessary external resources to make possible one's further pursuit of the internal goods of chess, it is obviously better to cheat to win a game at least sometimes, if not frequently, than be absolutely honest and lose the game. Moreover, one should not be willing to risk harm or danger on behalf of one's colleagues in a shared scientific research; rather, one should try to survive them in order to secure more internal goods of the research by oneself. Finally, is it not the case that one may enjoy more internal goods of a practice by excluding some individuals from the practice regardless of their merit or desert? Evidently, someone may be a great politician being able to accomplish a great deal in political activities, but he may also be vicious in treating some of his colleagues. This is to say, in MacIntyre's account, there is a discrepancy between individual and society regarding the pursuit of the internal goods of practices. In this case it is difficult to hold that individuals can effectively learn and acquire the virtues by participating in these practices as MacIntyre seems to believe. I term this issue *the virtue learning and acquisition problem*.

To be fair to MacIntyre, his full account of virtue includes three stages in which an appeal to practices is only the first stage. MacIntyre recognizes that if the virtues are defined only in terms of achieving the goods internal to practices, a life as a whole would perhaps be defective. First, since different practices point in different directions, there would be a multiplicity of incompatible internal goods (p. 201). Moreover, one would be unable adequately to specify the context of certain virtues (p. 202). Finally, the virtue of integrity (the wholeness of a human life) recognized by the Aristotelian tradition would not be specified adequately (p. 203). These considerations lead MacIntyre to move to the second stage in which the good of a human life as a whole is introduced. In this stage the virtues must be understood as those dispositions which will not only enable the individual to achieve the goods internal to practices, but will also sustain the individual in the relevant kind of quest for the good of a human life conceived as a unity (p. 219). Finally, MacIntyre

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[5] MacIntyre seems to hold a positive answer to this question in his "Postscript to the Second Edition" of the *After Virtue* by emphasizing the robust difference between the internal and external goods that one may accomplish in performing a practice: the good that a grandmaster of chess who cares only about external goods contingently attached to chess playing can achieve will not be "that kind of excellence which is specific to chess and the kind of enjoyment that supervenes upon such excellence" (p. 274). However, for real human beings, isn't it more reasonable to hold that the grandmasters of chess, or any other practice under discussion, care about both the external and internal goods? In this case, MacIntyre cannot convincingly deny that a great chess player who is vicious can still achieve some of the internal goods of chess.

recognizes that no one is able to seek for the good or exercise the virtues only *qua* individual. Instead, one is inextricably bound up with what one inherits: every individual is one of the bearers of a living tradition – whether one recognizes it or not. "A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition" (p. 222). Such a concept of tradition provides the possibility of harmonizing the roles of individuals in pursuing human flourishing. Accordingly, tradition constitutes an inevitable final stage for a complete Aristotelian account of virtue, providing the final *telos* for a community to pursue in structuring individuals and employing practices. Taken together, MacIntyre's account demonstrates that the goods associated with the virtues are internal to and embodied by practices, practices are performed through the proper human relations sustained by the virtues, and the virtues are the qualities acquired in the practices that are approved, transmitted, and reshaped by traditions (p. 221).

This three-stage account of virtue helps MacIntyre free from the charge of offering an obscure, even suspicious, view of practices in relation to the virtues. At the stage of practices, he is a bit vague about what activities do and do not constitute practices. He gives some examples, stating that playing chess is a practice but playing tic-tac-toe isn't; farming is, but planting turnips isn't (p. 187). A practice is, in any case, a "coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized" (p. 187). Without the final stage of a living tradition that approves, revises and transmits practices, his understanding of practice is definitely defective for the sake of virtue learning and cultivation. Wouldn't the activity of murder conducted by a professional murder association, if set up openly or secretly, constitute a practice under MacIntyre's original definition? Such activity can certainly be coherent, complex, and socially established. It can also carry certain "goods" internal to this form of activity in the sense that they can only be "accomplished" by participating in this form of activity.[6] However, no individual can learn and acquire the virtues from the activity of murder in a coherent sense. One might be described as "courageous" in some sense, but that would be a squarely different sense from MacIntyre's understanding of courage as a willingness to risk harm to oneself due to care for others. Regarding the virtues of honesty and justice, one would only acquire the opposites from such professional murder activities: the vices of dishonesty and injustice.

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[6] Think of, for example, the Russian "chessboard murderer" arrested in 2007 – he had planned to kill 64 people and put a coin on every square of a 64-place chessboard for each murder. He preferred to select victims he knew, and stating that he collected the souls of his victims after falling in love with killing. He was finally convicted of 48 murders in six years. Experts at Russia's main psychiatric clinic have found him sane. In a sense he has achieved a great deal of the "internal goods" of the "practice" of murder. See a series of reports online, e.g., http://www.news24.com/Content/World/News/1073/84d5ef9cd77a4374ac876804c7e345da//Killer_wanted_victims_souls (accessed in July 2009).

However, no matter how comprehensive MacIntyre's three-stage account of virtue is, it is unable adequately to handle *the virtue learning and acquisition problem*. MacIntyre fails to recognize that, regarding virtue learning and acquiring, there exists another type of practices which is different from the type of practices such as games, arts or sciences under MacIntyre's discussion. These practices, from the Confucian view, are not the most important practices for individuals to undertake in order to acquire the virtues. Instead, Confucianism recognizes that the rituals are the most important practices for young children to learn and exercise in order to acquire the virtues. Such ritual practices require that, in the first place, young children be taught about how they should properly address other individuals, especially their family members, in correct names: grandpa, grandma, father, mother, elder brother, elder sister, younger brother, younger sister...[7] The differentiation of these names is crucial for the Confucian way of life because these names carry with them an understanding of certain specific moral virtues and obligations that one should accept and discharge when falling under the names. For example, one is told to call his elder brother "*gege*" (哥哥) to show one's respect (*gong*, 恭), to call his younger brother "*didi*" (弟弟) to represent one's brotherly love (*di*, 弟), to use one's two hands to hand a thing to one's parent to manifest one's filial piety (*xiao*, 孝), and to bow to one's grandparents during a holiday to give them reverence (*jing*, 敬). These particular Confucian virtues, *gong, di, xiao, jing*, and so on, are learned and exercised by children in the specific Confucian family interactions and activities so that they are gradually cultivated and integrated in their personality. For Confucians, only if children are nurtured this way, can the proper order and peace of society be hopefully realized.[8]

This is to say, Confucianism recognizes that the rituals are a special type of practice that is directly concerned about human relationships. This type of practice informs and embodies specific ways in which humans should treat each other in conducting relevant activities. The internal goods of such practices are precisely the goods of human relationships rather than the goods of skills for playing a game or excellence in drawing a picture. Accordingly, the Confucian virtues can effectively be learned and cultivated through performing this type of practices, because acquiring the internal goods of such practices is equivalent to acquiring the Confucian virtues.

For a clear distinction, let me term such special practices *ritual practices*, and term the practices that MacIntyre discusses *general practices*. Again, the

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[7] "If names are not correct, what is said will not be in accord [with what is to be done]; if what is said is not in accord [with what is to be done], what is to be done cannot be implemented; if what is to be done cannot be implemented, rites and music will not flourish; if rites and music do not flourish, punishments will not be appropriate; when punishments are not appropriate, the people will not know where to put hand and foot" (*Analects* 13.3).

[8] "There are few who, being filial (*xiao*) and fraternal (*di*), are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of starting a rebellion" (*Analects* 1.2).

Confucian ritual practices are directly concerned with how humans should address, treat and react to each other, namely, about human relationships.[9] For example, the Confucian wedding ritual constitutes the actual ways in which a man and a woman show their unity and become husband and wife. The Confucian reception ritual informs the actual ways in which one greets and treats one's guests. And the Confucian sacrificial ritual manifests the actual ways in which family members offer sacrifices to their ancestors. Similarly, numerous Confucian minute rituals inform the proper manners in which the Confucian individuals are concretely directed to revere their parents and grandparents, to take care of their children and grandchildren, to unite with their brothers and sisters, and to provide assistance to their friends and strangers in difficulty. It is the Confucian conviction that if one is able to nurture such virtues through the ritual practices with one's family members as well as with other familiars, one is able to acquire the virtues and exercise them in large society with other practitioners in the general practices.[10]

9.4 Why Ritual Practices Cannot Be Replaced By Moral Principles?

Can virtue be cultivated through following moral principles, without the need of learning and observing ritual practices? No doubt, a virtue, for Confucians, is an acquired quality that contributes to human flourishing rather than the moral strength of a human will that fulfills one's rationally identified duty, irrespective of human flourishing.[11] Nevertheless, some may want to inquire why Confucian virtue, as a quality, must be acquired by submitting to stringent rituals. They may want to argue that virtue can also be obtained simply by complying with moral principles. Indeed, the Confucian resources, such as the most

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[9] Of course, the Confucian rituals are not only about human relationships. There are also many Confucian rituals concerning the relationship between humans and Heaven or between humans and spirits. But this essay focuses only on the Confucian rituals regarding human relationships in order to address the virtue learning and acquiring problem.

[10] I am not sure what MacIntyre would say about the necessity of the distinction between the ritual practices and the general practices that I have drawn in this section based on the Confucian perspective. But he does state, in another essay, that "about the relationship between respect for ceremonial forms and the practice of the virtues in general, we Aristotelians do have a great deal to learn from Confucians" (2004, p. 158).

[11] In this respect the Confucian understanding of virtue is in line with classical Western views such as Aristotle's, but is at odds with Kant's position. Kant sets out the principles of moral conduct based on his philosophical account of moral agency as being rational and autonomous, and then on that basis defines virtue as the trait of acting according to these principles. Thus a virtue for Kant is not a quality of one's character, emotions, feelings, desires, or any other feature of human nature that might be amenable to habituation, but is rather a quality of one's will, a pure rational volition.

influential *Analects*, have shown that some general ethical principles have been established in the Confucian tradition. What are the relations between such principles and the rituals regarding virtue cultivation? This section will argue that the Confucian moral principles must operate with the Confucian rituals in order to fulfill the aim of virtue cultivation. The point is that the Confucian ritual practices are necessary in the process of virtue acquisition. Their function cannot be replaced by that of the moral principles.

It is no controversy that the most important and complete Confucian virtue is *ren* (humaneness or goodness, 仁).[12] I will use *ren* as a representative Confucian virtue to explore the Confucian view on the relation of virtue to ritual practices based on the resources offered by the *Analects*. Evidently, Confucius clearly holds that ritual practices are necessary for acquiring *ren*. In answering his most intelligent student Yan Hui's question about how to become a man of *ren*, the Master said,

> "overcoming your selfish passions and returning to the observance of *li* constitutes *ren* (克己復禮為仁). If a person can for one day overcome one's selfish passions and return to the observance of *li*, all under Heaven will regard him as having *ren*. The attainment of *ren* comes from oneself, and not from others." Yan Yuan said, "may I ask about the items of this?" The master said, "do not look, listen, speak or act if it is contrary to *li*" (12.1).

Indeed, in his school Confucius taught his students to learn and observe the rituals established in the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE). From his view, the Zhou *li* was perfectly coded through the revision of the rituals existent in the Shang (c. 1600–1100 BCE) and Xia (c. 2100–1600 BCE) dynasties (*Analects* 3.14). For him, these rituals were precisely the proper practices for his students to perform in order to acquire the virtue and become the men of *ren*. Thus it is true that Confucius generally held a conservative attitude towards the rituals (3.1, 3.14, 3.17, 7.1, 7.20). On the other hand, however, it is also true that sometimes when his students ask about how they can become men of *ren,* Confucius replies to them by offering what we may term general ethical principles. A few salient examples are as follows:

> "A *ren* man must love the people" (愛人) (12.22).

> "A *ren* man helps others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand, and gets others there in so far as he himself wishes to get there" (夫仁者, 己欲立而立人, 己欲達而達人。能近取譬, 可謂仁之方也已) (6.30);

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[12] In the *Analects,* Confucius and his disciples often explain *ren* in terms of more specific virtues and depict *ren* as most complete Confucian virtue. For example, "filial piety (*xiao*, 孝) and fraternal submission (*di*, 弟) are the root of *ren*" (1.2); "while at home hold yourself in a respectful attitude (*gong*, 恭); when serving in an official capacity be reverent (*jing*, 敬); when dealing with others be loyal (*zhong*, 忠)" (13.19); "unbending strength (*gang*, 剛), resoluteness (*yi*, 毅), simplicity (*mu*, 木) and reticent (*ne*, 訥) are close to *ren*" (13.27); "to be able to practice five things under heaven constitutes *ren*...: courtesy (*gong*, 恭), tolerance (*kuan*, 寬), trustworthiness (*xin*, 信), quickness (*min*, 敏) and generosity (*hui*, 惠)" (17.6), and so on.

"Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (己所不欲, 勿施於人) (12.2);

"A *ren* man is loath to speak" (仁者, 其言也訒) (12.3);

"When faced with an opportunity to practice *ren*, do not give precedence even to your teacher" (當仁,不讓於師) (15.36);

"A *ren* man...should not seek to stay alive at the expense of *ren*, [but] may have to accept death in order to have *ren* accomplished" (志士仁人, 無求生以害仁, 有殺身以成仁) (15.9).

I term these instructions general ethical principles because they are (1) articulated without mentioning the ritual practices, (2) formulated as regulative rules rather than the constitutive rules functioning in the ritual practices, and (3) directive in a general sense across many different situations. This is to say, Confucius offers apparently two different types of answers regarding how one becomes a *ren* man: one type of answer is that one must comply with the rites, but the other type is that one should follow the general ethical principles. What is the relation between these two types of answers? Is there any contradiction involved? If not, what are their relations? Can one type be reduced to the other type?

I think these apparently two different answers constitute a coherent whole in which each of the two elements, the ritual practices and the ethical principles, is indispensable for the effective cultivation of the Confucian virtue of *ren*. Taken as a whole, Confucius' point is that only appeal to the general ethical principles is not sufficient for one to acquire the virtue; rather, the ritual practices are inevitably required for the task. The reason can be summarized as three-fold. First, while it is crucial for humans to begin to learn the virtue from a young age so as to form virtuous habituation, Confucianism does not think that we can realize this purpose simply by teaching young children the principles, because they are unlikely to be motivated by the principles. Their desires, feelings and interests have not been nurtured in ways in which they can readily respond to the call of the principles to perform appropriate actions.[13] As MacIntyre sensibly acknowledges, for Confucians,

> the Aristotelian account [of] habituation is misleading. For in saying that we become just by performing just actions and courageous by performing courageous actions, Aristotle omitted to point out that the just actions of those who are not yet just and the courageous actions of those who are not yet courageous are precisely actions in which the outward behavior is one thing and the inner motivation quite another. The young novice does not act as justice requires because justice requires it, but to avoid the approval or disapproval of parents and teachers. So the outward appearance of justice

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[13] This observation could hold even if Confucians agree on Mencius' understanding that every human already has a potential power to become a man of *ren*. In his view, "no man is devoid of a heart (*xin*, 心) sensitive to the suffering of others....The heart of compassion is the germ (*dan*, 端) of *ren*..." (Mencius 2A6). But this is only saying that everyone has the beginning or starting-point of virtue, which still needs cultivation or development to become actual virtue.

does not express the agent's inner attitude. And it is not only that the agent's inner attitude has to be transformed, but also that it has to be transformed in such a way as to close the gap between inner and outer (2004, p. 157).

Indeed, central to the acquisition of a virtue is the integration of the inner (such as one's thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and decisions) and the outer (such as one's bodily expressions, movements, and speeches). A young child cannot reach this integration through being directly motivated by the moral principles. Rather, the route is plausibly the other way around: a young child has to form his bodily expressions first by following his parents' and/or teachers' demands to observe the rituals, then in the process of such practices gradually coming to understand that this is precisely the way of following the requirements of the moral principles and subsequently being motivated by the principles. Although from a dominant Confucian view young children already have a desire to be *ren* or virtuous (Mencius 2A6), Confucians also recognize that this moral desire is weaker compared to many other non-moral desires, such as desires for food, drink, comfort, pleasing their parents or teachers, and avoiding the disapproval of their parents or teachers (Xunzi 23). It is usually these strong non-moral desires that motivate them to follow the instructions of their parents or teachers to learn or do "moral" things. For example, a young child does not share his most favorite toy with a neighbor's child as the principle of love requires because the principle requires it, but to avoid the disapproval of his parents. But as he exercises this ritual behavior time and again under his parents' direction, he is gradually to reach the integration of his inner and outer: now he wants to share his toy with other children because it is the proper thing to do. In this way he is able to learn the Confucian virtues. This is to say, for Confucians, the integration of the inner and outer needed for the realization of *ren* requires the implementation of the ritual practices.

Moreover, it is not that only children need ritual practices for virtue acquisition, while adults are already autonomous moral agents acting straightforwardly on moral principles without the need of complying with the ceremonial patterns of behavior. Instead, for Confucians, adult human individuals, as more or less virtuous human beings, will still have to exercise the ritual practices to convey their inner dispositions and cooperate with others in action so as to manifest their virtues. One is virtuous precisely because one is able to do the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right feelings. Without the ritual practices, one would lose the normal means of conveying one's feelings and responding to the feelings of others through shared, public standards in one's social life. One would not even have an intelligible language to communicate with others regarding one's autonomous, rational moral principles, even if one has developed a set of such principles (cf. Cua, 1998, pp. 300–302). For Confucius, a man of *ren* must embody four particular virtues: courtesy (*gong*, 恭), prudence (*shen*, 慎), courage (*yong*, 勇), frankness (*zhi*, 直). He sharply points out, "without the rites, courtesy is tiresome; without the rites, prudence is timid; without the rites, courage is quarrelsome; without the rites, frankness is

hurtful" (*Analects* 8.2). This is to say, the ritual practices are necessarily required not only for the integrity of one's inner world and outer behavior, but also for the unity of self and others in human communitarian moral lives.

Finally, all of these sayings do not mean to underestimate the importance of the moral principles in a Confucian life of virtue. Although it is misleading to think that *ren* can be realized by following the moral principles alone without the need of conducting the ritual practices, the general moral principles are also necessary for the Confucian virtuous way of life because they provide reasons for the defenses, excuses, and exceptions of the applications of the rituals. The moral principles indicate the reasons for why individuals should observe the rites in the normal situations – they can live the authentic way of human life imbued with the content of these principles only by performing the ritual practices. The principles also provide reasons for why the ritual should not be absolute; rather, allowing certain excuses and exceptions to the applications of the rituals can be justified by appealing to the moral principles. For example, while the Confucian mourning rite generally requires that during the mourning period for the death of a close relative, one should not take luxurious food, such as meat, it has also made it explicit that if one is ill or otherwise weak, needing nutritious meals to maintain health, it is legitimate to take them. For another example, when Mencius is provided with a scenario in which one must choose between adhering to a ritual prohibition against physical contact with one's sister-in-law and reaching out to save her from drowning, he argues that everyone would, by weighing (權) the situation, know that one should suspend the ritual prohibition and save his sister-in-law (*Mencius* 4A17). The moral principles of *ren* as those offered by Confucius could be adopted to justify such weighing and exceptions.

The moral principles can also serve as reasons for defending ritual revision or reform. For example, in line with the principle of loving the people, we may find reasons for justifying the reform of some rites – e.g., the rule of using humans as sacrifices must be rejected because this rejection manifests the love of the people (Mencius 1A4); the rule of using the linen cap should be changed to using the silk cap in ritual activities because this change shows more love to the people by being frugal (*Analects* 9.3); and the rule of prostrating oneself before ascending the steps should not be changed to doing so after having ascended the steps because this change shows less love by being casual (*Analects* 9.3).

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the Confucian moral principles primarily exert their function in relation to the ritual practices. That is, although they can direct non-ritual behavior, they do not mean to suggest that individuals should forget about the rituals in following these principles. Rather, they provide effective guidance to individual conduct on the assumption that the individual observes the rituals. In other words, these principles do not teach you to abandon the rules of the rituals and create your acts by directly following these principles, but teach you properly to observe the rules of the rituals. The virtue of filial piety (*xiao*, 孝) can be used as a prominent example. To be filial to one's parents, Confucius requires one to observe the rituals, including the

serving rituals when one's parents are alive, the funeral rituals when they die, and the sacrificial rituals after they die (*Analects* 2.5). Meanwhile, he also requires one to follow the principle of respect (*jing*, 敬) in treating one's parents: if one does not respect one's parents, one cannot even distinguish treating one's parents from treating animals (*Analects* 2.7). Evidently, following the principle of respect does not mean that one no longer needs to observe the rituals. Rather, it means that one must observe the rituals in the proper way, namely the way in which reverence is manifested in every context. This includes that in special situations one may not obey a ritual rule in order to fulfill the ritual as a whole. For example, Confucius did not have his mother coffined at home as the rule of the funeral ritual required; instead, he had his mother coffined at a crossroad in order to obtain the information about the location of his father's grave and bury his mother in the same grave as his father (*Liji: Tangong* 禮記: 檀弓; Legge, 1967, Vol I, pp. 124–125).[14]

9.5 Concluding Remarks

If my argument is sound – the Confucian rituals are necessary for virtue cultivation, acquisition and manifestation, and this function of the rituals cannot be replaced by the Confucian moral principles – then the message should be heuristic to both contemporary Confucian Chinese society and non-Confucian society. In modern Chinese society, the Confucian rituals have been attacked by the official ideology as "feudalist" backward activities to be entirely abandoned. Contemporary Neo-Confucian scholars, in attempting to defend the Confucian civilization, put their emphasis on general Confucian moral principles in separation from the function of the Confucian rituals. They have thus abstracted these principles from the real Confucian moral convictions embedded in the ritual practices and detracted from the substance of the Confucian culture and morality. On the other hand, in modern Western liberal culture, self-determined activities have been emphasized to seek the self-chosen conception of the good life. Moral education becomes difficult, if not impossible, to deploy in such society. Such society will have to pay immense moral costs by failing to recognize that the true nature of any human morality cannot be properly cultivated and realized without appreciating rituals, a series of familial and societal practices traditionally established and commonly performed by human individuals.

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[14] The Confucian principle of reciprocity (*shu,*恕) can be used as another example to indicate the point. The principle states that "do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (*Analects* 12.2). This is not meant to substitute for the rules of the rituals. It rather provides guidance as to how you perform the rituals appropriately. For example, when you perform a present-giving ritual, this principle reminds that you do not give to your friend a present that you yourself do not like.

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Part III
Ritual and Tradition as Challenge to Modernity

Chapter 10
Cultural and Philosophical Resistance to Ritual in Contemporary Culture

David Solomon

Ethics is concerned with action. It investigates questions about how we should act and for what reasons. Since actions take place in different settings, ethics is also concerned with the settings of actions. Among the settings that are important for actions are the social and physical environs in which they are performed. And, among the social settings of particular importance for ethics, are ceremonial and ritualistic frames within which we act.

Rituals are a particularly diverse class of social settings. We perhaps think first of rituals in religious settings (e.g., baptism and celebrations of the eucharist), but they are also ubiquitous in educational settings (e.g., graduation rituals), law (e.g., the swearing in of a jury or the official opening of a judicial body), and in the humdrum aspects of ordinary life (e.g., rituals of greeting, leave-taking, congratulations, and commiseration). Given the variety of rituals and the diverse settings or purposes for them, it is difficult to define 'ritual' by means of necessary and sufficient conditions. We should rather treat the concept of ritual as Wittgenstein proposed we treat the concept of a game.[1] Wittgenstein proposed that in the case of concepts like 'game' and most other general concepts originating in ordinary language, we should look not for essentialist definitions, but rather for mere "family resemblances", i.e., a set of properties widely shared by many instances of the concept in question, but where no one of the properties is universally shared by the instances of the concept.

It is also difficult to distinguish rituals from rites, ceremonies or other forms of institutional settings. Although social scientists have been at pains to attempt to draw careful distinctions among these concepts, the precision they bring to distinguishing these concepts does not fit well with the relatively loose manner in which these concepts are used in ordinary life. For the most part in what

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1953, pp. 30–31

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follows I will assume that for our purposes the distinctions among rituals, rites, ceremonies and other forms of carefully structured institutional settings for human activities may for the most part be ignored. Although there are no doubt distinctions worth making among these different concepts, for our purposes these distinctions are of little importance.

Rituals, as we understand them, will be rule-governed forms of human activity where the authoritative foundation of the rules lies outside the power of the individuals participating in the ritual and where participating in the activity transforms the significance of the agent's action in some important way. Weddings are rule-governed activities defined by religious or legal authority, or by traditional practice, which have the power to transform the significance of certain behavior (e.g., uttering the words, "I do", in an appropriate manner) so that by uttering those words one is married. Similarly, certain actions depend simply on the rules of linguistic practice to transform the significance of certain forms of linguistic behavior. As an example, when I utter the words, "I promise to pay you five dollars on Friday," in the appropriate circumstances (I am, for example, not acting in a play or reading from a book or under an hypnotic spell) I thereby make a promise. Although the institutional and social background for the practice of promising may seem quite thin compared to the practice of marrying, it seems reasonable to think of both of these social phenomena as rituals.

Given the ubiquity of rituals in any culturally complex setting for human action, it should not be surprising that questions about the nature and significance of ritual and ceremony will be important for ethics. Surprisingly, however, there are certain tendencies in contemporary ethics to play down the significance of the ritualistic—or so, at least, I will argue in what follows. I will first discuss some of the more specific ways in which the presence of ritual settings for actions are important within ethics, and then I will turn to an exploration of a number of reasons why ritual is looked on with a certain suspicion in modern ethics. I will conclude with some general reflections on the tension in modern ethics which both recognizes the significance of ritual, but also seeks to diminish its importance.

10.1

Why is ritual important for ethics—and important for successful human living in general? In asking this question, I would like to move beyond what seem to me the obvious reasons why it would be difficult for most human lives to be lived without ritual. The importance of religious rituals, and the rituals of community life generally (e.g., enrolling in school, singing the national anthem at football games, celebrating one's birthday, etc.) are obviously connected in deep ways with individual identity as well as social identity. Without the social anchors of regular participation in the rites, rituals and ceremonies of religion, the workplace and marketplace, and domestic life, most human lives would be

at risk for a kind of meaninglessness and anomie that would put the very existence of anything like genuine human life in danger. What I would like to focus on, however, is not this general background necessity for ritual settings for human life, but rather on some more specific reasons why ritual is important for ethics.

A particularly important contribution of ritual to human life is found in the power of ritual to expand the repertoire of human action. Without the norm-governed contexts made possible by ritual the range of human action would be severely impoverished. Human beings could not, for example, hit home runs unless they are able to participate in the ritualized game of baseball. Merely hitting a small spherical object over a fence with a short piece of wood is not sufficient for one's action to constitute a home run. In order for this set of actions to be a home run one must perform them in the setting of a baseball game. Moreover, one has to perform them at the right time and in the right way within a baseball game. One cannot, for example, come on to the field between innings and hit a ball over the outfield fence and expect that to count as a home run. One has to perform the appropriate "home run basic actions" when one is legitimately at bat and while the game is legitimately underway. Without base-ball there would be no home runs. There is much that we don't know about Socrates' life, but we can know with certainty that he never hit a home run since we know that he had no access to the game of baseball.

There is, of course, much more that needs to be said about how rituals make particular actions possible. There are particularly difficult questions about how similar a norm-governed activity has to be to baseball in order for it to make home runs possible. What if a game were to have five bases instead of four but was otherwise identical to baseball? Would fair balls hit over the fence in such a game be home runs? It is not clear that there is a definitive answer to this question—nor that there need be a definitive answer to it. Some hard cases may not be so hard, however, We would all surely agree that hitting a fly ball over the boundary rope in a cricket match is not a home run. These kinds of cases suggest that we should not look for too much definitiveness in the area of the necessary institutional conditions for a ritual action. But the fact that there is a certain open texture to the norms governing a ritual does not detract from its power in making new kinds of action possible. Just as we can't hit home runs without baseball, we can't be married without weddings—nor can we be divorced. We can't be baptized without religious rituals nor can we earn a Ph.D. without academic rituals. Apart from the threat of meaninglessness that we have already seen is a part of life without ritual, the range of actions open to us would be severely reduced if we were without the resources of rituals.

The problem here is not just that the *number* of distinct human action-types would be severely reduced in a world without ritually constituted actions. It is not merely a quantitative matter. It is also that the actions that would be impossible in such a world are some of the most important actions open to us, and ones that seem uniquely expressive of some of the deepest features of our natures. Our ability to express our love and commitment to others, our ability

to worship and hence to establish a relationship with God, as well as our ability to engage in complicated human practices like games and academic disciplines that allow us to extend our powers in extraordinary and unpredictable ways would all be severely curtailed, if not made impossible, were it not for rituals.[2]

A second way in which ritual is important for human action is that it facilitates our ability to perform socially complex actions. There are some actions that it might be possible to perform without a well-defined institutional setting, but it would be difficult—for a number of different reasons—to perform them. Consider the case of a simple greeting. It might be possible to greet someone using natural signs of greeting, but without conventional (ritualized) forms of greeting it will be difficult and wasteful of energy. With greeting rituals (a hand-shake, a hug, a pat on the head), the task of greeting someone is much more straight-forward. Just as money facilitates the exchange of goods and renders the tedious and inefficient practice of barter obsolete, so too social rituals serve an analogous function with regard to many of the commonplace actions of human social interaction. Rituals of this sort are particularly important in relations among persons separated by language barriers. Expressions of gratitude, regret, affirmation and many other common attitudes in addition to simple greetings can be made much more easily using the language of ritual and ceremony. And it goes without saying, I take it, that the human ability to insult or demean others is greatly facilitated by the range of ritualized behaviors for expressing such negative attitudes.

This second way in which ritual is important for human action is closely related to a third, and much the most important, way I think. The use of ritual not only makes it easier to perform certain actions, but it is absolutely essential in the task of teaching certain centrally important moral attitudes and in inculcating virtue. The power of ritual in shaping sensibilities and even belief is quite obvious. Pascal in a famous passage suggests that if someone wants to acquire religious belief, the best way to do so is to engage in religious practices faithfully for a period, pretending, as it were, that one already had religious belief. In time, he claimed, religious belief will almost certainly come.

It is in this way, I suspect, that we should read some of the difficult passages in Book II of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in which he is discussing how

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[2] It is difficult, I think, to overestimate the importance of rituals associated with practices in enriching the possibilities of human life. Alasdair MacIntyre's discussion of the significance of practices in Ch. 14 of *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981) explores more fully than any other recent work the range and significance of practices for allowing human beings to extend their powers and capacities in pursuing what he calls the goods internal to practices. He also argues that it is only in the context of practices that the full significance of the virtues for successful human life can be appreciated. I cannot here pursue his discussion of these matters in detail, but any adequate discussion of the role of ritual in expanding the range of human actions must take MacIntyre's views on these matters into account.

agents can acquire the virtues.[3] He famously says, for example, that the best way to acquire the virtue of courage is to perform courageous actions under the direction of some person or some community that already possesses the virtue. This position is problematic for Aristotle, however, since he has also claimed that for an action to be genuinely courageous it must be performed by a person with a fixed disposition to act courageously—that is, by someone who is already courageous. He seems committed therefore to both the view that one cannot perform a courageous act unless one possesses the virtue of courage and, also, the view that in order to acquire the virtue of courage, one must perform courageous actions. It is obvious however that both of these views cannot be true. Aristotle attempts to render them compatible by suggesting that there are different senses in which an act can be courageous. A fully courageous act is only possible for a person who possesses the virtue of courage, while a person attempting to acquire the virtue can perform actions that share certain features with the actions of the genuinely virtuous persons, but are not fully courageous. I don't think it is too much of a stretch to suppose that Aristotle here is suggesting that in order to acquire genuine courage one must perform rituals, as it were, that seem to ape the courageous actions of the genuinely courageous person. Indeed, isn't this what we do when we encourage our children to engage in games and other endeavors that demand that they learn to deal with feelings of fear and insecurity. These games are occasions for the young to practice courage with the hope that their characters will come to be imbued with it.

There are many other attitudes central to morality that seem to be capable of being taught only through the teaching of ritualized behavior. Consider, for example, the difficulty in teaching young children to respect their elders, especially their elderly relatives. This is especially difficult since we wish to teach these attitudes of respect when children are quite young and when they normally lack even the concept of respect that we adults apply in our relations with our grandparents, our teachers, or our betters. If children lack even the concept of respectful behavior, however, it is difficult to teach it to them by appealing to intellectualized and discursive accounts of respect and its function in the good life. It is quite easy, however, to help children to acquire the concept of respect for elders by initiating them into certain rituals with respect to their elders. In

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[3] The crucial text is at 1105b5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Ross translation) where Aristotle says, "Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them *as* just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good." If this same section of the NE, Aristotle heaps scorn on those who believe that one can acquire virtue by mere intellectual means. He says, for example, "But most people . . . take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do. As the latter will not be made well in body by such a course of treatment, the former will not be made well in soul by such a course of philosophy."

the southern United States, where I grew up, children are taught to address any older person with the terms, 'sir' or 'ma'am'. Also, conventional signs of respect such as removing one's hat in the presence of one's elders, or standing when they enter the room are easily taught.

A critic of this style of moral education might comment that it is possible to observe these rituals of respect while lacking respect "in one's heart." In one sense, indeed, this is obviously true. The reason we have to resort to such ritualized forms of moral education is that those being taught do lack "respect in their hearts." Indeed, as we have seen, they may lack even the concept of respect. The critic here, however, may mean that even after the education in respect is complete, the students may continue to ape the rituals of respect without being genuinely respectful. But that simply illustrates a commonplace—there are bad and hypocritical persons in the world. It also calls our attention to the fact that moral education of this sort, like moral education of any sort, can go badly wrong. It may not work every time. Even Pascal would surely admit that some of those persons who practice religion in order to achieve genuine belief, never attain belief. It certainly does not show, however, that the rituals of respect are incompatible with genuine respect. Nor does it even show that they are likely to fail in inculcating respect. It is true, of course, that at an appropriate age this education through ritual has to be supplemented with a more discursive account of respect and its importance to family life and to the notion of a good life in general if the children are fully to acquire the appropriate attitudes toward their elders. The use of training in rituals may not be sufficient for virtue, but it is surely necessary.

One might ask further, though, whether it is possible to show respect to one's elders while flouting all of the ritualized and conventional expressions of that feeling. Couldn't a young southern man genuinely respect his southern grandfather while never addressing him as "Sir," always remaining seated when he walked into the room, and by wearing a New York Yankees baseball cap to his dinner table every night? I don't think so—unless we suppose that there is an elaborate and special social background in this case. It might, of course, be possible to do this, if both the young man and the grandfather have been initiated into another set of conventional expressions of respect. But then we wouldn't be talking about relations among southerners and the case has changed. In general, we should recognize that a person who wants to express respect for another is hostage to the conventions of respectful behavior adopted by the other. This is just one of the reasons why human interactions across cultural boundaries are fraught with hazards.

10.2

We have examined above a number of different ways in which ritualized settings for human action are important to human life. We have emphasized in particular three of these ways.

(1) Ritual settings allow us to increase radically the repertoire of human actions;
(2) Ritual settings facilitate the performance of socially important actions which without a ritualized setting would be difficult to perform.
(3) Ritual settings are valuable in moral education both in inculcating certain moral attitudes in persons and also in helping them to acquire the virtues.

One would expect, given the importance of ritual to human action, that ethics would find an important place for reflection on ritual at its heart. Among the questions that would seem to be particularly important are the following:

(1) Under what conditions can new rituals be brought into existence and how can we create new rituals without excessively coercive action?
(2) How do we keep rituals in healthy condition? In particular, how do we keep participation in rituals from degenerating into mindless conformity? And how to we prevent those whose roles within rituals give them power over others from abusing that power?
(3) How can rituals be used to help others acquire appropriate moral attitudes and to acquire the virtues? And which particular rituals are apt for inculcating particular virtues or moral attitudes?

As important as these questions seem, though, we find that in late modern culture the use of ritual or ceremony as a setting for human action is regarded with suspicion as is the use of ritual or ceremony in projects of moral education. Also, we find that modern philosophy has shown little interest in these questions about the role of ritual in human conduct.

Philosophically, modern normative ethical theories have focused on features of human action that have left little room for discussion of ritual or the institutional settings of human action. Within normative theory, the dominant approaches to ethics have been broadly Kantian and consequentialist theories that focus on particular actions of individual agents. For Kantians, primary emphasis is placed on the rationality of the actions of fully autonomous agents while consequentialists focus on the causal contributions of the actions of individuals to the sum total of the satisfaction of desires. In neither case, is significant attention paid to the larger social setting of actions in which ritual plays such an important role. Even the recently revived Aristotelian virtue theories, which one would expect to pay more attention to the role of ritual, tend to focus, in a particularly non-Aristotelian way, on particular agents and their character traits with little emphasis on the social involvement of these agents.[4]

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[4] This is not universally true, of course. In particular, the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Elizabeth Anscombe has been especially attentive to the social involvement of their theories of the virtues.

In addition to philosophical neglect of the importance of ritual in ethics, there has been a cultural resistance to the importance of ritual as well. In contemporary culture there has been an emphasis on individualism and autonomy in human action that has led persons to be suspicious of the role of ritual in human action. These cultural attitudes first come to be dominant in the decade of the 1960s in North America and Western Europe when there were radical changes in citizen attitudes toward traditional loci of moral authority. The decade of the sixties was characterized by an emphasis on individualism and autonomy which called into question many received moral beliefs and the institutional settings and supports for those beliefs. Individuals were empowered to "make their own choices" about fundamental ethical issues, and self-fulfillment was increasingly understood in terms of emancipation from restricting and suffocating traditional norms. This new emphasis on individualism and autonomy found expression both in popular culture ("do your own thing", "different strokes for different folks") and in academic moral and political thought–in the work, for example, of such influential social theorists as David Riesman with his criticism of "other-directed" persons, and the philosophical work of such continental thinkers as Jean-Paul Sartre and Herbert Marcuse who emphasized the role of personal autonomy in defining one's ethical stance.

These changing cultural attitudes embodied a kind of "privatization" of moral opinion which had implications for the whole culture. In the schools, for example, the fashionable model for moral education came to be "values clarification," in which the emphasis was on encouraging each student to work out his or her own "value system," free from coercion or authoritative pronouncements by teachers. Ritual did not figure largely in the schemes of moral education devised by the value clarification movement. In the courts, the most significant decision of this period was the Roe v. Wade abortion decision in 1973 which invalidated virtually all of the restrictive abortion laws in this country. What was remarkable about the Roe decision was not just its dramatic overthrow of ancient legal prohibitions at the heart of Jewish and Christian culture, but also that in overthrowing them the court felt no need to comment substantively on the nature of the moral controversy associated with abortion. The decision rested rather on an interpretation of a constitutional right to privacy which had been recognized by the Court for only a few decades, and its argument was based almost entirely on the claim that the state has no right to interfere with the private decision of a pregnant woman to have an abortion. The courts too, then, along with philosophy, popular culture and fashionable educational theory licensed a kind of privatization of moral judgment. This trend toward privatization reached its apex with the much discussed "mystery passage" in the Casey decision rendered by the Supreme Court in 1992. In its decision, the Court wrote, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." The radical autonomy of each person was thus found to be another constitutional guarantee.

These cultural developments were not friendly to the claims of ritual to play an important role in shaping human action. Participation in ritual settings requires that one recognize the authority of the norms governing the ritual as coming from outside the individual wills of the participants in the ritual. It is for this reason that we commonly encounter images of "losing oneself in the ritual" associated with participation in ritual. A culture driven by ideals of autonomy and individualism, however, and which can produce the radical subjectivism at the heart of the "mystery passage", will have few members with an interest in "losing themselves." Their interests will rather be in living in a world constituted by their own individual decisions—a world of their own making.

A concrete example of the resistance of late modern culture to the power of ritual can be seen in many of the reforms within the Roman Catholic Church in the decades since the Second Vatican Council. The adventures of the Roman Catholic Church in simplifying the traditional liturgical procedures and settings of Catholic sacramental life is an excellent example of change driven by suspicion of ritual. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the social dislocations of the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church utterly transformed church architecture, the language and procedures of the liturgy, the standards for sacred music, the dress and deportment of consecrated religious persons and other "surface" features of Catholic life in the interest of a more authentic religious experience for both lay persons and the clergy. The rhetoric accompanying this change appealed to the need to strip away social encumbrances that interfered with direct and personal participation in religious encounters with God and with fellow worshipers. This great "simplification" is widely regarded today as a disaster for the Church and steps have been taken to undo many of the changes. The return to an appreciation of ritual in the Roman Catholic Church was driven largely by the sense many worshipers had that the thinning out of ritual did not increase one's personal contact with the Divine, but rather made it more difficult and less satisfying. It also became clear that the liturgical reforms of the Council did not replace ritualized religious practice with non-ritualized, but rather replaced rich and engaging ritual with thin and alienating ritual. It proved impossible, as one should have suspected, to escape ritual altogether.[5]

There are many strands of thought and practice within late modern culture that can partially explain our resistance to a whole-hearted acceptance of the importance of ritual in human life. Of particular importance, however, I think is a particular conception of the importance of authenticity in action that has

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[5] The history of the liturgical reforms in the Roman Catholic Church in the last four decades is complex and controversial. I offer this paragraph as the mere result of close observation of these changes at one of the centers of American Catholicism over the last forty years. Others will no doubt disagree with my characterization.

been discussed by a number of contemporary thinkers, but especially by Charles Taylor.[6]

This ideal of authenticity is associated with a widespread feeling in modern culture that ritual settings for action bring with them a kind of self-deception and a tendency toward mere social conformity. The thought seems to be that ritual settings for human action are mere window-dressing that allows the thing done by the agent in a narrow sense to be transformed into something else. And, of course, there is something right about this. Ritual, as we have seen, always involves our doing one thing which is transformed into something else by the ritual setting in which it is performed. This can seem both magical and deceptive. By uttering the words, "I do", in the appropriate setting, I marry someone. By uttering the words "I promise to A" in an appropriate setting, I actually promise to A. One can have the feeling that such actions involve a violation of some law of the conservation of significance in that we seem to create significance out of nothing.

Now one might think that it is more accurate to say in both of these cases that all I really did was utter certain words. The rest of the work was done not by me, but by the ritual. It is by some such reasoning that one might be led to be suspicious of ritual. Charles Taylor, among others, has explored the idea that this notion of authenticity is especially powerful in the contemporary ethical imagination. He says of the ideal of authenticity that it "accords crucial moral importance to a kind of contact with myself, with my own inner nature, which it sees as in danger of being lost, partly through the pressures toward outward conformity, but also because n taking an instrumental stance to myself, I may have lost the capacity to listen to this inner voice. And then it greatly increases the importance of this self-contact by introducing the principle of originality: each of our voices has something of its own to say. Not only should I not fit my life to the demands of external conformity; I can't even find the model to live by outside myself. I can find it only within."[7]

He goes on to say that, "Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, and that is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the background understanding to the modern ideal of authenticity, and to the goals of self-fulfillment or self-realization in which it is usually couched . . . It is what gives sense to the idea of "doing your own thing" or "finding your own fulfillment."[8]

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[6] Taylor has discussed these issues in a number of places, but his most important discussions are found in the following three books. *The Sources of the Self*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); *and Modern Social Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2004).

[7] *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p, 29.

[8] Ibid, p. 29.

Taylor's larger point, defended in a number of his recent works, is that the retreat of many moderns into a life dominated by self-centeredness and a kind of soft relativism about ethics is fueled by this ideal of authenticity. Being true to myself requires me to recognize as my actions only those things that fully originate in me. My actions are *mine* because of their determinate contact with me—my will, my capacities, my practical reasoning. The kinds of action that are only possible in social settings that originate outside me and are sustained by the collective actions of others cannot be *truly* mine. And to treat them as if they are mine is to be self-deceived and to live in a state of bad faith.

It is reasoning of this sort that surely lies behind the extraordinary interpretation of human liberty that is articulated by the U.S. Supreme Court in the "mystery passage." It is surely also this kind of reasoning that has moved so many moderns to strip away rich ritualistic settings from their lives and practices, as in the example of the liturgical reforms within the Roman Catholic Church.

Taylor argues that a debased ideal of authenticity lies at the heart of many of the cultural and philosophical trends that resist the significance of ritual for a successful human action. This notion of authenticity gains much of its power from its claim that in acting authentically (in Taylor's sense) we gain a certain kind of control over our own lives and our situation. By eschewing full participation in norm-governed institutional settings like rituals, I allegedly am able to take back my life and make it my own. We have argued in the first section of this chapter, however, that participation in the very norm-governed practices eschewed by the fans of authenticity increases the repertoire of actions open to us and facilitates our ability to perform many important actions and to inculcate appropriate moral attitudes and virtues in our fellows. It seems inconceivable to many moderns that by subjecting ourselves to the authority of rituals and other norm-governed social practices, that we can actually gain in power and in the range of actions open to us. That this is the case, however, seems to follow from a careful examination of the nature of ritual and its relation to human action.

Chapter 11
Hierarchical Rituals for Egalitarian Societies

Daniel A. Bell

Compared to most religious/philosophical systems, Confucianism is relatively this-worldly, it aims to improve the way that we lead our lives here and now. Moreover, it accepts the kinds of creatures we are, moldable in some ways but not in others, and aims to minimize the manifestation of difficult-to-eradicate character flaws to the extent possible. One important function of ritual is precisely to civilize – to make civil – forms of human interaction that would otherwise lead to conflict and make life difficult, particularly for the weak and vulnerable. In this chapter, I will discuss Xunzi's (荀子) (c. 310–219 BCE) idea of ritual (li 礼) and draw implications for contemporary societies.

11.1 Xunzi on Ritual

Confucius (in)famously said, "吾未见好德如好色者也" ("I have yet to meet anyone who is fonder of virtue than of beauty") (15.13).[1] This passage can be read to imply that the attraction to beauty/sex is a universal feature of the human condition. Rather than engage in a futile effort to eradicate it and replace it with a full commitment to leading an ethical life (à la Catholic priest or Buddhist monk), it is best to recognize its omnipresence and ensure that it does not lead to undesirable consequences. The task is not to change people to

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[1] The translations are mine unless indicated otherwise. Also, I have used characters rather than pinyin to write Chinese, except for commonly used terms like "li" (ritual) and "rang" (deference). My view is that readers of Chinese prefer the characters (less ambiguity) and those who don't read Chinese won't make any sense of the pinyin, so there's no point in using pinyin unless it's commonly used terms.

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the point that they no longer have animalistic needs, but rather that those needs are expressed in forms that are compatible with cooperative social interaction.

Xunzi drew upon the idea that human beings are born with such 'animalistic' natural instincts and systematized a distinctly Confucian philosophy intended to make possible orderly and peaceful social life. The starting assumption of Xunzi's philosophy is that human beings are born uncivil:[2] "人之性恶, 其善者伪也" (Human nature is bad; people are made good by conscious exertion) (23.1).[3] If people follow their bodily natures and indulge their natural inclinations, aggressiveness and exploitation are certain to develop, resulting in cruel tyranny and poverty (19.1). In his own day – the Warring States period – Xunzi seemed to think that natural desires had gotten out of hand: "今人无师法, 则偏险而不正; 无礼义, 则悖乱而不治" (In these times, people lack good teachers and models, so they are prejudiced, wicked and not upright; there are no rituals or conceptions of moral duty, so there's rebellion and chaos and it's impossible to govern society) (23.3; Knoblock, modified; see also 20.13).

Fortunately, that's not the end of the story. Human beings can learn to contain their natural desires and enjoy the benefits of peaceful and cooperative social existence. The key to transformation is ritual (23.3). By learning and participating in rituals, people can learn to contain their desires,[4] there will be a better fit between people's actual desires and the goods available in society, and social peace and material well-being will be the result (19.1). Rituals provide bonds not based solely on kinship that allow people to partake of the benefits of cooperative social existence.[5] But what exactly is "ritual"? Xunzi's account of ritual has seven features:

(1) Ritual is a social practice (as opposed to behavior involving only one person). Xunzi's examples of rituals include musical performances, marriage ceremonies, and village wine ceremonies (20.12). He discusses the

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[2] The differences between Xunzi and Mengzi on human nature are not so great as commonly believed (or as Xunzi himself implies). As Paul Rakita Goldin points out, "The two thinkers arrive, in fact, at remarkably similar points of view. Both agree that people can perfect themselves; both agree that an achievement requires great exertion and self-motivation. And both agree that without self-cultivation, people are evil" (Goldin, *Rituals of the Way: The Philosophy of Xunzi* (Chicago and La Salle, II: Open Court, 1999), 11).

[3] My English translations Xunzi draw upon John Knoblock's translation as published in *Xunzi* (Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999) (this two volume set also includes the original text as well as a translation into modern Chinese by Zhang Jue). However, I have occasionally modified the Knoblock translation to suit my style, as indicated with "modified" after the English translation. In this case, I have translated as "恶" as "bad" rather than "evil" ("evil" tends to be closely associated with Christian ideas of sin and hell).

[4] See 储昭华, 明分之道—从荀子看儒家文化与民主政道融通的可能性 (The Way of Clear Distinctions: From Xunzi's Perspective on Confucian Culture to the Possibility of Harmonizing with Democratic Politics) (Beijing: 商务印书馆, 2005), 265–6.

[5] Donald J. Munro, *A Chinese Ethics for the New Century: The Ch'ien Mu Lectures in History and Culture, and Other Essays on Science and Confucian Ethics* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005), 112.

treatment of the dead – funeral and mourning rites – in greatest detail (19.10–19.22). It is worth noting that rites may involve one living person and one dead person, as when the dead body is bathed and the dead person's hair is washed (19.16). Hence, the word "social" should be extended to mean interaction between the living and the dead, not just interaction between the living.

(2) Ritual is grounded in tradition (as opposed to newly invented social practices). In Xunzi's view, "礼有三本: 天地者, 生之本也; 先祖者, 类之本也; 君师者, 治之本也." (Rituals have three roots. Heaven and Earth are the root of life; Our ancestors are the root of commonality; Rulers and teachers are the root of order) (19.4; Knoblock, modified). The ancient (exemplary) rulers (先王) then self-consciously implemented and promoted the rituals to limit human desires and establish social order: "先王恶其乱也, 故制礼义以分之, 以养人之欲, 给人之球, 使欲必不穷乎物, 物必不屈于欲, 两者相持而长. 是礼之所起也" (The ancient rulers abhorred such chaos, so they established the regulations contained within rituals and moral principles in order to civilize（养）human desires (in the proper way) and to supply the means for their satisfaction. They ensured that desires should not lack the things that satisfy them and goods would not be exhausted by the desires. In this way the two of them (desires and goods) sustained each other over the course of time. This is the origin of rituals) (19.1; Knoblock, modified).[6] By identifying the social origin of rituals with the great sage-kings of the past, Xunzi endowed rituals with an aura of 'sacredness' that would increase the likelihood people care for and follow the rituals.

(3) Ritual involves emotion and form (i.e., external, visible action). As Xunzi puts it, "凡礼…故致备, 情文俱尽" (Rites reach their hightest perfection when both emotion and form are fully realized.) (19.7; Knoblock). The main point of ritual is to civilize our animal natures, and if people are just going through the outward routines without any emotion, they are not likely to transform their natures. The ritual needs to involve, or trigger, an emotional response, so that it will have an effect on the participants during the ritual and beyond the ritual itself. An 'empty ritual' performed without any emotion is not a ritual in Xunzi's sense.

(4) The details of rituals can be changed depending on the context. As Xunzi puts it, "礼者, 以财物为用, 以贵贱为文, 以多少为异, 以隆杀为要．．．故君子上致其隆, 下尽其 , 而中处其中." (Rituals rely on valuables and goods to make offerings, use distinctions between noble and base to create forms, vary the quantity to make distinctions, and elaborate or simplify to render

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[6] I have translated yang 养 as "civilize", in the sense of "make civil" (taking something brutish and make it civilized and compatible with cooperative social existence), which I think more closely approximates what Xunzi is trying to say. Knoblock's translation of 养 is (the more literal?) "nurture."

each its due … Thus, exemplary people could make the elaborate forms of ritual more florid or its simplified forms leaner, but they dwell in the mean of its mean course) (19.9; Knoblock, modified). The relatively intelligent person who is aware of the main point of ritual – to civilize human desires – can adjust the details of the rituals in accordance with the situation so that rituals are made to serve their point. To be effective, as noted previously, they must involve expressions of emotion. The rituals should be proportionate to the emotions involved, so the mourning rituals should last three years to deal with occasions when the pain of grief has reached its pinnacle (三年之丧, 称情而立文, 所以为至痛极也) (19.18). The exact period of mourning can be modified depending upon the context and the nature of the emotions involved (for example, Xunzi notes that there should be little or no mourning for criminals after they are buried; 19.10). Elsewhere, Xunzi notes that the period when the dead body lies in state should not be rushed so that it lasts less than fifty days partly because those coming from far away should have enough time to arrive (远者可以至矣; 19.11). In the contemporary era, with periods of travel drastically shortened, Xunzi would probably agree that the changed empirical circumstances mean that the period when the dead body lies in state could also be shortened.

However, Xunzi suggests that it may also be important to impose somewhat arbitrary limits that are not perceived to be subject to individual choice. He notes that it is important to specify an end point so that daily life can be resumed: "That the mourning rite is finished in the twenty-fifth month means that even though the grief and pain have not ended and although thoughts of the dead and longing for him/her have not been forgotten, this ritual practice cuts off these things, for otherwise would not sending off the dead have no conclusion, and must there not be a definite interval for the return to daily life?" (19.18; Knoblock, modified). The implication is that such limits are necessary but somewhat arbitrary; to allow for the resumption of everyday life, the limits must be perceived as coming from outside and setting limits to individual choice. So the rituals should not be changed too frequently or without good reason, or they will begin to be seen as wholly determined by individual choice.

(5) Rituals specify different treatment for different people (as opposed to practices that are meant to treat everybody equally). As Xunzi puts it, "君子既得其养, 又好其别. 曷谓别? 曰: 贵贱有等, 长幼有差, 贫富轻重皆又称者也" (The exemplary person has been civilized by these things, and he will also be fond of ritual distinctions. What is meant by "distinctions"? I say that these refer to the gradations of rank according to nobility or baseness, differences between the treatment of old and young, and modes of identification to match these with poverty or wealth and relative (social) importance) (19.3; Knoblock, modified). Rituals involve people with different power in common social practices that treat people differently. As we will see, such practices are essential for generating a sense of

community and the emotional disposition for the powerful to care for the interests of the worse off.[7]

(6) Rituals are non-coercive (in contrast to legal punishments). Xunzi contrasts three types of societies: one governed by the way and its authority (有道德 之威者), one governed by harsh and judicial investigations, and one governed by deranged madness (16.2). They are arranged in order of desirability, and the first type relies on ritual and music to secure social order. Although punishments are not used, the people will willingly obey the ruler and awesome authority holds sway (16.2). Xunzi is pragmatic, and he recognizes that punishments and legal coercion may be necessary in non-ideal contexts, but if possible it is best to rely on non-coercive rituals that command willing assent and participation. It is when ritual principles are cast aside that people are deluded and penal sanctions and punishments are numerous (27.13). There is, one might say, an inverse correlation between the use of rituals and the use of punishments in society.[8]

(7) Rituals are socially legitimate (as opposed to practices that are not endorsed by society at large, such as blood oaths between criminal gangs). Xunzi does not make this condition explicit, but the rituals he invokes are drawn from everyday social life and seem to be supported by social legitimacy. At the very least, they would not be undermined by laws that prohibit their expression and induce a sense of fear among practitioners.[9]

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[7] Xunzi also argues that, by establishing division and specialization, ritual distinctions open the possibility of economic development (see Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, 76–7, 81).

[8] This is deny that rituals may be backed up by informal sanctions, such as family or community pressure. But if people participate in rituals only because they fear sanctions (without any emotion or sense of reverence for the ideals expressed by the ritual) then they do not count as rituals in Xunzi's sense.

[9] For a sociological account of rituals in modern day Western societies, see Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). Collins argues that rituals are pervasive aspects of social life in contemporary life and supports his argument with a range of fascinating examples, from sexual interaction to tobacco rituals. The problem, as Peter Baehr points out, is that Collins sees ritual almost everywhere and cannot easily distinguish between situations that involve ritual and those that don't (Baehr, "The Sociology of Almost Everything: Four Questions to Randall Collins about Interaction Ritual Chains," *Canadian Journal of Sociology Online*, January 2005, http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/cjscopy/reviews/interactionritual.html, accessed 23 May 2006). Collins replies in the same online exchange that he can distinguish between situations where ritual interaction is low, medium, or high, but he doesn't answer the point that there may be situations with no rituals at all (in Xunzi's case, it would be situations where people exercise naked power, such as torturing a prisoner to extract a confession; it would be stretching things to describe such situations as "failed rituals" or as "low intensity rituals"). For normative theorists, the main problem is that Collins does not distinguish between rituals that serve desirable social purposes (such as generating a sense of concern for the weak and vulnerable) and those that don't (such as bonding rituals between gangsters). In my view, Xunzi's account of rituals is more useful for more normative theorists.

Like other Confucians, Xunzi intended to persuade political rulers to adopt his ideas because such rulers had the most power to transform society in the desired way. In an ideal society, the wise and benevolent ruler would implement such rituals and the whole society would be harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous. But what about non-ideal society? Xunzi is famously sensitive to context and advocates different prescriptions for different contexts.[10] So the question is how to persuade rulers to adopt rituals if the rulers have yet to be morally transformed? For such purposes, Xunzi had to appeal to their self-interest.[11] The problem, however, is that the powerful have the most to benefit from 'uncivilized' society, where the strong can rely on brute force to exploit the weak. Those with power need to be persuaded that they benefit from a social system that might seem to place constraints in their desires. Hence, much of Xunzi's discussion of ritual is designed to persuade political rulers that it's in their own interest to promote rituals in society. Ritual, he says, is the root of strength in the state (礼者... 强国之本也) (15.8)[12] and the right sort of music can strengthen its military forces (20.5). One would expect most rulers should be receptive to this sort of advice.

But rituals do not only benefit rulers. Both Marxists and liberal democrats have denounced hierarchical rituals because they seem designed to benefit the ruling classes of feudal societies and thus are inappropriate for modern times. But this is a misreading of Xunzi intentions. For Xunzi, hierarchical rituals also

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[10] See, e.g., Xunzi's distinctions between true kings (王), hegemons (霸), and pure opportunists (11.1.a–11.2c), in decreasing order of goodness. Unlike Mencius, Xunzi does recognize that hegemons can be partly bad and partly good, and he even suggests that power politics would be the right strategy to adopt by a ruler who is aware of his own incompetence and seeks out capable ministers (11.2c).

[11] Some passages seem to suggest that Xunzi also appeals to (nothing more than) the good moral sense of rulers: for example, he says that the true king (王) should care for the "five incapacitated groups" (五疾) (meaning the deaf, dumb, disabled, missing an arm or leg, or dwarfed; see Burton Watson, trans., *Basic Writings of Xunzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 34) (9.1). But in the next passage (9.2) Xunzi appeals to the self-interest of the ruler, noting that such policies will contribute to the ruler's fame increasing day by day, the world longing for him, and his orders will be carried out and prohibitions heeded (see also 9.4, where Xunzi notes that such polices as assistance to those in poverty and need will lead people to feel secure with the government, which eventually leads to glory and fame for the ruler). Moreover, Xunzi's suggestions for dealing with those who hold unorthodox doctrines – the first task of the sage king should be to execute them and only then deal with thieves and robbers "because although one can succeed in getting robbers and thieves to transform themselves, one cannot get these men to change" (5.18, Knoblock) – suggests that Xunzi thinks there are real limits to the possibility of moral transformation. In the case of not-so-perfect rulers, Xunzi's idea seems to be that they will initially be motivated by self-interest to adopt rituals, and then their motivation will change for the better once they actually participate in the rituals.

[12] On the way that Xunzi's account of ritual can strengthen the country, see 陆建华, "荀子礼学之价值论" (On the Value of Xunzi's Theory of Ritual), 学术月刊, 2002, 第二季度期, 63. 陆建华's otherwise comprehensive account of the function of ritual, strangely enough, does not mention its benefit for the vulnerable members of the community.

have the effect of benefitting the weak and poor, those who would fare worst in a 'state of nature.' Without rituals, desires are unlimited, leading to contention, leading to disorder, and leading to poverty: 礼起于何也? 曰: 人生而有欲, 欲而不得, 则不能无求; 求而无度量分界, 则不能不争; 争则乱, 乱则穷 (19.1). Of course, the tyrant himself won't be worst-hit by a system where he can exercise power without constraints. It is the weak and vulnerable that are worst-hit by disorder and poverty[13]: in a situation without ritual civility, Xunzi says, "强者害弱而夺之" (the strong would harm the weak as well as rob them) (23.9; Knoblock, modified).[14] Putting ritual in practice means 行礼...贱者惠焉 (being kind to the humble) (27.17; Knoblock). But why does Xunzi seem to emphasize rituals involving people with different power?

Hierarchical rituals seem more attractive if they are contrasted with practices that exclude people of different status: the rich and powerful do their own thing, as do the poor and the weak (consider the Indian caste system). The choice, typically, is not between hierarchical and egalitarian rituals, but between rituals that involve the powerful and the vulnerable and two different sets of rituals for those with power and those without.[15] Xunzi argues for the former. The village wine ceremony, for example, is praised because young and old take a drink from the wine cup and "焉知其能低长而无遗也" (in this way we know that it is possible for junior and senior to drink together without anyone being left out) (20.12, Knoblock). Rituals such as common birth, marriage and burial practices also have the effect of including the poor and the marginalized as part of the society's culture and common understandings.[16] Even castrated criminals,

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[13] Paul Woodruff interprets Confucius to mean that the main point of the moral hierarchy of li is to "keep the rulers in line who have no human superiors" (Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 106–08, 111).

[14] Xunzi goes on to say that "众者暴寡而哗之" (the many would inflict violence on the few and wrest their possessions from them) (23.9; Knoblock, modified), presumably to persuade the rich minority that it's also in their interest to live in civilized society.

[15] Xunzi himself did not conceive of the possibility of a socially egalitarian society because he thought that hierarchical society was essential for collective economic efforts. As Henry Rosemont, Jr. puts it, "no hierarchical society, no collective efforts; no collective efforts, no society whatsoever; no society, no justice whatsoever" (Rosemont, Jr., "State and Society in the Xunzi: A Philosophical Commentary," in *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the* Xunzi, eds. T.C. Kline III and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2000), 9). Collective economic efforts may no longer require hierarchical arrangements in particular areas (like computer software design), but Xunzi's views about the need for hierarchy to secure collective economic efforts will continue to hold true so long as the mass of humanity continues to toil in fields and factories.

[16] As Patricia Buckley Ebrey puts it, "Confucian texts and the rituals based on them did not simply convey social distinctions. At another level, they overcame them by fostering commonalities in the ways people performed rituals" (Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China: A Social History of Writing About Rites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 228). In contrast to early modern Europe, Ebrey argues that "over time class differences in the performance of family rituals seem to have narrowed rather than widened" (Ibid).

in Xunzi's view, are entitled to funerals (19.10).[17] The powerful are made to think of the powerless as part of the group, and they are more likely to do things for them (or at least, to refrain from the worst forms of rapacious behavior). It is no coincidence that Xunzi devotes a great deal of attention to the proper treatment of the dead. The dead, for obvious reasons, are the least capable of protecting their interests.[18] Hence, those with power – the living – need to be trained by means of certain rituals to treat them with respect. Xunzi carefully specifies the need to adorn the corpse because 不饰则恶, 恶则不哀 (if the corpse is not adorned, it becomes hideous, and if it is hideous, no grief will be felt) (19.12, Knoblock). He also specifies that the corpse must be gradually moved further away each time it is adorned because 尔则玩, 玩则厌, 厌则忘, 忘则不敬 (If it is kept close at hand, one begins to scorn it; when having it close at hand makes it the object of scorn, one begins to weary of it; when one wearies of it, one forgets one's duty to it; and if one forgets one's duties, then one no longer shows proper respect) (19.12; Knoblock, modified). The ritual should be gradually phased out so that it allows for a smooth transition to everyday life as well as an extension of the cultivated emotions of proper respect and mindfulness of duty to the needy in the world of the living: 动而远, 所以遂敬也; 久而平, 所以优生也 (With each move he takes it further away, whereby he ensures continued respect. With the passage of time he resumes the ordinary course of life, whereby he cares for the needs of the living) (19.12; Knoblock).

The real (moral) value of Xunzi's work, in my view, is that he shows how rituals – more than laws and more than verbal exhortation – have the effect of promoting the interests of those most likely to suffer from a 'war of all against all.' And the real cleverness of his philosophy is that he proposes a mechanism that can also be made to seem to be in the interest of those most likely to benefit from a 'war of all against all.'[19]

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[17] The funerals of castrated criminals should be sparse and low key compared to other funerals so as to reflect the disgraceful life of the criminal (19.10). But if such funerals are contrasted with the recommendations of Xunzi's supposed Legalist followers – cruel death by torture of the criminal himself if not his whole family – then Xunzi's humane recommendations become more apparent.

[18] The dead do have interests: for example, I do not want my body to be laid out in public to be devoured by dogs and insects after I die. It could be argued that the dead can protect their own interests because they have the power to intervene in the world of the living (by means of ghosts and such), though Xunzi would likely reject such supernatural explanations for changes in the world of the living.

[19] I have learned much from Paul Rakita Goldin's *Rituals of the Way: The Philosophy of Xunzi*. However, Goldin seems to assume that all members of society benefit equally from ritual interaction, and he does not interpret Xunzi to mean that the vulnerable may disproportionately benefit from civil life governed by ritual and/or that the powerful may actually lose out compared to the pre-civil life where their desires can be fulfilled with fewer constraints. To be fair, Xunzi does not explicitly argue the views I am attributing to him. But Goldin tries to make sense of the benefits of ritual by reasoning on the basis of "a situation in which a number of actors, of equal strength and intelligence, are pitted against each other, in contention for the same objects, in an arena in which only a finite number of such objects

11.2 Rituals in Contemporary East Asian Societies

East Asian societies have incorporated rituals as part of the fabric of everyday social and political life. In Japan and Korea, for example, the greeting and parting rituals between persons of different social status are governed by bowing practices that vary in accordance with the social status of the person. Those with less status bow at sharper angles to their social superiors, and vice versa. On the face of it, it might seem peculiar that such hierarchical societies also have relatively equal distributions of wealth compared to socially egalitarian societies like the United States.[20] But it should not be surprising. The rich and powerful members of society typically desire to distinguish themselves from the rest and it is a challenge to motivate them to do otherwise. In socially egalitarian societies like the United States, the way to express superior power typically takes the form of wealth. But in societies governed by informal rituals that express differences in social status, the powerful need not rely on material wealth to show their 'superiority' to the same extent. And if the rituals involve the powerful and powerless in shared rituals, the rich are made to feel a sense of community with the powerless, and they are less likely to seek other means of domination such as material wealth. At the very least, they will feel guilty about displaying excessive wealth, and they are less likely to oppose government measures designed to secure material equality (such as high inheritance taxes, as in Japan).[21]

Unfortunately, perhaps, the bowing rituals have been largely replaced by the more egalitarian, 'Western-style' handshaking rituals in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Egalitarian rituals, however, will take place largely

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exists. And suppose, further, that there is no law to regulate that actors' interactions" (60). In my view, I doubt that such scenarios of "actors, of equal strength and intelligence, are pitted against each other" would even occur to Xunzi and they are not helpful in trying to explain his views on ritual. Xunzi would take it for granted that the pre-civil social interaction (the "state of nature") would involve actors of unequal strength and intelligence pitted against each other and he would take it for granted that those with more strength and intelligence benefit disproportionately from 'uncivilized' life and that the vulnerable have most to gain from civil life. Why didn't Xunzi make such views explicit? Perhaps because he was addressing rulers, and he thought he had to appeal to their self-interest, first and foremost, and he realized he was less likely to persuade them to adopt his views on ritual if he made it explicit that they have the least to gain from civil life governed by ritual interaction that benefits the vulnerable.

[20] According to the Gini indexes in the CIA World Factbook (22 August 2006) (accessed on www.nationmaster.com), Japan has the 63rd most unequal distribution of family income and South Korea is in 77th place. The US is in 36th place. Small European countries tend to be the most equal.

[21] I do not mean to imply that only hierarchical rituals help to explain the relatively egalitarian distribution of wealth in East Asian societies such as Japan and South Korea. No doubt also factors, such as economic policies, international factors, and other values such as work ethics and propensities to save are crucial. My point is that rituals play an important (non-quantifiable?) role in motivating the rich and powerful to accept measures that contribute to economic equality.

among members of the same class, and the powerful are less likely to learn the emotional disposition to care for the interests of the vulnerable.[22] The powerful are more likely to be physically separated from the rest and there may be less of a sense of community between the powerful and the vulnerable. The interests of the weak and the vulnerable need to be secured primarily by means of coercive measures, such as redistributive taxation backed by harsh punishments for defectors, but the rich and powerful will often find ways to defect and it will be difficult to enforce such laws, particularly in large countries such as China.[23] Nonetheless, informal rituals still have an important role to play in securing a sense of community in China. For example, the rituals governing gift-giving, with gifts that vary in accordance with the social status of the recipient, is common in all East Asian societies. The greeting of guests and parting rituals are far more elaborate than those in most Western societies. It is common for parting guests to be accompanied all the way to the physical point of departure, and the host doesn't leave until the guest has physically disappeared from view.[24]

In this essay, I would like to discuss three different settings for hierarchical rituals widely practiced in China and other contemporary East Asian societies that have the effect of promoting the interests of groups of people likely to fare worst in a 'state of nature' where the powerful could otherwise freely indulge their natural inclinations. If such rituals exist and work in the way they're supposed to, the aspiration to promote rituals in modern-day society may seem more realistic. The rituals mentioned were not specifically discussed by Xunzi, but they serve to illustrate his point that hierarchical rituals have the effect of civilizing – making civil – hierarchical social interaction that would otherwise expose the nasty underside of human beings and be particularly problematic for the weak and vulnerable.

Note, however, that the main point of this essay is normative – to show that hierarchical rituals can have egalitarian consequences. The key argument has been inspired by reading Xunzi, but I reject those parts of Xunzi that do not bear on (or seem inconsistent with) the main argument. For example, Xunzi's

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[22] I do not mean to deny that egalitarian rituals such as handshaking also take place between members of different classes. In such cases, however, they often take hierarchical characteristics: the more powerful will offer his or her hand first and the grip will be firmer. And in East Asian societies the weaker member will often lower his or her head slightly in recognition of the higher status of the powerful person.

[23] Tax evasion by the rich is one of the most widespread and difficult to remedy of China's social problems.

[24] In contrast, the Western host typically does not wait until the guest has physically disappeared from view. Once the taxi door closes, the Western host turns away and resumes his or her other activities. My own French-Canadian mother follows such habits, and while I'm hurt at the time I cannot blame her for following the Western ways she has yet to question. It would not be effective to raise the possibility of alternatives because she is quite fixed in her ways (during her visit to China, she insisted on kissing my Chinese friends on the cheeks because "that's the French way"). In such cases, I've learned not to criticize my mother in order to maintain harmonious ties and pay tribute to the value of filial piety.

main target seems to have been to limit the desires of political rulers by means of ritual.[25] In contemporary society, however, it is not just political rulers that exercise power: socialists thinkers have shown that capitalist organizations exercise power over workers, anarchists have shown that bureaucrats exercise power over citizens, feminists have shown that men exercise power over women, Foucault has shown that hospitals, prisons, and other social organizations exercise power over individuals, and so on. My aim is to suggest that hierarchical rituals can serve to limit the powerful and protect the interests of the disadvantaged in various social spheres where power is exercised.

Also, Xunzi's point that the rituals were first implemented by the exemplary rulers of the past (先王) cannot seem plausible in a modern context. Perhaps Xunzi himself did not really endorse a view that may have been put forward for political purposes: by identifying the origin of rituals with the great sage kings of the past perhaps he thought people would be more likely to follow the rituals he describes. Put another way, if people regard such rituals as arbitrary human creations or as practices that could be invented or changed at will by themselves or their less-than-perfect contemporary political leaders, the rituals may be subject to ongoing questioning and may be less effective. Just as the monarchy loses much of its magic if it's viewed simply as a conscious human creation by people just like us, so the same may be true of rituals. If the origin of an institution or practice is somehow shrouded in the mysterious past, it is more likely to command allegiance.

Fortunately, rituals needn't be seen to originate from the sage-kings to command allegiance in contemporary societies. What matters is that the rituals should be seen to contribute to a common good or ideal valued by human beings past and present. The common good itself should not be fully attainable by reason, it should be regarded as somewhat mysterious yet important for human well-being.[26] Music is key for Xunzi because it contributes to the 'sacred' atmosphere that underpins rituals and forges a sense of solidarity among participants: "故乐在宗庙之中，君臣上下同听之，则莫不和敬" (Hence, when music is performed in the ancestral temple, rulers and ministers, high and low, listen to it together and they are united in harmonious reverence) (20.2; Knoblock, modified).[27] Those participating in musical rituals experience

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[25] See Masayuki Sato, *The Confucian Quest for Order: The Origin and Formation of the Political Thought of Xun Zi* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 426–28.

[26] As Stephen Angle puts it (drawing on Paul Woodruff), "It is crucial that reverence (and awe) be reserved for ideals of perfection that lie beyond our full ability to grasp, and thus have a tinge of mystery associated with them: neither specific individuals nor specific institutions – no matter how good – merit reverence" (Angle, "Reverence, Ritual, and Perfection in Contemporary (Confucian) Political Philosophy" (paper presented at the International Forum of Political Philosophy, (Beijing) Capital Normal University, September 2006, 7)).

[27] See Kathleen Marie Higgins very interesting essay, "Rising to the Occasion: The Implication of Confucian Musical Virtue for Global Community" (presented at The International Symposium on "Confucianism in the Postmodern Era," Beijing Language and Culture University, October 2006).

some sort of reverence for the common ideals expressed by the rituals and the feeling of solidarity emerges as a by-product of participating in the ritual: and the powerful members of the rituals are more likely to develop a concern for the disadvantaged.[28] There may be non-musical means of generating the same results, but music does seem to touch something deep in the human 'soul' – as Xunzi puts it, "故乐者…人情之所必不免也" (Musical performance is a necessary and inescapable expression of our emotional nature) (20.3; Knoblock, modified) – that allows for feelings of reverence and solidarity to develop.

Let us now turn to the examples. They may seem like small matters, but as Xunzi says, "所失微而其为乱大者, 礼也" ("When the observance of small matters is neglected, the disorder that results is great. Such is ritual") (27.42; Knoblock).

11.2.1 The Teacher-Student Relationship

In East Asian societies with a Confucian heritage, the teacher has relatively high social status. The teacher is typically held in high regard not just by the educated classes, but also by the bottom social and economic rungs of society that share the value of respect for the educated.[29] Not surprisingly, the teacher-student relationship is relatively hierarchical (compared to Western societies), even (especially?) in universities. The students rarely, if ever, address teachers on a first-name basis and they show the kind of deference and respect that is initially off-putting for the Westerner that values social egalitarianism.[30] For example,

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[28] Xunzi was explicitly critical of Mozi's condemnation of music (see Book 20). Mozi has been viewed has a champion of the poor (the common person), but it could be argued that Xunzi has deeper psychological insights regarding the actual mechanisms (hierarchical rituals involving music and/or drinking and reverence for common ideals) that would lead to powerful to care for the poor's interests (not to mention Xunzi's views regarding the necessity for hierarchical division of labor that would develop the economy and provide the foundation for widespread material well-being).

[29] Interestingly, the social status of teachers seems to be independent of their class status. In China, the salaries of teachers is quite low compared to other professions. In fact, I'd argue that the relatively low income of teachers enhances the social standing of teachers, they may be seen as relatively intelligent people who choose their profession at least partly for other-regarding reasons. In Hong Kong, university professors have very high salaries, but their social standing is lower than in China (I taught in both Hong Kong and Beijing, and the different reaction by taxi drivers suffices to demonstrate this point: in Hong Kong, the typical reaction is that I'm lucky to have find the kind of job that provides good material benefits; in Beijing, there seems to more genuine respect for my job, and the respect only increases when I respond half-jokingly that I teach students "useless" philosophy).

[30] My first job was at Singapore's National University. I was only a few years older than most of my students, and I encouraged them to address me as "Daniel," but it almost never worked. Exasperated, I once scolded a student who repeatedly called me "Dr. Bell" and told him he shouldn't be so formal and should address me as "Daniel." He immediately responded "Yes, Sir!" I learned to live with "Dr. Bell" after that.

in drinking sessions (the modern equivalent, perhaps, of Xunzi's account of village wine ceremonies) the student would typically serve the professor and refrain from drinking before the professor, even if both parties have had a fair amount to drink. Such rituals are meant to show reverence for the ideal of commitment to learning (the pursuit of truth, in Western terms) and respect for those who have demonstrated life-long commitment to that goal.

Such hierarchical arrangements, however, are also advantageous for the student. The teacher is meant not simply to provide a fair structure for learning and to transmit knowledge in the most effective way. The teacher is also supposed to care about the student's emotional well-being and moral development. The relationship between professor and graduate student is especially rich and many-sided, it would be seen as an important moral lapse if the teacher focuses only on the student's job prospects and neglectes the student's emotional and moral well-being.[31] The obligations of the teacher put additional (again, compared to Western societies) pressure on the teacher; he or she is also meant to set a good moral example for the student and to gain the student's respect in non-academic spheres of life.

11.2.2 Mealtime

In the animal world, the powerful beasts typically get first dibs at the food. Even communal animals, such as lions, make few allowances for the weak and the vulnerable in their community. When lions make a kill, the toughest animals eat first, and the others get the scraps. In times of scarcity, the young, the sick, and the aged are the first to perish.

Human beings have developed meal-time rituals that serve to protect the interests of weaker members. In many societies, the weak rely on healthy members of the family to prepare and serve them an individual portion of food that keeps them alive. Unfortunately, the urge to be charitable takes a hard hit in times of scarcity, and in times of famine children and the elderly are often the first to die. But the powerful – in this case, healthy adults – are more likely to be predisposed to care for the powerless if they are conditioned to suppress their appetites on an everyday basis. In East Asian societies, eating is a communal activity,[32] and rituals have evolved that allow weaker members of

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[31] The teacher's responsibility for the student's moral development was made explicit in Qing dynasty legal regulations: in the extreme case of the murder of a parent, the offender's principal teacher would suffer capital punishment (*Filial Piety: Practice and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia*, ed. Charlotte Ikels (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 5)

[32] The practice of communal eating in China dates from the Northern Song dynasty; previously, separate "Western-style" servings were served to individuals. Whatever the explanation for the change, it contributed to more harmony at mealtime and, arguably, society at in large (see 裸风儿, 餐桌边的中国文化 (The Chinese Culture of the Dining Table), 南方周末, 9 March 2006, D27).

the family to get their fair share, so to speak. Communal dishes are placed at the center of the table, and healthy adults are often reluctant to be the first to start and the last to finish.[33] They are supposed to constrain their own desires and let others indulge (the Chinese character *rang* 让 best expresses the idea of appropriate meal time behavior).

Typically, the elderly are supposed to go first and children are conditioned at a young age to defer their gratification and not dive right into the communal food. The idea is to pay homage to the ideal of filial piety as well as to train children in the art of *rang*.[34] In contemporary China, the practice may be breaking down due to the "little emperor" syndrome of single-child families, but most families still seem to criticize children that act 'selfishly' at mealtime.[35]

11.2.3 The Boss-Worker Relationship

In China, economic development has been characterized by massive internal migration, composed largely of impoverished farmers and family members migrating to urban areas in search of better work opportunities and higher earnings. China's "floating population" consists of about 120 million migrants, and they are subject to the legal discrimination of the hukou (household registration system) regime that deprives them of equal access to health care, education, work, and residence. Moreover, they are routinely subject to the scorn of urbanites and suspected of criminal activity.[36]

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[33] In the context of an argument that morality counteracts our bad natures and stems from conscious commitment to ritual and moral duty, Xunzi notes that "今人饥, 见长而不敢先食者, 将有所让也" (When a person is hungry, upon seeing an elder, he or she will not eat before the elder; rather, the elder will be deferred to) (23.6; Knoblock, modified). On the assumption that Xunzi is describing a common practice of his own day, we can infer that "rang" at mealtime predates communal eating practices. Perhaps the development of communal eating practices further facilitated "rang" practices.

[34] For an interesting account of the practice of meal rotation (taking turns in supporting and feeding the elderly) in contemporary rural China, see Jun Jing, "Meal Rotation and Filial Piety," in *Filial Piety*, ed. Charlotte Ikels. On the continuing relevance of the value of filial piety in contemporary urban China (notwithstanding the challenges to Confucianism by liberals and Marxists in twentieth century China), see Martin King Whyte, "Filial Obligations in Chinese Families: Paradoxes of Modernization," in *Filial Piety*, Ibid.

[35] In the past, it was common for children of rich families to eat separately from the adults. Such practices should be criticized if they do not effectively teach the young to defer to their elders. The rituals are only effective at generating concern for the vulnerable if they involve interaction between the different groups of society.

[36] The critics of the *hukou* system seem to think first and foremost of legal ways of improving it. Such legal measures can be counterproductive (see my book *Beyond Liberal Democracy: Political Thinking for an East Asian Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 313–21) and they neglect the way that informal rituals can contribute to the well-being of migrant workers.

But the social standing, if not material conditions, of migrant workers can be improved by common rituals involving manager/boss and worker, similar to the common rituals involving bosses and workers in Japanese companies. In Beijing, it is not uncommon to observe migrant workers in the restaurant trade being 'subject' to group lectures, forced to undergo morning exercises, and sing group songs and chant company slogans. These activities are typically carried on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant, in full view of the public. These rituals are meant to express commitment to the good of the company, and more broadly, to the ideal of progress for the country (the lectures sometimes include patriotic content).

What seems like militaristic and rigidly hierarchical set of rituals may also have some benefits for the workers. The manager/boss is involved in common rituals – exercising, singing, and sometimes joking with the workers – and he or she often develops care for the interests of the workers that would not otherwise occur. Such sessions may lead to joint meals and karaoke sessions, and in the best cases the manager/boss would develop real feelings for the workers and show those feelings by giving gifts to the workers. In one case, the manager/boss of a restaurant who also designs clothes occasionally makes clothes for the young migrant worker waitresses of the restaurant she runs.[37]

In short, different rituals serve to protect the interests of different vulnerable groups: the ritual of shared dishes serves to protect the interests of the elderly, the ritual of deference for teachers serves to protect the interests of students, the ritual of group singing and morning exercises serves to protect the interests of migrant workers. Of course, this account of rituals is a bit too neat. On the one hand, the above account of rituals is overly optimistic. Some rituals do not always work as they should. For example, the lectures to migrant workers can contribute to worker alienation if they are carried out in deadly-serious ways without any hint of kindness or humor. Some rituals, even if they work as they should, lead to unintended bad social consequences. For example, the family-centered meal-time practices might lead to excessive familism, with the consequence that people are insufficiently concerned with the legitimate interests of non-family members.

On the one hand, my account insufficiently highlights the positive functions of rituals. Particular rituals can benefit more than one vulnerable group. For example, it is common for migrant workers to send money to disadvantaged relatives and friends in the countryside. Also, particular rituals can instill habits that can have beneficial habits in other spheres of life. For example, the norms of humility and deference at mealtime may produce the sorts of emotional disposition that lead children to be more sensitive to the interests of the elderly once they become productive adults.

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[37] Example from the Purple Haze restaurant in Beijing, on the small lane facing the north gate of Worker's stadium. I am involved as a minority shareholder in this restaurant, but I do not make policy or manage the restaurant and can observe such practices qua researcher.

There is, then, a need to consider ways that maximize the good consequences of rituals – meaning that they serve to protect the interests of the weak and the vulnerable to the greatest possible extent – and to minimize the bad ones. The next section sketches some possibilities.

11.3 Proposals for Reform

Ritual principles, as Xunzi notes, are the guiding ropes that pull the government (27.24). So the most obvious starting place for reform would be the establishment of a government agency with the specific mission to promote rituals that help the vulnerable members of the community.[38] Its task would be to ensure that rituals generate the sorts of emotions that involve care for the interests of the weak and vulnerable, both within the ritual itself and extended to other spheres of life. My hypothesis is that rituals involving interaction between powerful and vulnerable members of society are most likely to produce such emotions. Following Xunzi, it is important not to insist on equal treatment, because unequal treatment can also (and may be more likely to) generate concern for the vulnerable. I would also like to suggest that the more such rituals govern everyday social interaction, the more likely the emotions generated – the sense of community between rich and poor, the sense of caring for the interests of the worst off – will extend to other spheres of life.[39] If such claims are correct – and they would need further empirical validation – then the agency would have the task of promoting such rituals to the greatest possible extent.

One important task for the agency would be to create the social conditions for different groups to interact with each other. In the socially egalitarian United States, the different economic classes live largely separate lives in separate neighborhoods[40] and the rich do not commonly interact with the poor, with the consequence that they do not develop the motivation to care for their interests and to address the problem of economic inequality. In socially

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[38] The Qing dynasty established a Ministry of Rituals (礼部), but its specific function was to manage relations between tributary states rather than help the weak more generally. Still, it may have had positive effects for the weak. One might speculate that Chinese imperialism did not typically involve European-style brutality and contempt for the "natives" partly because the tributary states paid symbolic homage to the Chinese, thus establishing some sort of sense of community among the groups, and making the Chinese power holders less likely to abuse the vulnerable people of the tributary states. I do not mean to deny that others factors, such as technological limitations, may also have played a role in limiting oppression by the Chinese overlords.

[39] If the main function of a ritual is to mark the boundary between the in-group and the out-group and have bad effects for members of the out-group and society at large (like rituals involving gang members), then such rituals should be discouraged. Such rituals, not surprisingly, tend not to be socially legitimate.

[40] See, e.g., Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

inegalitarian Japan, by contrast, there is no sharp geographical separation between rich and poor, residences and businesses, and different classes interact with each other in common (socially hierarchical) rituals on an everyday basis,[41] with the consequence that the rich are made to care for the interests of the poor. In China, the growing gap between rich and poor is widely considered to be one of the country's most pressing problems, and the agency could look to the Japanese experience in urban planning as one way to help address the problem. For example, it could provide tax breaks for mixed-income housing projects that provide public spaces for intermingling between rich and poor.

The agency would also have the power to remove legal regulations that force certain rituals to operate on the boundaries of social acceptability: the idea is that getting the government out of the way is more likely to lead to social acceptance. If migrant workers operate on the boundaries of legality, for example, the fear factor may prevent the emergence of a sense of community between workers and bosses, not to mention extension of affective ties to other spheres of life. But the Confucian approach to promoting rituals would not rely first and foremost on the strong arm of punishment to promote rituals. One of the most famous quotes in The Analects of Confucius is 道之以政, 齐之以刑, 民免而无耻; 道之以德, 齐之以礼, 有耻且格 (Lead the people by means of regulations and keep them orderly with punishments, and they will avoid punishments but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with moral power and keep them orderly by means of rituals and they will develop a sense of shame as well as correct themselves) (2.3). In the context of our discussion, it means that fear of legal punishment is not likely to produce the sorts of emotions that generate a sense of community. If people engage in rituals because they feel forced to, the rituals are likely to become empty displays of form and devoid of the sorts of emotions that show genuine concern for the weak. People should perform rituals because they want to, not because they have to.

So it's best to think of non-coercive means to promote rituals that have the effect of helping the worst-off. For example, the agency could provide subsidies for television programming that shows positive examples of how the rituals should be carried out, such as eating practices that let the weakest members of the family eat first and company activities involving bosses and migrant workers. The agency might provide rewards for model performers of rituals, such as prizes for car drivers that "rang" to let disabled people to cross the street. More ambitiously, perhaps, its task would also be to devise mechanisms for extending the emotions generated by such rituals to other spheres of life similar to Xunzi's account of mourning practices that cultivate the emotions of respect and mindfulness of duty for everyday life.

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[41] See Paul Dumouchel, *Tableaux de Kyoto: Images du Japon 1994–2004* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005), 19–20.

In sum, there is an important role for public policy, particularly of the indirect, non-coercive variety. Still, it must be recognized that the power of ritual depends upon the kind of moral transformation that makes the powerful care for the interests of the vulnerable, and the less-than-inspiring history of governmental attempts to transform motivation (even of the indirect kind) is reason for caution. So the case for ritual should come largely from civil society (e.g., intellectuals that explain the benefits of ritual), schools (e.g., teachers that emphasize rituals and set a good model for students),[42] families (e.g., parents that encourage their children to let the elderly go first), and other groups in society that rely first and foremost on persuasion rather than coercion.

11.4 Beyond East Asia?

I would like to end with the thought that the defense of ritual has universal validity, as Xunzi himself no doubt believed. In fact, it has validity even if my interpretation of Xunzi is mistaken as an account of what he really believed or what he was really trying to argue. Qua intellectual historian, I hope my interpretation is correct, but what matters from a contemporary normative perspective is whether the ideas about the positive function of ritual that I've derived by reading Xunzi are applicable and do what they're supposed to do in contemporary societies. If so, then they are worth promoting.

There is some evidence for the universal validity of the value of ritual transformation. For example, the rituals of sporting competitions can transform (civilize) the instinct for aggression into socially desirable motivations. As Confucius put it, "君子无所争. 必也射乎！揖让而升, 下而饮. 其争也君子" (3.7) (Exemplary persons are not competitive, but they must still compete in archery. Greeting and making way for each other, the archers ascend the hall and returning they drink a salute. Even during competition, they are exemplary persons).[43] The task is not to try to eradicate the desire to compete (a futile, if not counterproductive effort), but rather to civilize it by various rituals, like the rituals of sumo wrestlers or the ritual of shaking hands after tennis games, that produce a sense of social solidarity and concern for the disadvantaged.

Team competitions are perhaps even better suited for this task. By participating in a team, the players learn the value of social solidarity. At the non-elite level, the teams can include weaker players, thus promoting the virtue of concern for the weak and teaching about the need to make social institutions inclusive of the weak. At the elite level, the participants and the spectators can

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[42] Xunzi himself emphasized the importance of education in li under the direct education of a teacher (see Henry Rosemont, Jr. "State and Society in the Xunzi: A Philosophical Commentary," in *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the* Xunzi, eds. T.C. Kline III and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 11).

[43] I have modified the translation in *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation,* trans. Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr. (New York: Ballantine, 1998), 3.7.

learn about the value of good sportsmanship. And the spectators learn to respect and cheer for the underdog, perhaps contributing to more generalized concern for the weak.

Another example might be the model of "restorative justice" that has been tried in various societies. This model has successfully relied on ritual rather than legal coercion to produce social solidarity and reduce recidivism. As Randall Collins explains:

> Criminals are confronted at group meetings by their victims as well as other members of the social networks on both sides. These encounters have been remarkably successful in reconciling the contending parties and in reducing repeated offenses … The mutual focus of attention is enforced, in part, because a police officer makes the offender pay attention to what the victim is expressing. The initiating emotional ingredient is high: the strong feelings of shame and anger; these feelings are shared and transformed, because all the persons in the circle get to express their opinions and feelings, and are swept into a common mood. The result is that the offender is shamed and ritually punished, but then is reintegrated into the group by participating in the group emotion of collective solidarity.[44]

The power-holder is the victim of the criminal offense, and by means of social interaction the power-holder develops sympathy for the criminal and symbolically pardons him or her. And the criminal, feeling part of the community, is less likely to commit crimes in the future.[45]

Still, the defense of ritual is less likely to be taken seriously in contexts that do not have a Confucian heritage. For one thing, it is difficult to translate the key terms – li 礼 and rang 让– in ways that sound appealing to, say, English speakers. I have translated li as "rituals", but ritual often has negative connotations in English, it sounds like one is defending mechanical and uncreative practices from outdated eras. Other common translations such as "rites" and "ritual propriety" are hardly improvements. The typical translations of rang – defer, concede, give in – also seem like outdated notions from aristocratic and hierarchial times.[46]

The different priorities of different values in different cultures may also affect commitment to the value of the transformative potential of hierarchical rituals. Western societies such as the United States place strong emphasis upon social equality and less emphasis on material equality. In Confucian-influenced East Asian societies, it is the opposite set of priorities. Thus, Western societies may

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[44] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 111.

[45] George Fletcher provides another example from the American context. Drawing on his own experience reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, he argues that patriotic rituals "are necessary to nurture and maintain a common national identity and a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the nation as a whole" (Fletcher, *Loyalty: An Essay on the Morality of Relationships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), xi).

[46] It might take actual experience with East Asians for Westerners to really appreciate the social utility of rang. Several years ago, I recall arguing with my wife about which restaurant we should choose for dinner. My Korean graduate student whispered "rang" in my ear, and I understood, I let her choose, and the rest of the evening went smoothly.

be less willing to sacrifice social equality for the sake of hierarchical rituals that underpin material equality (perhaps some societies like Norway blessed with certain advantages like small, relatively homogenous populations living in the context of abundant natural resources do not have to engage in such trade-offs, but most East Asian societies are not so lucky).

Another problem is that the project of promoting rituals may seem foreign in cultures that tend to invoke legalistic, rights-based solutions to the problem of how to care for the interests of the worse-off. The whole social contract tradition in Western political theory, from Hobbes to Rawls, appeals to coercive laws as the main mechanism for securing the interests of those most likely to suffer in a state of nature. And the rights-based welfare states in contemporary Western societies also rely on legal mechanisms, first and foremost, to secure the interests of the weak and vulnerable. To (over) simplify, the mainstream of political thought and practice in East Asia is 先礼后兵 (first ritual, then coercion),[47] whereas it is the opposite in the West.[48]

Not surprisingly, Western-based human rights groups in China fault the country first and foremost for its lack of adherence to the rule of law, on the assumption that Western-style laws would help to secure the interests of the worst off. I do not mean to deny that the country would be better off with more serious commitment to the rule of law (particularly if the alternative is corrupt political processes that typically benefit the rich and powerful), but excessive focus on legal mechanisms may cause reformers to lose sight of the power of rituals, not to mention the possibility that such legalistic solutions will

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[47] The literal translation is "first ritual then military force", but "coercion" (military, legal, or otherwise) best captures the meaning of 兵 in this idiom. In Chinese, 先礼后兵 can still sound threatening if it is deployed in certain contexts. In 2003, the (then) secretary (minister) for education in Hong Kong, Arthur Li, called for the merger of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Science and Technology University of Hong Kong. He said he was willing to consult and dialogue, but he used the idiom. Many members of the university community took this to mean that Li was not serious about dialogue and that he was going to use force to get his way if people disagree, and Li lost much social capital that would have allowed him to implement his idea (the merger proposal ultimately failed).

[48] I say "oversimplify" because there are counterexamples, such as the case of restorative justice mentioned above. At the level of theory, the emphasis on legal, rights based solutions to problems has been challenged by communitarian theorists. Amitai Etzioni, for example, has called for a moratorium on rights in the American context and the strengthening of the family and civil society as a way of generating concern for social responsibilities (Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993)). Robert Putnam has empirically demonstrated the importance of associational life in generating the social capital that is crucial for decent social life (Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001)). Such views, unfortunately, remain marginal in American political discourse that continues to emphasize legal solutions to social problems. From a normative perspective, the literature on communitarianism and social capital may be criticized on the grounds that there may be more of a need to distinguish between class-based associations/communities that generate solidarity only within particular classes and the associations/communities that involve ritual interaction between the powerful and the vulnerable and hence generate concern for the worst-off.

further undermine the sense of community that makes the powerful care for the interests of the vulnerable. To put it more positively, since rituals are already deeply embedded in the philosophical outlooks and everyday social practices in East Asian societies, it is not far-fetched to believe that social reformers can and should be more attentive to the positive function of rituals in China and elsewhere.[49]

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[49] Several mainland Chinese scholars have recently drawn inspiration from Xunzi's defense of ritual to draw implications for contemporary society: (1) 王丽霞 argues that the idea of ritual as civilizing desire and making social life beneficial for the people is valuable for contemporary society (王丽霞, "荀子之礼的现代诠释及其意义") (A Contemporary Interpretation and the Implications of Xunzi's (Concept of) Ritual), 青岛海洋大学学报 社会科学版, March 2000, 68; (2) 王群瑛 argues that for the importance of ritual because it contributes to the morality that underpins a smoothly functioning market economy (王群瑛, "荀子的 '隆礼重法' 思想及其现代意义") (Xunzi's 'Value Ritual and Emphasize Law' Thought and Its Contemporary Implications"), 高校理论战线, 1998.8, 57; (3) 李仙娥 argues for the importance of ritual because it underpins the morality that makes law effective (李仙娥, "荀子礼法思想的特征与现代启示") (The Characteristics of Xunzi's Thought on Ritual and Law and Its Contemporary Implications), 唐都学刊, 1997, 13 (4), 67; (4) 梅德高 argues that ritual can be used to unify the people (以礼齐民) and hence can be beneficial to China by reducing corruption and opposing bureaucratization (梅德高, 荀子德治思想及其现代价值) (Xunzi's Thought of Ruling the Country with Virtue and Its Contemporary Value), 湖北大学学报 哲学社会科学版, Nov. 2003, Vol. 30, No. 6, 47; (5) 宋立卿 argues for the importance of ritual because it underpins the morality that makes government officials act morally when nobody is watching them (慎独) (宋立卿, "荀子的伦理思想及其现代价值") (Xunzi's Ethical Thought and Its Contemporary Value), 首都师范大学学报(社会科学版), 1997, No. 6, 25–6; (6) 杜培 argues that the current task is to build a democratic system and that it is far more effective to use ritual/morality rather than force to secure people's obedience (杜培, "荀子礼法-体论及其现代意义") (Xunzi on Ritual and Law: Theory and Its Contemporary Implications), 科学, 经济, 社会, Vol. 17, Summer, No. 75(2), 1999, 21) These attempts at drawing implications for contemporary society can be viewed as not-so-veiled critiques of the CCP's (excessive) reliance on coercion to secure social and political order.

Chapter 12
Ritual, Harmony, and Peace and Order: A Confucian Conception of Ritual

Jonathan Chan

12.1

To begin, I shall discuss how Confucians understand ritual. In particular, the discussion will focus on the importance, the nature and the social context of ritual from a Confucian perspective. For many people, ritual is no more than a set of formal rules or procedures that people observe in celebrations or ceremonies. These rules or procedures are social conventions that have a role perceived as far less important than other legal or constitutional bases of society. Confucians hold a very different view on ritual, however. For Confucians, ritual has a far more important role to play, and is not merely a set of formal rules or procedures used in celebrations or ceremonies. In what follows, I shall propose an interpretive framework to characterize the Confucian conception of ritual.

   The framework begins with a basic view that Confucian ritual is a social practice. As a social practice, it consists of a body of rules or norms of proper behaviour of various levels of specificity which governs action in every aspect of life. It also embodies a fundamental set of moral values, gives structure and coherence to human society, and provides a total cultural context in which human life can flourish. Since these descriptions are quite abstract, in what follows I shall make some elaborations on the view.

12.1.1 Ritual as Ceremonial Rites and External Codes of Behaviour

Confucian ritual consists of a set of concrete rules which includes ceremonial rites such as mourning rituals, sartorial rituals, and birth rituals as well as an

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established or external code of behaviour. These rites and code of behaviour govern action in every aspect of life, regulating every movement, glance, and word. In responding to the question about the specific details of Confucian ritual, Confucius said, "Do not look in a way that is contrary to ritual propriety, do not listen to what is contrary to ritual propriety, do not speak in a way that is contrary to ritual propriety, and do not move in a way that is contrary to ritual propriety." (*The Analects* 12:1) What Confucius said succinctly expresses the idea that by deploying a set of ceremonial rites and an external code of behaviour, ritual governs action in every aspect of life. It is exactly these rites and code of behaviour that provide standards of excellence for assessing all kinds of activities in human life. When individuals try to achieve those standards of excellence, fundamental good internal to the practice of ritual is realized.

12.1.2 Ritual and Morality

The fundamental good internal to the practice of Confucian ritual is *ren* or humaneness which is regarded as the supreme virtue by Confucians. In *The Analects*, there is a passage which records a conversation between Confucius and his favourite students Yan Hui

> Yan Hui asked about *ren*. Confucius said, "Discipline yourself and return to ritual is what constitutes *ren*." (*The Analects* 12:1)

Confucius' answer to the question raised by Yan Hui is important. It provides a clue to understand how Confucius sees the relation between ritual and morality. For Confucians, ritual is not merely a set of ceremonial rites and an external code of behaviour. It is also spoken of as a virtue, and an ethical attitude that leads people to treat others with respect and deference, and its ultimate goal is to cultivate a person to become a humane person. What is more important is that for Confucius, ritual is not only a means to develop *ren* in a person but also constitutive of the virtue. Thus, the relation between ritual and morality is not an instrumental one but a constitutive one. That being the case, ritual not only cannot be separated from morality but also is a manifestation of morality.

Ren is not only the supreme virtue but also the 'total virtue' in the sense that it includes all other more specific virtues or values such as earnestness and generosity. In *The Analects*, there are passages which attempt to explain *ren*

> Whoever is able to put five things into practice throughout the whole world is certainly *ren*. These are earnestness, consideration for others, trustworthiness, diligence, and generosity. (*The Analects* 7:6)

It is also important to note that whenever Confucius wanted to clarify *ren*, he often returned to the ethical values that concern individual relationships: filial piety, fraternal duty, loyalty, and sincerity. These ethical values match the concrete personal relationships such as those between fathers and sons, between older and younger brothers, and among friends. In *The Analects*, it is written,

> The exemplary person devotes his efforts to the fundamental, for once the fundamental is established, the Way will grow therefrom. Filial piety and fraternal respect – are they not the fundamental of a person? (*The Analects* 1:2)

Virtues connected with friendship such as loyalty and sincerity are also the logical consequences of *ren*. As Confucius said,

> When acting on another's behalf, shouldn't you always be loyal? When dealing with friends, shouldn't you always be sincere? ... Make loyalty and sincerity your first principles. (*The Analects* 1:3 and 1:8)

> A young man, when at home, should be filial, and when out in the world should be respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow with love, and cultivate the friendship of the good. (*The Analects* 1:6)

The relationship between *ren* and other more specific virtues, then, can also be used to explain why there exists a strong connection between ritual and morality from the Confucian perspective. Since *ren* is the total virtue, to fully develop *ren* requires cultivating the specific virtues in a person and that in turn requires the person to go through some sort of moral training. For Confucius, practicing ritual constitutes the essential part of the required moral training.

12.1.3 Ritual and the Basic Structure of Society

In the above, I have discussed the moral aspect of Confucian ritual. However, to fully understand the nature of Confucian ritual, one needs to go beyond this moral aspect and examine the social and political aspect of Confucian ritual. In what follows, I shall focus my discussion on the kind of social structure that Confucian ritual envisaged. It is a commonplace to say that traditional Chinese society was a society of ritual. But what exactly this statement implies is not clear. However, in my view, it is important to understand the full meaning of the statement if our goal is to characterize the social structure envisaged by Confucian ritual since traditional Chinese society was one of the few ancient societies which put Confucian ritual into practice. A sociological overview of the basic structure of traditional Chinese society would be helpful.

12.1.3.1 The Differential Mode of Association (*chaxugeju*)

According to a well-known Chinese sociologist, Fei Hsiao-tung, the clue to understand the basic structure of traditional Chinese society is to address the problem of how to draw the line between others and our own selves, between the group and the individual. On Fei's view, no sharp boundary can be drawn between others and our own selves in traditional Chinese society. Nor does a clear cut line exist between the group and the individual. One piece of evidence put forward by Fei is that the concept of family in traditional Chinese society lacks a definite boundary. He wrote

In China, we often see the sentence "The whole family will come" (*hedi guanglin*), but few people can tell what family members should be included in the word *di* (family)... Why are nouns [which involve using the concept of family] for such basic social units [families] so ambiguous in Chinese? In my opinion, the ambiguity indicates the difference between our social structure and that of the West...[Our pattern] is like the circles that appear on the surface of a lake when a rock is thrown into it. Everyone stands at the center of the circles produced by his or her own social influence. Everyone's circles are interrelated. One touches different circles at different times and places. (Fei, 1992, p. 63)

Fei argued that kinship, the most important relationship in traditional Chinese society, is similar to the concentric circles formed by throwing a stone into a lake. Kinship is a social network formed through marriage and reproduction, which can be extended to embrace countless numbers of people – in the past, present, and future. It is somewhat like a spider's web in the sense that it centers on oneself. Fei said,

Everyone has this kind of a kinship network, but the people covered by one network are not the same as those covered by any other ... the web of social relationships linked with kinship is specific to each person. Each web has a self as its center, and every web has a different center. (Fei, 1992, p. 63)

According to Fei's observation, this pattern of organization applies not only to kinship but also to neighbourhood. In traditional Chinese society, "every family regards its own household as the center and draws a circle around it. This circle is the neighbourhood, which is established to facilitate reciprocation in daily life." (Fei, 1992, p. 64) This network of human relationships is so elastic that it can even be extended to cover the whole world. Despite the vastness of this social network, there are certain human relationships which are regarded as the most fundamental. Such human relationships include rulers and subjects, fathers and sons, husbands and wives, older and younger brothers, friends, seniors and juniors, the close and the remote. Thus, within such a social network, we can see the path which runs from the self to the family, from the family to the state, and the state to the whole world (all under heaven). Fei called the basic structure of traditional Chinese society characterised by this weblike social network "*chaxugeju*", in English, "the differential mode of association".

On Fei's view, in a society with a differential mode of association, the most important ethical principle is the principle expressed by the Confucian dictum "Discipline oneself and return to rituals." This is so because, as seen above, practicing rituals provides necessary moral training for a person. And only through this training, a person is able to cultivate her moral character and therefore able to extend oneself out into other circles of human relationships. Thus, according to Fei, in a society with a differential mode of association, moral cultivation has some sort of centrality in moral and social life. This centrality of moral cultivation in moral and social life has a succinct expression in *The Great Learning*

> From the Son of Heaven [the ruler] down to mass people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides. (*The Great Learning*, sec 6)

The aim of the cultivation of the person is to develop the necessary virtues which are important for maintaining the proper human relationships in a society whose basic structure is characteristic of a differential mode of association. Only when we understand why moral cultivation is important to a society with such a social structure, we are able to understand why *The Great Learning* said,

> The ancients who wished to display illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first order well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their own self…Their self being cultivated, their families were regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and peaceful. (*The Great Learning*, sec 4)

Fei argued that in a society whose basic structure is defined by a differential mode of association, individual rights have no place in moral and social life at all. It is because the notion of individual rights presupposes a certain social structure which is quite different from that of a differential mode of association. The notion of individual rights requires a social structure in which a sharp distinction between individuals exists and individuals are treated as equal. However, it is exactly such a sharp distinction between individuals and equality among individuals that is absent in the social structure of a differential mode of association. In a society with a differential mode of association, how a person should be treated depends on her relations to others. Equality, then, is relatively unimportant in the moral and social life of that society. Only against a social background which accords the state a distributive function, equality could have an important role to play. Lacking such a social background, it would be meaningless to talk about equality unless what is being talked about is formal equality. However, in the traditional Chinese society, the state was not accorded such a distributive function. And only when we understand this, we are able to understand why Mencius said, "That things are unequal is part of nature…If you reduce them to the same level, it will only bring confusion to the empire." (*Mencius*, 1984, 3A:4)

12.1.3.2 Rule of Ritual vs. Rule of Law

Lacking the notions of individual rights and equality has significant implications for how a society with a differential mode of association is ruled. Modern democratic societies such as U.S. societies are often characterized as societies based on the rule of law. It is also conventional to categorize traditional Chinese society as society whose social order is based on rule of men. Fei argued that this categorization is misleading. On his view, traditional Chinese society is a society based neither on the rule of law nor on the rule of men but on the rule of ritual. He wrote,

> We can say that [traditional Chinese society] is a society 'without law,' if we define laws
> as those regulations maintained by state power. However, the absence of laws does not
> affect social order, because rural society is ruled by rituals. (Fei, 1992, p. 69)

Fei argued that both rituals and laws are behavioural norms. The difference between them is the force used to maintain the norms. Laws are enforced through political power, i.e., state power. Rituals, however, do not require any concrete structure of political power in order to be effective. Instead, their enforcement is based on tradition through which individuals receive moral cultivation.

> A ritual (*li*) is not something that is carried out by an exterior force. Rituals work
> through the feeling of respect and of obedience that people themselves have cultivated.
> People conform to rituals on their own initiative. . .[following rituals] is a habit formed
> in the process of cultivating oneself. One learns to conform to tradition on one's own
> initiative. (Fei, 1992, p. 99)

In a society with a differential mode of association, ritual is a more effective means than law to achieve order. This is so because, as seen above, moral cultivation is the key to achieve order in such a society, and practicing ritual is a more effective way than using laws to achieve moral cultivation. Only when we understand this are we able to understand why Confucius said,

> Lead the people with administrative injunctions and keep them orderly with penal law,
> and they will avoid punishments but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with
> excellence [virtue] and keep them orderly through observing ritual propriety and they
> will develop a sense of shame, and moreover, will order themselves. (*The Analects*, 2:3)

In the realm of morality, what law can achieve is minimal. Law is effective only in preventing harmful actions, but not in cultivating virtues. By contrast, ritual is a better means to cultivate virtues in a person. It is because ritual can provide us rules or norms of proper behaviour of various levels of specificity which govern action in every aspect of life.

12.1.3.3 Ritual and Its Constitutional Significance

In the above, I have described briefly the kind of social structure in which Confucian ritual is embodied. I also have discussed the nature of the order achieved in a society with the kind of social structure in question. However, the discussion above left one issue untouched, that is the issue concerning the relationship between ritual and the authority of government. From the Confucian perspective, ritual not only provides norms governing individuals' actions. It also furnishes norms as for guiding governmental actions. For instance, in *The Book of Rites*, which is known as one of the five important Confucian classics, there is a chapter called "Royal Regulation" (*Wang Chih*) which records the regulation of early kings regarding the classes of the feudal nobles and officers and their emoluments, regarding their sacrifices and their care for the aged, and regarding the educational systems. The point of writing down such regulation is to make sure that the ruler and the entire government

operated according to ritual. Thus, for Confucians, ritual is not only a political instrument but also something like a written constitution which constitutes the source of the legitimacy of governmental authority. Only when we understand the constitutional aspect of ritual, we are able to understand why the emperors in ancient China put so much emphasis on ritual. They had to pay utmost attention to the detailed specifications and correct observance of ritual because their political legitimacy depended on correctly regulating their conduct according to ritual. The thought that political legitimacy depends on correct observance of ritual has a clear expression in *Xunzi*

> Rites are the highest expression of order and distinction, the root of strength in the state, the Way by which the majestic sway of authority is created, and the focus of merit and fame. Kings and dukes who proceed in according with their requirements obtain the whole world, whereas those who do not bring ruin to their altars of soil and grain. (Xunzi, 1988, vol. II, Book 15.4)

That the ruler and the entire government should regulate their conduct according to ritual is also an important principle advanced in the *Analects*

> Rulers should employ their ministers by observing ritual propriety, and ministers should serve their lord by doing their utmost. (*The Analects*, 3:19)

> If rulers are able to effect order in the state through the combination of observing ritual propriety (*li*) and deferring to others, what more is needed? (*The Analects*, 4:13)

For Confucius, the ideal government is an "inactive government", which is the ideal that government should not interfere with people's social life. The most important thing that government should do is follow the rituals. This ideal of inactive government can also be supported by the notion of the rule of ritual. As seen above, in a society whose order is based on the rule of ritual, people conform to rituals on their own initiative. Governmental interference is only a last resort. Thus, from the Confucian point of view, the sphere of governmental functions is far more limited than the modern states allow.

12.2

In the above, I have put forward an interpretative framework to characterize the Confucian conception of ritual. Through this framework, I believe, we can have a more complete and deeper understanding of the Confucian teachings on ritual. In this section, I shall discuss the contemporary relevance of Confucian ritual. I shall discuss two things. First, I shall discuss the relevance of the notion of the rule of ritual to those East Asian societies such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China. From the historical point of view, all these societies have a historical origin from the traditional Chinese society whose basic structure is characteristic of a differential mode of association. These societies then have a cultural background which allows the notion of the rule of ritual to be incorporated into their social system so that order can be more efficiently achieved.

One might ask why the societies in question need to incorporate the notion into their social system. Before responding to this query, I would like to draw the readers' attention to some of Xunzi's thoughts. Xunzi characterizes a social order with ritual and moral principles as 'well-ordered' and otherwise 'chaotic'

> The gentleman creates order with what is itself well ordered and not with itself chaotic. What is the meaning of this? I say that 'well ordered' refers to ritual and moral principles and that 'chaotic' refers to what is contrary to them. Accordingly a gentleman creates order in terms of ritual and moral principles; he does not create order with what is contrary to them. (Xunzi, 1988, vol. I, Book I 3.6 & 3.7)

Thus, for Xunzi, ritual is not only an effective means of building a well-ordered society but itself a defining characteristic of a well-ordered society. It is impossible for a society to be well ordered without ritual. One might wonder why Xunzi needs to assign such a conceptual role to ritual when answering the question of what a well-ordered society is. A deeper reason for assigning such a conceptual importance to ritual can be found in Xunzi's theory of human nature.

According to Xunzi, human nature is bad and human goodness is acquired by conscious exertion. If human follows her inborn nature and indulges her natural inclinations, strife and rapacity will result, accompanied by rebellion and disorder, culminating in violence. To avoid such consequences, human needs to be guided by ritual and moral principles so as to transform her inherently bad nature. And only after human's bad nature has undergone such transformational influence may peace and order become possible. It is this transformational role of ritual that leads Xunzi to equate well-orderedness with ritual. For him, well-orderedness and ritual are simply two sides of the same coin. This transformational role of ritual also leads him to consider ritual as not merely rites of assembly but also practices that penetrate every aspect of one's life activity. Other Confucians might not agree with Xunzi's theory of human nature. But they would agree with Xunzi that the transformational role of ritual is the key to building a harmonious society. Consider a statement put forward by Yu Tzu, a disciple of Confucius, in the *Analects*:

> Of the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small, yet this will not always work: to aim always at harmony without regulating it by the rites simply because one knows only about harmony will not, in fact, work. (*The Analects* 1:12)

For Yu Tzu, harmony is a product of ritual; and only our seeking for harmony is regulated by ritual harmony will result.

One might ask why we must base harmony or peace and order on ritual. Even if, the opponent may argue, we accept Xunzi's theory of human nature, we do not need to accept the Confucian view that harmony or peace and order must be based on ritual. Why not, for example, base harmony or peace and order on administrative injunctions and penal law? At least, Confucius himself admits that people will avoid punishments if they are ruled by administrative injunctions

and penal law. That being the case, why can't we base harmony or peace and order on the deterrent effect of penal law? Or why can't we, like Hobbes and Locke, base harmony or peace and order on social contract?

To the above queries, Confucians can have the following replies. First, as to the idea of basing social order on the deterrent effect of penal law, the Confucians might reply that using the deterrent effect of the penal law as the basis for harmony or peace and order is neither secure nor morally desirable. To see why such a basis is not secure we need only to appreciate the fact that the deterrent effect of the penal law can always be outweighed by rewards that people will have if they trespass the zone prohibited by law. People with wicked characters are quite willing to take the risk of being punished by law, if their trespass will bring them enormous reward. Nor is it morally desirable to base social order on the deterrent effect of the penal law. It is not morally desirable because to use the deterrent effect as the sole basis for harmony or peace and order is to base the social order merely on fears. Using the deterrent approach presupposes that people lack moral motivation to obey the law. The social order would then be deprived of moral basis and the harmony brought about would not be a moral one. A reasonable form of Confucianism would not deny the importance of law and social policy; however, it denies that moral harmony can be based merely on law and social policy. For Confucians, moral harmony can be brought about only by developing the people's good character, and the only way to achieve this is following ritual.

Similar comments may be made concerning the idea of basing social order on people's agreement. In the first place, the people's will may be so weak or wicked that they would not honor their promises when doing so would endanger their self-interest. Thus, harmony or peace and order as based on people's agreement may not be secure. More importantly, we need to ask why we could assume that people would come up with such an agreement. That people may want to avoid social disorder cannot guarantee that such an agreement would exist. If the conflict of interest among people are so enormous or their conceptions of the good are so diversified, people may not be able to come up with any such agreement concerning arrangements of social institutions, if such agreement is merely motivated by people's personal interests or values.

The second thing that I want to discuss is concerned with the constitutional relevance of ritual to in East Asian context. As seen above, ritual can have a constitutional effect on the legitimacy of governmental authority. In a society which assigns ritual such a constitutional role, the highest government officials will be required to regulate their conduct according to ritual, and the entire government has to operate according to ritual. This would set a high standard of excellence for anyone who wants to take up the ruling position in that society. And only those who have been disciplining themselves through ritual for a long time could meet this high standard of excellence. In my view, it is exactly these highly self-discipline political leaders that are needed in most of the countries nowadays. Given the fact that corruptions and abuses of political power are due to lack of virtues, to assign ritual a constitutional role can help to diminish

corruptions and abuses of political powers in society. To put it differently, assigning ritual such a constitutional role can help society to select better political leaders.

A logical consequence of adopting such a ritualist approach to political authority is that the political process through which political leaders are chosen must be properly designed so that only those who are properly disciplined through ritual will be selected. The political process in question must include the practice of ritual as a part of education for citizenship. This means that citizens themselves also need to go through some sort of discipline guided by the practice of ritual. This is a line of thought advanced by some political theorists. For instance, Chaihark argues that if the goal of selecting highly self-disciplined political leaders can be realized, citizens need to be appropriately disciplined to know that their constitutional role is to demand such discipline from their ruler too. According to Chaihark, the goal of such an education is that "[t]hrough 'ritualization' it seeks to instill in everyone those habits, attitudes, and beliefs according to which one's constitutional role is to discipline – to discipline through ritual propriety not only one's self but also one's political leaders." (Chaihark, 2003, p. 48)

Besides a ritualist educational program for citizens, Chaihark argues, a ritualist discipline program for political leaders is also needed. This is so because there must be institutional mechanisms ensuring that political leaders will be appropriately disciplined if the political leaders so selected are not already so disciplined. While I welcome Chaihark's idea of a ritualist discipline program for political leaders, I differ from him in what content of such a program must consist of. He suggests,

> Modern-day analogues of the Royal Lectures or the Censorate should become regular parts of the government and be staffed with those who have shown themselves to be similarly disciplined at least in their own fields of expertise. This should not be mistaken as a call to make the president a moral examplar ... The heightened discipline demanded of the president is not primarily about the moral quality of the person's private life but more about competency and proficiency in the art of governance. It means ensuring that the president is constantly educated about requirements of statecraft. (Chaihark, 2003, p. 52)

From the Confucian perspective, the moral quality of political leaders and the art of governance are inseparable. If we take the notion of the rule of ritual seriously, the authority of political leaders depends very much on their moral quality. Thus, a sound ritualist discipline program for political leaders must include moral training for political leaders.

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Part IV
The Traditional Ritual Project

Chapter 13
The Traditional Ritual Project

George Khushf

In a series of conference presentations and in the essays for this volume, Orthodox and Confucian scholars argue that ritual is integral to the formation of a well-lived life and constitutive of a well functioning community. Modern societies are viewed as deficient because of their lack of ritual, or because they have the wrong kinds. In contrast, traditional communities are seen as having the vital rituals necessary for human flourishing, and they also provide the language and cultural framework that is needed for appreciating the functions of ritual in human life. These scholars thus look to a general account (or theory) of ritual as the basis for (1) a critique of modern society, and (2) an apologetic for their traditional communities. I will call the project advancing these two elements the *traditional ritual project*, and I will call those who advance this project *traditionalists*.

In this essay I explore some tensions and problems integral to this project. I also show that there are interesting parallels between the traditional ritual project and other projects related to natural law and natural theology. In all of these endeavors, we find tensions between universalizing and particularizing tendencies, and they each present deep problems of incommensurability, privileged epistemic access, and fundamental barriers to entering the set of practices integral to the traditional community. I argue that any resolution of these problems must depend on the specific, ritualized content integral to the particular communities. I will also show that traditionalists cannot provide a general account of ritual without simultaneously moving beyond some of the strong claims about incommensurability. This move in a universalizing direction provides a basis for appreciating some strands of Western philosophy and natural theology that traditionalists want to criticize. However, advocates of these Western strands can also find in the traditional ritual project an orientation and basis for developing these strands of Western philosophy and theology so that they avoid the problematic reductions integral to modernism.

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13.1 Defining the Traditional Ritual Project

There are two inter-related components of the traditional ritual project. The first involves an attempt to understand the rituals integral to a specific tradition, and, with this, to account for the privileged epistemic access and insight available to those who practice the rituals. The second component involves a criticism of modernism, which is seen as deficient in ritual. I will consider each of these components in turn, and then argue that ritual will only be an irreducible, explanatory concept for those who simultaneously advance both of these. Further, I show that each component by itself reflects a tension between universalizing and particularizing tendencies.

In elucidating the nature of ritual, one can begin with specific rituals of the traditional community and then seek to generalize regarding the nature of ritual or, alternatively, one can start with a general account of ritual and then move to an interpretation of the specific rituals of a community. Similarly, in criticizing modernity, one can begin with assumptions integral to modernity and show how these lead to absurdity or one can begin with some general account of human flourishing and show how modernity is deficient with respect to that account. Thus, the two-part structure of the traditional ritual project – and its tension between universalizing and particularizing tendencies – is reflected within, and also reflects, a kind of doubling within each of the components of that project taken individually. Within this complex architectonic, a strategy emerges for addressing problems of legitimation and practice that haunt modernity and its enlightenment project.

13.1.1 Understanding Rituals: On Privileged Epistemic Insight and the Virtue Acquisition Problem

There are two general ways to study ritual. One can immerse oneself within a given tradition, practice the rituals, and by means of this immersion and practice seek to attain whatever the ends are integral to that tradition. In this way, one becomes a student of the rituals; one is tutored by them. The language one uses to understand the rituals is drawn from the specific community where they are situated, and this language is especially tailored toward the appropriate practice and to the realization of the ends integral to those rituals. Here words and deeds, principles and rituals all work together in a harmonious manner. This is the pathway of the "insider," and the process of study is one with that of initiation into a practice.

Alternatively, one can study rituals as an "outsider." Here we have the pathway of the philosopher or social scientist, and even the most sympathetic investigator remains external to the practice. While the ethnographer tries "enter" into the world system of the rituals, we still find a kind of distance that characterizes the outsider. The categories for understanding are not drawn

from the community whose rituals are being studied. In this case, one has a more general account of ritual, with an attendant language that is not tied to the specific tradition one might study. Any specific rituals are simply instances of this general type. They might serve to illustrate the general theory of ritual, but the particular, community-situated rituals (and the tradition-bound language associated with their use) are not essential for understanding ritual more generally.

One of the impulses behind the traditional ritual project is to make the case for the privileged character of traditional rituals, with the attendant need for understanding them in the language and according to the purposes of the specific, traditional community. As Ruiping Fan (Chapter 9) argues, the traditional rituals constitute their own ends; they are thus linked to the internal goods of the associated practice. Although Fan doesn't explicitly highlight the privileged epistemic insight and problems of incommensurability associated with the insider vs. outsider distinction, these clearly are implied by the notion of a practice that Fan utilizes. In that account, there is a sharp distinction between goods internal to a practice (and associated with the idea of a ritual as constitutive, rather than regulative) and those external to a practice. For internal goods, we can only specify them by an activity of a specific kind (directly related to the type being considered, e.g., to a ritual of such and such a kind). These goods "can only be identified and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice in question. Those who lack the relevant experience are incompetent thereby as judges of internal goods" (MacIntyre, 1984, pp. 188–189).

There is clearly a tension between the claims about unique epistemic insight integral to a traditionalist approach to ritual and the general approach to ritual that assumes no specific practices are needed for the more universal understanding. In its strongest form, this apologetic for traditional ritual involves the claim that no general philosophical or social scientific account of ritual is possible. This strong claim about traditional ritual was nicely stated by Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes in her written contributions to the first set of conferences that lead to this volume. (These took place in Hong Kong in early July, 2006; for an overview of these conferences see Chapter 1.) She stated the approach so well that I will quote her at length:

> "When I read what the various authors have reported about scholarly accounts of ritual, I am reminded of Foucault's "the words and the things," where at one point he offers something he calls "a Chinese classification of dogs." It runs like this: "There are big dogs, longhaired dogs, racing dogs, pets, dogs from the imperial breed, very tasty dogs, intelligent dogs and yellow dogs." The point is: the material is categorically a mess. Everything the authors report about ritual research reminds me of this mess.
>
> It is quite a different matter when I look at rituals in a tradition which I know (a little). ... I know the overall purpose of Christian rituals: it is none other than the purpose of all human life: deification. And I also know why that purpose requires rituals. On the one hand, I know the Christian teaching about man as embodied ... fallen ... redeemed ... On the other hand I know what has been revealed about God and [this] therefore makes it clear to me why humans have to engage in ritual efforts. I

know, in other words, that He loves each human and wants to draw him into a relationship of love in a real way; i.e., one that preserves man's freedom, and that Christ destroyed Hades. Moreover, I know that what I can understand about it all has its limits, because God remains a mystery to His human subjects, and that there exists an ascetical method for rendering oneself receptive to a more adequate noetic understanding of it all.

It is all clear as the sun.

Whenever I transcend the religious context which I live, things become opaque, and inventing and systematizing concepts for classifying rituals this way and that is not helpful. (Delkeskamp-Hayes, 2006, p. 24)

Note the following important characteristics associated with this traditional approach to ritual:

Particularism: A traditional approach to ritual involves the language of a particular tradition; for Delkeskamp-Hayes that means the concepts and expressions integral to Orthodoxy. She understands ritual by highlighting the purpose of specific Christian rituals. But this purpose is inseparable from the purpose of all human life: deification. One is thus not really understanding ritual as ritual; or rather, proper understanding of ritual only takes place when one understands what it means to be human, the predicament of humanity (the fall, sin and death), and the redemption that God brings about in Christ Jesus. In Delkeskamp-Hayes' account, we also learn that rituals are somehow used by God to draw humans into a relationship of love; that rituals are associated with an ascetical method, and that what we can know about the scope and character of rituals is limited, because God's purpose is beyond what we can grasp, so our awareness of the various institutions He implemented remains partial.

Incommensurability: Because the logic of ritual is so intimately intertwined with a specific tradition, there is a fundamental incompatibility between accounts of ritual arising in different traditions. From within a tradition, an account of that tradition's rituals will be somewhat clear (commensurate with limited human understanding of God's purpose). But from outside that tradition, the account will seem like Foucault's "Chinese classification of dogs" – it will be "categorically a mess." This means we cannot come up with general philosophical, sociological, or religious historical accounts of ritual. To attempt this would do violence to the specific traditions of ritual, and Delkeskamp-Hayes counsels us to give up that project.

Privileged epistemic access: For Delkeskamp-Hayes (and other traditionalists), understanding ritual is not just a matter of using the appropriate concepts and terms integral to the particular tradition. It is also a matter of practice. There is thus a deep, intrinsic limit on the capacity of outsiders to even understand or appreciate the particular, traditional account. In the end, the traditionalist says: "if you want to understand, come and practice the rituals with us." Practicing rituals is thus a condition of understanding ritual.

Solution of the virtue acquisition problem: Beyond the problems of privileged epistemic insight, there is also a virtue acquisition problem. How does one gain the virtues that are important for authentic human existence/flourishing? Several contributors to this volume highlight this part of the problem, rather than the epistemic concerns (e.g., Chapters 9 and 12). This emphasis upon practice and virtue acquisition seems to fit an important style and orientation of many advocates of the traditional ritual project, and it resonates with their criticism of the conceptual/philosophical orientation of modernism. However, it is also important to appreciate the deep link between the virtue acquisition problem and the problems of privileged epistemic insight and incommensurability. In two ways, virtue and knowledge/insight are related. First, as the above citation from MacIntyre makes clear, knowledge of standards, norms and ends must be integral to a practice and thus a component of the excellences that enable the practice. To this extent, virtue includes knowledge, although it may not be the discursive knowledge of the philosopher (Chapter 3). Thus the virtue acquisition problem is always also a knowledge acquisition problem. Second, as Ping-cheung Lo notes, one of the central elements of ritual concerns the way it reproduces elements of culture "that seldom enter into conscious choice, the realm taken for granted, left outside the limits of debate" (Chapter 8 citing Ebray). Here the "taken for granted realm" is a rich, complex confluence of a host of factors. This "rich density of overdetermined messages and attitudes" lies outside the possible explicit awareness of any human agent. Viewed in this way, "virtue acquisition" cannot be distinguished from initiation into the tradition (the "overdetermined framework") that is itself one with the life of the traditional community (when viewed as extended in space and time).

I think this particularist approach to ritual gets at something deep, something that is in fact essential to ritual and something that makes ritual an important category for addressing the problems inherent in modernity. In the strong version – seen, for example, in the above-mentioned citation from Deskeskamp-Hayes, but also apparent in the earlier versions of other conference presentations – we see the primary concerns and claims that motivate the traditional ritual project: claims about a privileged insight and practice associated with the traditional communities, and about problems of particularism and incommensurability that haunt modernity. However, this traditional approach to ritual also engenders some of its own problems.

First, while it would be valuable to have traditional accounts of the kind Delkeskamp-Hayes suggests, it is not clear what such accounts would entail, especially when they are presented for people who are not members of the traditional community. Do you provide an explanation of specific rituals, present their purpose, and then say something like "but if you really want to understand, come and practice them"? After presenting such accounts for many

specific rituals, can you inductively generalize, and say: "ok, if we look at all these rituals together, we find these are the things they have in common . . ." And from there can you move to an account of the scope and purpose of rituals generally (rather than of specific rituals)? The degree to which such accounts can be successful depends upon the character of the claim about privileged epistemic access. If it is a very strong claim, then outsiders wouldn't get the explanations at all, and it is not clear why they would be advanced, unless they were for other members of the same tradition. In fact, the implication of Delkeskamp-Hayes' account seems to be that conferences like ours, where people from different traditions come together to understand ritual, do not really make much sense. We can't understand each other, and we shouldn't try. Let's all go back to our various communities and practice.

A second problem with the radically particularist account of the traditional ritual project is that it doesn't map to what people were doing at the conferences or to what the essays in this volume attempt to accomplish. It clearly was not what Delkeskamp-Hayes did in her first conference commentary. In fact, the above quoted paragraph (with a little more elaboration) is the closest she came to giving such an account. She said she knows why deification requires ritual; how God uses rituals to draw us into a relationship of love; how rituals are part of an ascetical method, and why we will only have a limited understanding of the scope and limits of ritual. But she didn't tell us these things, nor did any of the other Orthodox participants. (This has been somewhat remedied in the essays for this volume.) Instead, Delkeskamp-Hayes provided eight single-spaced pages of introductory material (before commenting on various essays of the conference) that told a story about the degenerate West, and about how rituals were marginalized, and of three general approaches one can take to ritual. All of this criticism was presented in the form of a philosophical argument that didn't use the categories of her Christian tradition. Similarly, in the essays by other contributors, we get general accounts (i.e., a theory!) of the nature and function of rituals. This theory is then used to interpret how the rituals integral to traditional communities address deficiencies in Western culture or that show how the positive characteristics associated with ritual are fully realized within the traditional community.

We see a similar development among Confucian scholars. Ruiping Fan (Chapter 9) provides a philosophical account of constitutive vs. regulative rules, defining rituals as constitutive. He then considers a problem of virtue acquisition in MacIntyre's philosophy, and develops Confucian rituals as a way of solving that problem. Xianglong Zhang (Chapter 7) attempts to ground filial piety by "analyzing the temporal ways of human existence in a phenomenological perspective." The closest we get to a traditional account of the kind Delkeskamp-Hayes suggests is found among those who are not strong traditionalists (those she would classify as modernists), for example, in the work of Jonathan Chan (Chapter 12). If I take the role of an ethnographer, and seek to clarify what might be called the "traditional ritual project" of the traditionalists,

then I need an account that makes sense of what they are doing in their essays and what we were doing at the conferences.

Finally, and most significantly, even if Delkeskamp-Hayes and other traditionalists had provided us with the kind of particularist account she advocates, this would still *necessarily* have been informed by a broader philosophical, critical perspective, one that would have remained implicit in the traditional account of ritual. This problem will arise in any account that makes "ritual" into an irreducible, constitutive concept for describing human flourishing. If what really matters are the particular practices performed in traditional communal settings, then the general concept and discussion of ritual adds nothing. What matters is this or that practice, or these sets of practices and beliefs as opposed to others that are not appropriate. If one goes beyond this and discusses ritual generally, then one must mean something by the term: it will pick out some human phenomena and do this for some reason. We must then make explicit what is meant by "ritual," and why it has been defined in this way. Here the context of discourse will be important. When we more carefully consider the claims integral to essays in this volume, we will find that "ritual" functions something like the way "reason" functioned in the Enlightenment project: it designates a set of human patterns or dynamics (whether of practice or thought) that are seen to be integral to human flourishing. When the term "ritual" is used, it thus means something. If it is used as an irreducible concept for characterizing an essential aspect of human life, then that meaning will depend on the general notion of human life and its character. Our task is then to make explicit that implicit anthropology.

When ritual is used in this general way, it necessarily goes beyond the more parochial endeavor of speaking only to those who are members of a particular community. Consider, for example, Tristram Engelhardt's (Chapter 3) definition of ritual:

> For the purpose of this essay, a ritual is understood as a set of routinized bodily movements, including the making of sounds constituting an action that is repeated and that conveys, and is meant to convey, meaning. Rituals are shorthand summaries, recognitions, and instantiations of complex fabrics of commitment and purpose. . . . [N]ot all routines rich in tacit knowledge are rituals. Nonetheless, all human actions are proto-ritualistic: they can be given ritual significance. It is at least the symbolic character of rituals that distinguishes rituals from mere routines. . . . Humans through rituals render symbols incarnate and chart their place within the often conflicting symbols, moral commitments, and metaphysical understandings that attempt to define the human cultural environment.

This is, in fact, a beautiful example of natural-theological argumentation. It is framed in a general philosophical idiom, and descriptively presents fundamental aspects of human existence, showing how the complex dynamics integral to human rationality (e.g., language, symbol use) are, at the core, resonant with ritual. We get a "proto-ritual" constitutive dynamic that finds itself explicitly within ritual. At the same time, we find key terms which show how the more general philosophical account is informed by traditional Orthodox understandings of ritual; for example, the way ritual "renders symbols incarnate."

Engelhardt seeks to explicitly distance his account of ritual from other Western Christian attempts to provide a general framework for the moral law or general knowledge of the human condition. Thus he argues:

> [R]ituals are in everyday life largely pre-discursive. They have a contingency unlike the norms claimed by the proponents of natural law. They lack the reflective character of natural theology, although there can be a reflection on the cardinal roles of religious ritual. Ritual behavior is an epiphany of man's incarnate, symbol-creating nature, where symbols are understood as partially iconic signs that usually take shape under the impress of history and context. ... Rituals in enacting or embodying values and moral commitments can serve as an induction into a life of virtue (e.g., rituals that show respect of parents can instill filial piety). However, contemporary philosophical explorations of morality devote little attention to the place and significance of ritual or ceremonial behavior. This major dimension of the embodied character and life of human values and of the symbolic character of human interaction is largely discounted. There is no developed philosophy of ritual, though there is theology of ritual in the sense of liturgical theology, an enterprise quite different from natural theology (Chapter 3)

By highlighting the contingency of ritual, Engelhardt attempts to strongly distinguish the rituals integral to the traditional ritual project from the norms integral to natural law and from the knowledge integral to natural theology. (Both of those are regarded as variants of the doomed Enlightenment project; e.g., Engelhardt, 1996, 2000, with MacIntyre, 1984.) But this strategy for distinguishing his efforts from those of Western Christian thought is problematic for two reasons. First, Engelhardt does not just define ritual in terms of contingency. He defines it in a broader way, and sees it as "an epiphany of man's incarnate, symbol-creating nature." In the same way, advocates of natural law or natural theology allow for contingency (e.g., in norms or knowledge), and they would likewise see the norms or the knowledge as an epiphany of essential aspects of human nature. Second, Engelhardt doesn't sufficiently reflect upon the conditions of his "philosophical anthropology," and on the role that his general account of *homo ritualis* plays in characterizing what distinguishes ritual from the norms integral to natural law or the knowledge of the natural theologian. In his account, he doesn't reject philosophy, but rather seeks to revise and expand it, so that it is made responsive to ritual in ways that Western philosophy has not been. While ritual may not be discursive in the way reflection on natural law or natural theology are, Engelhardt's general philosophy of ritual – and thus his reflections on ritual – is discursive in exactly that same way.

If we go through this volume's essays on ritual, we find in all of them these general frameworks. "Ritual" is defined not just by the traditions and practices of a specific community, but also according to a general philosophical ethics and action theory, usually with some contrast class between non-ritualized and ritualized communities. And all of the essays have an implicit or explicit contrast between Western anti-ritualistic modernism and traditional (Orthodox or Confucian) ritualized cultures. This contrast class between the impoverished West and the vital East is a necessary, constitutive aspect of the accounts of ritual that are provided by the traditionalists. To the degree the general account

of ritual depends on this contrast class – and the associated model of the West and its deficiencies – to that same degree it does not just depend on the insights arising in the traditionalist's particular community. There is a criticism of the West that arises out of those communities, and we need to consider how that criticism is developed.

13.1.2 Criticism of Western Modernity

There are two ways to criticize a philosophical system or culture. The first is to conditionally accept its premises, and then show that these lead to inconsistencies or to implications that an advocate of the tradition would consider deeply problematic. Here the philosophical system or culture is reduced to absurdity. This is largely the mode of argument Tristram Engelhardt levels against Western culture in his books on the *Foundations of Bioethics* (1996), *Secular Humanism* (1991), and *Christian Bioethics* (2000). Alternatively, one can criticize a culture or philosophical system by standing outside of it, presenting some generally accessible account of what is good or true, and then showing that the culture or philosophical system is deficient in relation to this norm. That is what Engelhardt did in the above referenced account of ritual.

The first approach is compatible with the strong claims of incommensurability and privileged epistemic access, because one need only conditionally accept the premises of the tradition one criticizes, and that only for the purpose of showing the premises inconsistent or having reprehensible implications. But the second approach is clearly not compatible with the strong claims about incommensurability, because the very definition and account of ritual involves positive claims about what is missing in the deficient tradition. In the traditional ritual project we see criticisms of the second kind, and this means there must be some general philosophical account in the background, which either enables or arises from the attempt to mediate the privileged insight to those outside the traditional community. It is for this reason that the apologetic strand and the critique of modernity are both necessary – both are constitutive features of the traditional ritual project. "Ritual" becomes the category (like "reason" in older natural theological traditions) for articulating what is deficient in modern societies and what is provided within the traditional community.

For this essay, I provisionally understand modernism as the attempt to provide a universal account of human nature, community, and flourishing in a way that is independent from specific, contingent historical traditions (Lyotard, 1984). Modernism involves a presumed independence from specific traditions in two ways. First, the universal account enables understanding of the full array of specific traditions, and is thus appropriate for all. Second, the universal account is not dependent upon a specific tradition for its validity. We thus have a universality of legitimation and of the scope of application. One reasons from nowhere and everywhere, and thus the account is valid for all

contexts. Modernism thus involves a very specific kind of universality, which is attained by a prior act of negating what is contingent and particular. Specifically, this negation involves a rejection of any special revelation that gives tradition-specific, historical knowledge of God's will and purpose for the world. With this loss of tradition, there is a concomitant reinterpretation of morality so that it does not depend upon a general account of human purposes and functions (MacIntyre, 1984). As a result of losing this content, virtue becomes meaningless and ethical discourse degenerates into a crude emotivism regarding values. In place of virtues, ethical discourse turns to either consequential considerations related to the optimization of some hedonic good (such as a discrete pleasure, as with Jeremy Bentham, or a more complex happiness, as with John Stuart Mill); or we get an orientation toward individual autonomy and an associated "authentic existence" that highlights spontaneous, self-determination (Immanuel Kant). In both cases, modernism involves a rejection of ritual, which is seen as a vestige of the contingent factors that are to be transcended. The resulting anomie and fragmentation is simply the flip side of the emotivism and individualism (MacIntyre, 1984; Taylor, 1992).

It is in this way that nearly all of the authors in this volume interpret modernism. Modern societies are then generally constituted by people who embrace modernism; e.g., by people who reject contingent historical values and practices, aspire to a universal account of human nature, and so on. In response, traditionalists seek to highlight the importance of exactly those contingent factors that are rejected. By means of their general philosophical accounts, traditionalists seek to provide an anthropology and ethic that makes clear why particular rituals are necessary for human flourishing.

There are two ways of criticizing modern societies as deficient with respect to ritual, and these rest on distinctly different claims about the pervasiveness of rituals.

Claim 1: *Rituals play a central role in all societies, including modern societies, but this role is not appreciated because of the modernist mindset. As a result, modern societies end up with a fragmented, chaotically ordered set of rituals rather than a coherent set that is ordered toward a rich and complete flourishing of human life*. This claim about rituals is clearly seen in the Western contributors to this volume; i.e., in Mark Cherry, H. Tristram Engelhardt, Ana Iltis, David Solomon, and Griffin Trotter. For these authors, the problem is not that we lack rituals. They are present everywhere. They are present in performatives like "you're under arrest" or "he hit a homerun" as long as these are uttered by the right people (a police officer or umpire) and when appropriate institutional and social conditions are satisfied. They are found in greetings, sporting events, chess games, graduations, and bedtime prayers. In fact, they pervade life and provide the condition for a host of uniquely human abilities (Chapter 10). The problem is modernists don't recognize and reflect upon them, and thus don't consciously and rationally address what is important for their own flourishing.

Modernity thus involves a mindset that is blind to a constitutive feature of human life.

Note how this criticism works with a specific interpretation of modernism: first, we have a *broad definition of ritual,* which, in turn, leads to seeing them everywhere. To account for why we are blind to these pervasive rituals, we then get a story about how we have a philosophical bent that makes us inattentive to embodiment and to the contingent, material and social conditions of life. We then counter the overly conceptual, philosophical bent of modernity by bringing into view the social and material conditions (including ritual) on which these various abilities are dependent.

While this approach highlights the importance of contingency and ritual, it says nothing about the value of specific rituals, and it is not rooted in a specific tradition. By virtue of this presumed universality, the approach can be taken as an extension or development of modernism itself. In fact, a similar approach can be found in some of the social scientific literature (e.g., Durkheim, 1995; or, more recently, Collins, 2004). As an anthropological or sociological critique, we clearly see antecedents in several prominent strands of modernist thought (or in post-modernism, if, as with Collins, 2005, we loose any grounding for the explanatory scheme). We can thus distinguish between kinds of modernism, and see the sociological accounts of ritual as one variant that is attentive to rituals.

Traditionalists then add to the sociological accounts a distinction between the right and wrong kinds of rituals. They then relate the right kind to some criterion that is integral to the goods of their specific traditional community; for example, Engelhardt (Chapter 3) will relate right rites (the good rituals) to the Divine Liturgy and to a proper orientation toward and worship of God.

Claim 2: *Modern life lacks ritual. Because of this lack, modern societies are deficient in the specific goods that arise from rituals.* This kind of claim is clearly seen in Eastern contributors to this volume; e.g., in Jonathan Chan, Ruiping Fan, Ping-cheung Lo, Tangjia Wang, and Xianglong Zhang. Fan (Chapter 9) takes some pains to restrict the meaning of ritual to the specific kinds emphasized by Confucians. Thus the sporting rituals discussed by Solomon (Chapter 10) are excluded, because they do not constitutively define what is essential to being Confucian, and they are not oriented toward the goods of relationship as such. For similar reasons, other ritualized practices are excluded (this is partially done by a stipulated distinction between rites and rituals). In a similar way, Lo (Chapter 8) is concerned with specific rituals that are not found in modern societies; for example, rituals of offering or of initiation (capping). Although Lo also utilizes general anthropological definitions that take rituals in the broad way associated with the first claim, his emphasis is upon what is absent, and the term is closely associated with the specific rituals that are missing, despite those general definitions. He also provides some bridgework between the Orthodox and Confucian scholars; for example, by regarding the definition of *li* (ritual) in terms of the Principle

of Heaven and thus as an analogue to "liturgy is theology" in the Orthodox. Wang (Chapter 6) oscillates between a general western concept of ritual (used when he cites western sociological and philosophical sources) and a narrower concept of ritual (as rightly ordering practice) when he discusses Confucian sources. The semantic shifts in his essay related to the scope of the term demonstrates the divergent meanings in the western and eastern literatures that Wang discusses.

Note how this Chinese interpretation of *ritual* (associated with claim 2) highlights a different feature of modernism and modern societies. In rejecting contingent, historically based traditions, modernists ceased to practice most rituals. As a result, most of life is unritualized. Thus modern societies lack the forms of life and virtue that are evoked by the rituals. To show that rituals are absent, they have to be narrowly defined. The definition is often closely associated with the specific purpose of ritual that is identified with the Confucian account. While modern people might have some deficient analogue, found for example in a fraternity eating binge or the quasi-rituals of a football game, these are not true rituals, because they lack the relation-oriented or transcendent aspect that is constitutive of a true ritual (Chapter 6). This kind of criticism reflects core concerns of traditionalists and it highlights features in traditional communities that might be lost in modern societies. But here the key conceptual work is done by the particular content that marks off traditional rituals from the secular or pseudo-rituals of modern society, not by a general concept of ritual. Thus this form of criticism involves a privileged particular content and perspective and this very particularity undermines the presumed universal legitimation and scope associated with the modernist project. We then see a kind of separate attempt to make this distinctive feature of ritual what is needed as a response to some deficiency that is derived from a general philosophical anthropology and ethic.

Note the tension between these two forms of criticism. In the first, we get a broad definition of rituals and see them everywhere. In the second, we get a narrow definition of ritual, and find that modern society lacks them. But in both forms of criticism, we have some additional content or criterion that is drawn from the traditional community and its rituals, and this is used to specify how the recovery of ritual integral to the traditional ritual project might address central deficiencies in modernism.

13.1.3 On the Difference Between the Way Confucian and Orthodox Scholars Advance the Traditional Ritual Project

The U.S. and European authors in this volume consistently used a broad definition of ritual (associated with claim 1), while Chinese authors advanced narrower definitions (associated with claim 2). The differences are clear enough

that they are probably not accidental. We thus have an interesting empirical result that emerged from the conferences, and we should consider some of the reasons for this difference. It must somehow reflect background assumptions that inform the work of the various authors. The question is whether these background assumptions are integral to the traditional communities – Orthodox versus Confucian – or whether they reflects more general cultural and linguistic conventions. While this question calls for a deeper analysis than I can provide here, there are reasons to think that both particular/traditional and general cultural/linguistic factors played a role, and their joint influence enables us to better understand how universal and particular aspects must be integrated in any account of ritual.

Regarding the general cultural and linguistic factors: the editors of this volume note in their introduction (Chapter 1) that the Chinese word for ritual, *li*, has a more positive valence than the English word. This reflects a Western cultural history critical of ritual, as well as specific linguistic characteristics; for example, there is a clear conceptual link between *li* (ritual) and its homophone *li* (good order). Here there is a parallel to another link between *yi* (justice or righteousness) and its homophone, *yi* (right, proper, appropriate, suitable). As Wang (1999, p. 248) notes, one term can be defined in terms of its homophone. Fan's coupling of ritual and principle can be viewed as a general coupling of the twofold *li* (ritual) with the twofold *yi* (righteousness); jointly they constitute the humanity, *ren*, which is the supreme mark of the Confucian sage. (On the original coupling of *li* and *yi*, see Chapter 6) At the general linguistic/cultural level, we can thus see an association of ritual and right in Chinese that tends to restrict the term so it is only used of what is right (claim 2). By calling something a ritual, there is an implied positive evaluation, which implicitly designates the object of the term as something that serves to rightly order and orient human life. This helps explain why authors like Fan (Chapter 9) are so careful to distinguish rituals (those things that rightly order life) from all of those other things that seem like rituals, but are not. In English, however, the link between ritual and right is not apparent. To the contrary, the English term is used of practices that are opaque, particular, and contingent. And if ritual simply concerns what is particular and contingent, then it encompasses all sorts of practices, both good and bad. Thus we see the broader approach to ritual among U.S. and European authors.

While this linguistic and cultural valence for *ritual* goes a long way toward explaining the differences between Eastern and Western authors, we can nevertheless ask why the linguistic association between ritual and order/right-relatedness is explicit within the Chinese language, but not in English. The mere presence of the homophone associations is not enough. As Engelhardt (Chapter 3) notes, there are similar associations in Western languages; for example, between the English word, *rite*, and its homophone, *right*. Why are the phonological and etymological associations more explicit for the Chinese, when all of the languages show some evidence of earlier couplings of terms and concepts? Engelhardt and others attribute the negative assessments in the

West to historical developments such as Protestant and Enlightenment reactions against ritual. But these reactions already presuppose a decoupling of ritual and right. We should thus look for other explanations.

One partial answer might be found in the role that the term, *ritual*, might have played within contexts where there was still a more positive valence for the term. Within early Christian contexts, for example, there were sharp disputes over right rites versus wrong ones. This context of dispute makes *rite* and *ritual* into general categories, and it requires some additional criterion for distinguishing the good from the bad variants. In other words, the exclusive character of the right rites can lead to a distinction among rites, and with this a concomitant change in the connotation or intension of the term so it reflects the expanded denotation or extension.

Within the Eastern tradition, however, there is a more eclectic, inclusive harmonizing of rites and traditions, and this can be already traced back to Confucius. He sought to sift through the somewhat nebulous set of rituals he found in his own day and determinate the true content of those rites by re-establishing the historically pure variants associated with a previous dynasty. This, in turn, provides a specific orientation toward time: nebulous and diffuse traditions are seen as a kind of historical drift from the pure variants (the norm). The historically privileged variants can then be reasserted as the right rites, but these don't exclude the current diffuse rites. Rather, the right rites can be interpreted as an intensification and recovery of what is more diffusely present in the current, but deficient culture. Ritual becomes the primary means of differentiation. Current Confucians seem to want a recovery of a similar kind (e.g., Chapters 6, 7, and 9).

If this difference between the more exclusive versus inclusive approaches to the right rites roughly captures particular claims that Orthodox and Confucians might make about their respective traditions, then the differences in the interpretation of ritual (broad versus narrow) and the general cultural/linguistic differences (positive versus negative/neutral) are also reflections of these differences between Christian and Confucian thought. We see how the historically influential traditions have informed the categories and language of their respective cultures, even when these cultures have drifted away from those traditions (MacIntyre, 1984 clearly documents this drift in western thought, and Chapter 6 discusses a similar drift that is now taking place in Chinese thought).

It is interesting to note that the exclusivist commitments and assertions of Christians – with their associated distinctions between orthodox and heretic, right and wrong – leads, in turn, to a linguistic usage that fosters recognition of a distinction between right and rites, a relativizing of ritual, and an appreciation and even respect of different viewpoints (e.g., eastern vs. western rites for Orthodox and Catholics). This has enabled Western thinkers to critically reflect upon the degree to which specific, historically contingent rituals genuinely embody what is essential to the tradition. (In fact, much of early Protestant criticism of rituals was not of ritual generally, but of specific rituals and

traditions such as those associated with indulgences or penance. This kind of criticism can be traced back to Jesus' own criticism of some Jewish rituals; for example, of those that put donation to the temple ahead of honoring parents, or rituals of purity or eating above the love of neighbor.) In a similarly curious manner, the more inclusivist commitments and assertions of Confucians leads to a diminished recognition of difference and an equation of ritual and right that prevents recognition of sharp distinctions between right and wrong rituals. (Instead, the wrong rituals are simply not designated as rituals, and there is an associated but unnamed allowance for all sorts of variable rites and practices). In these ways, inclusivity can work against the recognition of difference, while exclusivity can work in favor of it.

The diversifying versus homogenizing tendencies of Western vs. Eastern traditions is clearly manifest in this volume. For the U.S. contributors, rituals are everywhere. We don't need to add more. Rather, we need to discriminate among their kinds and functions (Chapter 2); recognize the important role that they play in enabling our capacities (Chapter 10); and reassert the central rituals that integrate and order the mess of contingent practices that we currently find (Chapter 4). For Engelhardt (Chapter 3), everything depends on recognizing and practicing the right rite: i.e., the Divine Liturgy. This integrates life as a whole; orients and situates the individual within space and time; and rightly relates that individual to the God who created all.

For Chinese contributors, a recovery of ritual adds something that is missing (e.g., Chapters 8 and 9). It thus doesn't require that one reject anything (at least that element is not explicit and apparent). Fan breaks off from MacIntyre's philosophical analysis at exactly the place where MacIntyre shifts from practices (with their internal goods) to the task of understanding "life as a whole" (the virtue of integrity), and from there to the situation of practices and that life within history (time and space). As Chan (Chapter 12) notes, this communal and historical situatedness is what the Chinese take as their basic assumption (the "differential mode of association"). The task is rather to harmonize individual practices with this taken-for-granted communal and social context, and there is a fluid boundary between what is seen as individual and communal (this reflects ones own kinship network). But for the Western authors, everything depends on rightly discerning which strands are good, and harmonizing with the right strands; this work of sifting and situating is a central function of ritual. Eastern authors thus take as a starting place what Western authors take as a goal.

Here I have somewhat overdrawn the contrast, and a more extended discussion would require a far richer and more nuanced account of the diverse claims. For my purposes, I only wanted to show that behind the shared agenda of the traditional ritual project, there are also some important differences that depend upon the specific, particular commitments of Confucians and Christians. If we want to come up with some general, agreed-upon account of the traditional ritual project, we thus need to carefully balance the universal and tradition-bound elements. To navigate this middle line, we need an account of ritual that

is both general (encompassing the broad Western variants), yet allowing for specification and refinement (which allows the term to be used in the narrower way found among Chinese authors).

13.2 A Preliminary Definition of Ritual

When either the expansive or narrow approach to ritual is used by itself, the traditionalist encounters problems. If the broad definition is used, then the deficiency of modernism cannot be defined as a lack of ritual – they are all over the place. Instead, the deficiency must be defined as one of intention (e.g., lack of an appropriate orientation toward God or Heaven) or as one of awareness (e.g., we don't appreciate the role rituals play in extending our capacities or inculcating virtue) or as one of integration (e.g., we don't have the ritual or rituals that rightly orients and coordinates all other rituals). But in each of these cases, the basic problem is either made into a philosophical one, e.g., a problem in understanding or awareness or intention; or, if we introduce some criterion for coordination of rituals or distinguishing good rituals from bad ones, the real work in the criticism and analysis is done by the additional criterion, not by the concept of ritual.

On the other extreme, if we work with a narrow approach to ritual, then we need to introduce some additional content to explain why practices that seem to be rituals are not, in fact, genuine rituals; for example, we might identify solemnity of practice or religious- or relation-orientation as the defining characteristic of true rituals. We then get the problems of particularism and incommensurability that we saw when discussing Delkeskamp-Hayes account. In all cases, the key work in the criticism is not done by the concept of ritual, but rather by the additional criteria and content that marks off the real rituals from the pseudo-rituals or that is used to distinguish the special features of the traditional rituals from the modern forms.

We thus find that the traditional ritual project must involve two, seemingly contradictory components. Instead of selecting a broad or a narrow definition and approach to ritual, the advocate of the traditional ritual approach needs both the broad and the narrow approach; and also needs both a universal definition and one rooted in and oriented toward a specific tradition. Without the general philosophical or sociological account of ritual, we might have an intra-communal, parochial discourse about specific rituals, but we wouldn't get general reflection on rituals. Without the special, particular content, we might get something like a sociological appreciation of ritual, but we would never get past modernism. The traditionalist thus needs some specific content that is drawn from within the traditional community, and which provides the basis for distinguishing proper rituals from those that are either only partial or pseudo-rituals or rituals that are in some way opaque or deficient in their coordination or orientation. If we lose either side – the general or the

particular – then we cannot make sense of what traditionalists are trying to accomplish in their essays for this volume.

I would now like to suggest that this strange middle status for our concepts and analysis of ritual – between the universal and particular – is not just an accidental feature arising from what I've called the traditional ritual project. In fact, we will find this strange combination in any account that sees ritual as both irreducible and explanatory. Further, this middle status gets at an important part of the phenomenology of ritual, and it enables us to provide a provisional, general definition of ritual. I'll now present the argument for these claims in three steps: I first introduce a distinction between formal and material definitions of ritual. Second, I provide a general criticism of the sociological approaches to ritual. Finally, I will show why any account that sees ritual as irreducible and explanatory will have this middle status.

13.2.1 The Formal/Material Distinction

In our attempt to understand rituals we need some way of distinguishing the universal and the particular, and also some way of integrating them. One way to do this can be based on a related distinction between abstract, formal claims about rituals and concrete, material claims. Material claims relate to the content of specific rituals; for example, Confucian rituals related to the parent-child relation have as their content specific norms and ends integral to being a parent, a child, and their relation. These might be only accessible to the person who lives within a traditional community and practices the appropriate rituals. However, formal knowledge of the general scope and character of rituals might not be dependent upon specific practices. These might be understood in a philosophical manner, and might be universally understandable. Viewed in this way, one might have a broad, universal account of ritual – this would give the formal definition, and be minimal in content. But specific rituals would involve a material content that could only be understood by those who practice them. We thus have one strategy for bringing together the universal and particular, and for accounting for the epistemic privilege and initiation into virtue characteristic of traditional communities.

In one of Ruiping Fan's conference presentations (2006), he attempted to understand rituals in this manner. He distinguished between constitutive and regulative rules. He then argued that rituals, especially the Confucian minute and ceremonial rituals, should be understood as constitutive. Regulative rules are open, in that they do not have defined beginnings and ends, and they presuppose some antecedent content that is then regulated by the rule. In contrast, constitutive rules require a system, and they bring into being the content. Thus, according to Fan, one only fully becomes a father or son by means of the rituals.

> For Confucius . . . names are performative and creative. A name creates a new form of existence (distinguished from a mere natural state) shaped by a system of constitutive rules (identifying the "objective" behavior or "norms" of an individual under the name): for example, a man doing such and such things and saying such and such words under such and such relations with others counts as a father. Hence, "the word 'father' caries the implication that the father will 'act like a father' as well as the assumption that the language will provide information on how to do so" (Schwartz, p. 92). If there were no constitutive rules for the name 'father,' no individual could be called 'father.' In other words, when an individual is called 'father,' he receives descriptions or specifications through the system of constitutive rules defining the name of 'father.' (Fan, 2006, p. 6)

Because the names and the reference of the content only arise in the context of the performance, one cannot understand or critically reflect upon the material content of the rituals from outside the traditional community. Because the rules are constitutive (not regulative), one also cannot critically reflect upon the material content while one is practicing them. We thus must have an unreflective practice, which then leads to the appropriate awareness among those who appropriately perform the rituals. Presumably these individuals then make up the community, which critically reflects upon the rituals. Fan is thus critical of New-Confucians who focus on moral principles like *ren* (humanity) and *yi* (righteousness) and think these can be appropriately understood apart from the practice of the rituals. He advances a recovery of a pervasive use of the rituals.

In a similar way, Engelhardt (Chapter 3) identifies rituals with pre-discursive practices, and he highlights non-discursive forms of knowledge that are made possible for those who practice the rituals (see also Engelhardt, 2000). This material content would be barred to those outside of the traditional community.

While Fan's account provides a justification for the privileged epistemic access associated with the material content of the rituals, he assumes that the formal aspects of ritual and their general character can be understood in a philosophical manner. In his contribution to this volume, Fan (Chapter 9) advances more of a mediating position, attempting to show how Confucian principles (e.g., of *ren*, meaning "humanity") work together with the practice of rituals. But he still frames his account of this mediation with a philosophical introduction, this time drawn from MacIntyre on virtue, rather than from John Searle on constitutive vs. regulative rules. In both cases, he does not sufficiently reflect upon how the general formal account is related to the particular material content. We thus get a strange disconnect between (a) the abstract, philosophical account of ritual, which is universally accessible and provides a general notion of ritual, and (b) the material content of rituals, which is particular and only accessible to those engaged in their practice.

I think this formal vs. material content distinction moves in the right direction, but there are some problems with the way it is framed by Fan and others. This is also a problem in the virtue theory of MacIntyre, which informs Fan's more recent analysis (at least if we just focus on the first stage of MacIntyre's argument, related to practices, and don't consider how these are integrated in a person's whole life and how they are historically situated within developing

traditions). In MacIntyre's ethic, the problem is related to the sharp distinction between internal and external goods (a distinction that resonates with Searle's distinction between constitutive and regulative rules, since internal goods are constituted by their associated practices). If the goods internal to a specific practice (and arising from a particular ritual or set of rituals) have no relation to those goods outside of that practice, then the general account of ritual can play no role in justifying the specific practice and ritual. If the formal aspect of ritual is not related in some way to the specific material content of ritual, we still have no basis for solving the core problems integral to modernism or at the heart of the traditional ritual project. How could a Confucian ever justify the specific rituals to someone who is not a Confucian?

When we consider specific Confucian rituals, however, we find that they do not have a material content that is completely new in relation to the content and general understanding of people who are not Confucians. Is there really no relation between the general, biological facts of fatherhood and the normative facts of fatherhood integral to the constitutive rules of Confucianism? It seems that every robust tradition – including the Confucian and Orthodox – assumes some antecedent world, with an associated account of nature, culture, and so on. Engelhardt speaks of a proto-ritual dimension that is taken up within ritual and presumably transformed and perfected. One of the central functions of ritual is to harmonize and integrate the antecedent strands. This, in turn, means that rituals play both constitutive and regulative roles. These dual roles will be found in an anthropology, politic, and cosmology; for example, we will get some account of natural desires – for food and drink, sex, and so on – and then of how these are appropriately ordered (or put to death) within, and by means of the rituals. Further, there will be many rituals related to the parent-child relations; some will relate to eating, others to education, and so on. Each of these will play a partially regulative role in relation to the others, and that will mean there is an openness within all rituals, both to more philosophical notions and to other rituals. MacIntyre's ethic moves toward addressing these by expanding his analysis from a specific practice to the integration of practices in a whole life. He then moves further outward to a consideration of a historical tradition. This three stage account of virtue complements what is needed for a full account of ritual, and it indicates how the general philosophical reflection might work together with the general account of ritual.

We also see seeds of mediation when we start on the side of the general formal account. Fan's strong formal/material distinction already assumes that philosophical principles will function in a partially regulative manner for ritual practices. When he says that the minute and ceremonial rituals are constitutive and not regulative, he proposes a philosophical principle that tells how the rituals are to be practiced. Similarly, when he outlines how a moral principle like *ren* works together with the practice of the rituals, he situates this account within a more general philosophical ethic, and he develops the joint working of Confucian ethical principles and rituals as an answer to a virtue acquisition problem that is only recognized and appreciated by means of the formal account.

From these considerations, we see that a formal account must relate to the material content in a more positive way, which is yet to be specified. Before attempting to provide my own formal definition and work out how it might be related to the material content of a specific tradition, I first want to briefly consider why the needed formal account cannot be fully independent from a particular tradition, and thus why we cannot hope for a purely modernist solution.

13.2.2 Another Side of Modernism: A Critique of Sociological Ritual Theory

Within modernism, ritual can either be irreducible or explanatory, but not both. Here I will generally accept the arguments of Delkeskamp-Hayes, Engelhardt, and others who suggest that for the philosophical traditions of the West, ritual has not been a central explanatory category for understanding human life and flourishing. Western philosophical accounts don't see themselves as dependent upon rituals; rituals do not provide the conditions for understanding and action. Such a dependence would undermine the universality of legitimation and scope of application integral to the modernist project. And while rituals might play a role, for example, in disciplining the desires or forming a community (as Bell, Chapter 11 suggests), these functions are purely instrumental, and they are governed by more transparent intentions and logics of practical rationality that do the real foundational work. Philosophical variants of modernism thus entail full freedom with respect to rituals. Explanations of ritual might be provided in terms of other things, for example, their utility. But in the end, rituals will not and cannot do foundational work. Rituals are in these cases not irreducible, primitive terms in an explanatory framework.

There is, however, another strand of modernism that was not addressed in the conference essays, and for which ritual is irreducible. But for this strand, ritual cannot be consistently explanatory. In sharp contrast to the philosophically oriented accounts, sociologists see the concepts and logics of practical rationality as a reflection of social structures and practices. For example, in the work of Emile Durkheim (1995) ideas and conscious reasoning – all that of which a person is aware – cannot be understood in their own terms. Behind these lie various social practices. To "explain" the ideas and reasoning, one shows how they arise from the underlying social patterns and practices.

Such strategies of sociological explanation might take a more historical, diachronic form (as in Durkheim), where current patterns of rationality reflect more primitive social structures, or it might take more functionalist, synchronic form (as in Talcott Parsons, 2002 or Robert Merton, 1968), where one only understands a specific idea or ritual in the light of the whole structure or constellation of society. (Here there are important parallels with Fan's account of constitutive rules.) In more structuralist variants (as with Levi-Strauss, 2000, and his followers), there is some deep code, of which any specific ritual or

instance is but a part. Here ritual is seen as a way of equilibriating some perturbation of the original structure. In these accounts, ritual is irreducible, and it plays a role in explanation. The explanation is reversed: the rituals explain the logic and concepts. But we then lack warrant for the sociological explanations, and for explanation generally. These must then be nothing more than equilibriating mechanisms for other social structures and practices.

To more clearly see the problem with these accounts – and why they ultimately must give up any claim to explain – we can consider the influential micro-sociological account of ritual provided by Randall Collins (2004). He follows other sociologists in regarding social practices as primary, and seeing individuals and their ideas as epiphenomenal. For him, the individual is simply a "quasi-transient flux in time and space." Instead, the situation is made primary, and individuals are derived from situations. The task is then to discover how the individual arises from the social. In doing this, Collins seeks to show that all morality, agency, and rationality are constructs. In his analysis, ritual is defined as "a mechanism of mutually focused emotion and attention producing a momentarily shared reality, which thereby generates solidarity and symbols of group membership." For Collins, the key is to not just look at one ritual in isolation, but the "interaction ritual chains," which provide the mechanisms for generating the diverse social phenomena.

While Collins provides a fundamental, irreducible role for rituals, his account is ultimately self-defeating, because he does not explicitly consider the material content of the rituals and social practices that would justify the logics of explanation he utilizes. In the end, the only warrant he gives for his explanations involves a kind of hedonistic self-legitimation: he simply claims that his account offers "more emotional energy in exploration" than a "conservative stance," which gives credence to traditional notions of theoretical and practical rationality. Again, in his words, "IR theory" [the theory of interaction ritual chains] is "a set of symbolic representations riding on its surge of emotional energy." I'm not exactly sure what this means, but I think it is something like: "Hey Dude, this theory gives me a head rush." And if theory follows the ritual chains, and if we have no privileged chains, then the "IR theory" must also follow from contingent, ritual chains and, with this recognition, must give up any claim to universality. The sociological theory thus faces a deep problem of consistency and legitimation, one that leads from modernism to the so-called post-modern condition. (In fact, Lyotard's [1984] diagnosis of the crisis in legitimation reflects the kind of recursive self-refutation found in accounts such as those of Collins.)

While these sociological accounts of ritual are problematic when taken by themselves, they do appropriately highlight features that are missing in the more philosophically oriented variants of modernism, features that are important for the traditional ritual project. Most significantly, they involve an appreciation of how rituals might function socially, both in sustaining forms of communal interaction that are at risk, and in creating new forms of community. Further, they provide fruitful accounts of how ideas and reasons might arise

from, reflect, and reinforce ritualized patterns of practice and social structures. Their failure arises when they refuse to identify a privileged context of ritual and community, which might justify the sociological claims that must themselves be grounded in specific rituals and social practices. And it is just on this point that traditional communities might provide a distinct advance over the non-traditional, modernist contexts of sociological reflection.

13.2.3 Ritual as a Middle Term in the Apologetic of Tradition

We can now make some generalizations about what a sufficient account of ritual should entail, at least if the account is to advance the traditional ritual project. Rituals are a kind of habitual or customary practice, but not all practices are rituals. Rituals designate a practice type, and they are in some sense ahead of the conceptual reflection and understanding that arises from them. For this reason, rituals are not fully transparent, either to those who perform them or to outsiders who observe and seek to understand the performance. In contrast to a positivistically prescribed rule or statute, which is obeyed solely because it is externally imposed, rituals have a kind of internal validation. People feel compelled to perform them, and the reasons for this compulsion are not always fully clear. By this definition, a custom or a protocol that is fully transparent to understanding is not a ritual. The same is true for a practice that is only externally compelled, like a statute obeyed solely because one fears the consequences of not obeying. In this case, we would get a repetitive practice that is not transparent, but the custom would have no internal legitimation. Our goal is thus to appreciate this strange coupling of opacity and internal validation that is integral to ritual.

At this stage a comment is needed about the status of the definition I just proposed. I present it as a universal definition, and to this extent advance an account that is modern, at least with respect to the scope of the claim. This gives one side of the tension: all at this conference are, in fact, attempting to present some general account of ritual. Further, while my definition is quite minimal, it is not trivial. By highlighting a practice type that is both opaque and that offers some internal validation that is not just conceptual or discursive, I exclude a host of habitual or customary practices that might seem to be rituals, but are not. The definition brings into view exactly the features of ritual that are in tension with the modernist project: the features of opacity and particular, contingent validation are contrary to the presumed clarity and universal legitimation integral to modernism. Thus, while the definition is universal in the way required by modernism, it does not involve the negation of the contingent and particular that characterized the problematic variants of modernism (as outlined in e.g., MacIntyre, 1984). Instead, my definition provides a formal, universal account of a set of practices that have structures of legitimation that are tied to particular communities and traditions. This formal definition thus has a telos that is the inverse of the initial negation that constituted the

modernist turn away from the particular. However, as formal and universal, it begins where modernists must begin, since they lack what is seen to be vital in the particular communities and traditions. It gives as the conceptual content of ritual a formal structure that must be filled in and further determined by specific rituals and their specific patterns of nondiscursive legitimation.

While the general, formal definition orients us in the direction needed for the traditional ritual project, it doesn't get us very far, and the important work must involve clarification of how and why the rituals are opaque and further exploration into the kind of internal validation they provide. For this, we must go beyond a general account and move to the material content of specific rituals integral to a given tradition.

To fill in this content, the following features will be important:

(1) An adequate account of ritual should s*pecify the communal context, and the rituals that ground the universal account. It should then justify the general account of ritual (the theory) in relation to that context and content. This amounts to a regressive justification of the initial theory*. Like sociologists, the traditionalist sees concepts and logics of practical rationality as arising from rituals and a specific social context. However, unlike sociologists, traditionalists do not relativize that context. By affirming a privileged context of practice for ascertaining a content that is of universal scope, traditionalists can address truth conditions of their explanatory accounts in a way that sociologists cannot. One of the tasks of the traditional ritual project should thus involve an explicit grounding of the universal claims within the particular tradition. This is already implicit in many of the accounts that have been provided at this conference. When Tristram Engelhardt provides the general account of ritual we considered above, he used a language that was already adjusted to his particular tradition – for example, when he spoke of "man's incarnate, symbol-creating nature, where symbols are understood as partially iconic signs." After presenting his philosophical anthropology, he also provided an account of how the Orthodox Divine Liturgy is the ritual of rituals. But he didn't close the loop and show how the general account (or theory) of ritual that he provided finds its justification as a general account in the ritual of rituals that brings together and rightly discriminates and orients the disparate array of rituals he discusses in the first, philosophical part of his essay. As it now stands, the philosophical first part is left dangling, and it seems to be undermined by Engelhardt's close association of all such philosophical anthropologies with the mindset of the West and its modernism.

Similarly, when Ruiping Fan introduces his general account of rituals, he begins with a philosophical account of constitutive and general rules, and of virtues and internal goods. He then shows how Confucian rituals solve a virtue acquisition problem that he thinks is unsolved in MacIntyre's account. But he didn't go on to show how his general philosophical account (drawn from Western philosophical sources) might be justified by means of the ritualized practices and principles integral to the Confucian tradition. As the account now

stands, it seems that the central problems that are to be solved – e.g., the virtue acquisition problem – are framed and oriented by means of the Western philosophical concepts.

Fan and Engelhardt could readily answer my criticisms by saying that their specific, particular contents and practices provided the basis for selecting exactly those philosophical concepts that would best serve as a propaedeutic to enable outsiders to appreciate that content that they have come to recognize as most important in their specific communities. In each of these accounts, we find an implicit attempt to adjust the general theoretical account of ritual so it resonates with the specific, material content of the rituals within that tradition. The task now should be to make explicit this implicit process of reflection and iterative adjustment. When this is done, we get a general pattern of relating the general and particular that is different from the pattern integral to modernism. However, this pattern also enables us to recognize strands within Western thought that already exhibited this structure; for example, certain strands of natural law and natural theology. This, in turn, provides a basis for a more positive, constructive relation to Western philosophical thought, rather than the simply negative one presupposed in the criticisms of modernism, where nearly all of philosophical thought is equated with modernism (as in Engelhardt's *Christian Bioethics*, 2000). The propaedeutic philosophical sections of their essays already demonstrate this more positive, constructive relation to Western philosophy, and the schemas they use for criticizing modernism likewise presuppose it. The task now is to make this explicit and put it in play as part of their own discourse.

(2) An adequate account of ritual should c*larify how epistemic access is obtained*. Earlier we considered some of the fundamental epistemic barriers associated with the particularism of Delkeskamp-Hayes and Fan. However, we only considered the problem from the vantage of modernist assumptions. If rituals involve another kind of legitimation, one that is internal and non-conceptual, then they by themselves have an inherent capacity to overcome the epistemic barriers. How does this internal validation function? What is the phenomenology of legitimation for one who is outside the tradition but then drawn within? How do rituals lay claim on those within a tradition, drawing them deeper, and on those outside the tradition?

In the general, formal account I provided, rituals pick out a specific subset of practice types that have both a structure of legitimation and a content that is not fully transparent to discursive thought. This formal definition of ritual was formulated in a way that would be acceptable to modernists and traditionalists, although the former would appraise negatively what the latter would appraise positively. Thus, for example, a modernist might recognize that there are "irrational" structures of legitimation associated with ritual, and these might draw on emotions or involve rhetorical or sociological dynamics for drawing people into their orbit. Or with Marxists, they might link those structures of legitimation to some ideology that reflects some form of class dominance. But

this recognition would only serve modernist attempts to "demythologize," and the "irrational" structures of legitimation would be contrasted with the "rational" ones that are not dependent on such historically contingent structures. In contrast, the traditionalists would see within those non-discursive structures of legitimation a positive content, which is necessary for augmenting or transforming antecedent, imminent patterns of rational reflection and legitimation. It is this special content that grounds the claims made by traditionalists about unique epistemic insight.

Traditionalists thus need to move beyond the brute claims about the value of such contingency, and elucidate how their particular contents draw people within the orbit of the rituals and practices. The brute claims about the role contingency plays don't get us past Hume, Kant, and Hegel. Each of them already recognized diverse roles that contingency plays, but they also sought to negate what was particular by means of a second step. If the traditionalist wants to resist such a double negation, then an explicit account is needed about the way that rituals lay hold of us and draw us into the appropriate practices. For traditionalists this structure of legitimation will not be separate from the material content that constitutes the particular community; for example, it will be related to God's love and agency in the Orthodox account or to Heaven's Mandate in the Confucian one. What are these special structures of legitimation? An answer to this question is necessary if traditionalist wants to show how the traditional ritual project is responsive to the crisis in legitimacy that characterizes modernity (Lyotard, 1984).

(3) An adequate account of ritual should c*larify how practical access is obtained. How specifically does ritual solve what Ruiping Fan has called "the virtue acquisition problem"?* For modernists, rituals can be conceptually described; one can specify the rules and what is involved in their practice. Anyone can understand this. And then, as a second step, one can perform the ritual. In a dymothologized account, one can rationally reconstruct how these might legitimate a content and practices. These structures of legitimation would, in turn, be understood by equally general principles and thus free the modernist from the particularity and contingency of the rituals. But for the traditionalists, rituals evoke their own content and the appropriate orientation in the performance, and they resist this distinction between a general specification of the form of legitimation and the realization of that form within a specific ritualized practice. While we can have a distinction between the form and content of ritual (in the manner I presented it), we cannot have such a distinction between the form of legitimation and the content of that specific legitimation associated with traditional rituals. For the traditionalist, you can only understand the structure of legitimation associated with rituals if you engage in the practices and discern the content that grounds those practices.

In (2) we considered the epistemic problems associated with this particularist account of ritual. Now we need to consider the practical problem of access. It is not clear that the outsider can even understand what a ritual is, so how could he

ever practice it? If he begins with some inappropriate or partial understanding, and then performs this, has he really performed the ritual? David Solomon (Chapter 10) considers a related problem in Aristotle:

> He famously says … that the best way to acquire the virtue of courage is to perform courageous actions under the direction of some person or some community that already possesses the virtue. This position is problematic for Aristotle, however, since he has also claimed that for an action to be genuinely courageous it must be performed by a person with a fixed disposition to act courageously – that is, by someone who is already courageous. He seems committed therefore to both the view that one cannot perform a courageous act unless one possesses the virtue of courage and, also, the view that in order to acquire the virtue of courage, one must perform courageous actions. It is obvious however that both of these views cannot be true.

This is indeed a major problem, if we view the performance of courage from the perspective of one who does not have it; one who is outside the community of its practice and figuring out how to get within it. But if, in some sense, the community and the rituals evoke the appropriate practice, then access might be motivated from outside the individual. Fan (Chapter 9) and Solomon (Chapter 10) both move toward addressing these questions when they narrate how a parent may guide a child's actions so that a kind of external imitation of courage or parental respect is first imposed, and then a child gradually attains to an inner disposition that reflects those external patterns. In this way a child is gradually drawn into the appropriate moral disposition. But in those accounts it is the parent that does the real work, not the rituals themselves. In their accounts, the rituals are instrumentally regarded, implementing the parent's intention to inculcate the children into the virtuous life. This, by itself, doesn't get us past a modernism. For that, an account is needed of how the rituals themselves (and the associated practice) initiate an outsider into the appropriate practices.

There is a very interesting parallel between this problem of practical access for Aristotle and the problem of grace for Luther: In a similar way, Luther experienced the need to practice works of penance to atone for his sin, but simultaneously was aware of his inability to perform those works in the appropriate way. (A nice account of this is found in Bainton, 1977.) For Luther, the breakthrough came with the awareness that God's grace makes possible what is impossible for him. By virtue of God's act, he, Luther, was empowered to act in the appropriate way. Here there is an Agency external to Luther that draws him into the appropriate kind of disposition and action. It is this kind of an account that might provide a prototype for answering the virtue acquisition problem in a way that gets past modernism.

Central to the traditional ritual project is this sense of rituals as having a power to evoke the disposition and the practice, so, in some sense, the rituals and the traditional community draw the initiate in. The character of this evocation should be made explicit as a part of the account of ritual.

(4) An adequate account of ritual should c*larify the nature of the unity of universal and particular that is integral to the account of ritual*. Delkeskamp-

Hayes originally presented a sharp contrast between modernist approaches to ritual and the approach one finds in a traditional community. She basically dismissed any hybrid approach as inconsistent, or as too under the sway of modernism. I've tried show how all attempts that work with ritual as an irreducible, explanatory category involve some kind of hybrid, and thus take place at the intersection of the universalizing and particularlizing tendencies. By means of my minimal, formal definition of ritual, I tried provide a universal structure that could be taken as the form of any specific, traditional content. This establishes a rubric for integrating the universal and particular. The task then is to account for how universal and particular come together in any traditional account of ritual. The essays in this volume give hints at how this might be done. Each essay already reflects a complex adjustment of the general philosophical categories and the specific accounts of the content integral to particular traditions. But this integration has not yet been made explicit. An adequate account of ritual must do this in a way that is compatible with the specific claims that a traditionalist makes about what is central to their own rituals and their own community.

The answers given to these four aspects of the traditional ritual project will be interrelated, and they will involve a kind of iterative adjustment between a general and a particular, interpretive account, and between each of the specific aspects themselves. For example, there will be a clear link between how rituals ground privileged epistemic insight and how they solve the virtue acquisition problem. In some sense, advocates of the traditional ritual project reside in two camps; they are modernists, speaking from a cosmopolitan context and to one. But they are also in traditional communities, and find there a privileged context for understanding the human condition. They reject the initial rejection of contingency that motivated the modernist project; they thus begin rather than end with the philosophical stance. The language of ritual seems especially appropriate for characterizing their privileged content, and for conveying it to those outside the traditional community.

Whether, in the end, ritual is the most appropriate category for doing this, however, must remain open. We can only consider that question after much more has been done to carry forward the project. My own sense is that ritual does not, ultimately, go deep enough, and that for Christians a more appropriate category is found in the Logos and Incarnation. The task is to show how the incarnate, enfleshed Word draws us into the life of His community. As people are drawn into that life, their own practices replicate the originating type, thereby extending the Divine Life outward to others, who are themselves drawn within its orbit. Viewed in this way, the traditionalist's *ritual* – like the natural theologian's *reason* – is a middle term in the dynamic of a living process. A full account of this Word would involve an iconic aspect (associated with the "becoming flesh") that is close to ritual, but it will also go beyond what is generally meant by that term. In this way, reflection on ritual might provide a valuable step in the right direction.

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Chapter 14
Renewing Ritual Cultures: Paternal Authority, Filial Piety, and the Ethos of Self-Submission in Christianity and Confucianism

Corinna Delkeskamp-Hayes

14.1 Introduction

Cultural renewal seeks to recapture a loss. Such projects are undertaken when social life disintegrates: People no longer sustain the communal fabric on which their flourishing depends, and this change affects not only those at the margins of society, but even the seemingly well-adjusted and normatively dominant mainstream.

The call for cultural renewal must be distinguished from the call for stricter laws, more consistent law enforcement, more extensive redistributive policies and more effective social engineering. The call for cultural renewal recognizes that measures which seek to influence human deportment from without, either by imposing threats or by administering remedial (material or social service) support, are insufficient. This call acknowledges that civilisation, as the ability to develop and adjust to technological novelties and political re-orientation and reform, and to integrate that development and adjustment into one's private sphere,[1] is a fragile achievement. Under conditions of modernity,[2] where people

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[1] The concept of civilization engaged here merges the Hegelian notion of a "civil society" (as a general bureaucratic and legal framework sustaining various and diverse particular cultural communities) with the difference which Tönnies has established (in 1887) between the German notions of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" (2005). This concept moreover places both components in a liberal, i.e. pluralist and democratic setting (i.e. a setting that exposes members to political change and variety of normative options).

[2] The concept of modernity engaged here takes its inspiration from both the turn to immanence (Himmelfarb, 2004) and from Vattimo's 1985 endorsement of post-modernity, i.e. his diagnosis of how Nietzsche destroyed the Enlightenment's commitment to reason, replacing it by merely subjective valuing and by the will to power (Vattimo, 2005). That is, from the position of post-modernity, modernity surfaces as faith in a linear progress that is oriented toward rational goals and principles. Or, modernity becomes tantamount to the "Enlightenment project" itself as described by Rawls (1993, xviii).

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confront a baffling variety of options to choose from, such ability requires an already secured normative identity. Only such anchoring allows one to navigate the continuous and omnipresent change "at home," and the challenge of having to integrate influences from "abroad". In order to develop such an identity, people (at least ultimately, and when all short term incentives have worn away) need a sense of a meaning that encompasses their personal life along with that of their surroundings. The concept of a culture offers such a meaning.

Cultural renewal today is usually pursued on the level of societies which are also constituted as polities.[3] Such renewal is expected to solve a problem that affects all modern democracies in view of their post-modern, i.e. no longer ethically contained, affirmation of freedom. That problem affects societies both from within and from without. From the inside, the affirmation of world view and life style pluralism has eroded what is now recognized as an indispensable fabric of dependable rules and convictions; from the outside, the proclaimed commitment to tolerance is challenged by cultures which refuse to tolerate back.

Surely, any solution to this problem of pluralism, as a problem which (along with its underlying modernity-post-modernity) gets exported (and challenged) globally calls for a universal or global solution. The question is only, how cultural renewal can be promoted universally. Today, such renewal is usually pursued in terms of a "culture" that, as it were, in its very essence is taken to compel universal assent. This culture is claimed to implement some supposedly general human rationality, along with the moral norms this rationality is believed to authorise for legal enforcement. Since traditional cultures, and especially those expressed through rituals, invoke confessedly particular authorising narratives, they are from the very start disqualified from entering into competition for universal recognition.

The quest for cultural renewal is thus usually perceived as a quest for what safeguards peace on earth, both within and between societies, as these are threatened by their different and often conflictingly particular cultural communities. This quest relies on government funded institutions, the law, and policies. It is precisely by seeking to strengthen allegiance to the democratic state (with its social network-tamed market economy) as the one master community, that this quest accomplishes its purpose of weakening ("potentially disruptive") particular communities. It offers the constituents of such polities a meaning that encompasses their own life along with that of their surroundings, to be sure. But this meaning centres on a (remotely Kantian)

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[3] This pursuit can be seen as the attempt to frame politically constituted (and in the sense introduced above "civilized" societies) in terms of (meta-) communities. This pursuit thus reflects accounts of modern civilization such as the one offered (in 1893) by Durkheim, who conceives of the transition of pre-modern to modern societies in terms of a replacement of "mechanical" by "organic" solidarity, i.e. by some over-arching commitment to social values that frame the ethos of a civil society (Durkheim, 1997).

view of "human dignity" which privileges humans' rational capacity to endorse the moral norms framing those polities. Human personhood is addressed in terms of recognized human rights. Even though these rights (after Kant) have come to extend to persons' physical and social needs, the very political commitment to attend to those needs, wherever the existing intermediate social (communal, and thus potentially cultural) structures fail, places the state in competition with those structures. Even if this does not form part of the official strategy (because a commitment to protecting families and voluntary world view associations is still rhetorically maintained in most modern democratic states), such competition in effect, and with (welcome) destructive impact on the viability of particular communities, weakens such intermediate structures.

Within the horizon of a cultural renewal thus construed, persons are envisaged as bearers of politically recognised rights exclusively. The emphasis lies on securing their freedom in the sense of independence from external constraints (except the constraints of the supposedly rational moral norms informing the democratic state). Persons are addressed as individuals, each with their entitlement to as much autonomy as is compatible with that of all others. Their personhood is thus conceptually separated from those very familial and intermediate institutions and organisations, outside of which they could never become, and without which they cannot be personally sustained as, (among other things) rational and moral persons. The cultural renewal usually pursued today, as construed in this spirit of the European Enlightenment, disregards that space for personal encounter, outside of which a culture's offer of encompassing meaning cannot be adopted as what "personally" matters. In that sense, such a cultural renewal turns out to be in effect counterproductive.

This essay therefore explores the alternative. It examines a cultural renewal that focuses on traditional communities with their particular life worlds, norms, and rituals. This essay acknowledges the legitimacy of the quest for a universal impact of cultural renewal. In a world that is globally connected, merely parochial solutions are not sustainable.[4] But this quest for universality, so this essay argues, does not have to be construed in terms of claims to compelling

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[4] Christianity, in spite of its particular authorizing narratives, grounds its claim to universality in Christ's calling His disciples to teach and baptize "the world" (Mt. 28:19). Evidence for the fact that at least some Confucians endorse claims to universality for their ritual culture is provided by all the Confucian authors in this volume. Thus Fan argues that without rituals, concerning which Confucianism gives the most encompassing account, no virtue can be acquired (p. 151), Wang grounds Confucianism in a cosmic order (cf. note 18), Ping-cheung Lo takes up the generalising concept of a "Confucianism for America" (pp. 138 f), Zhang uses his phenomenological analysis of the time consciousness underlying parental and filial love, which in turn inform the most important (i.e. familial) rituals, as evidence for Confucianism's superior ability to understand humanity, and Daniel A. Bell points to the universalizing claims in Xunzi (p. 196).

rational arguments. It can instead be construed in terms of an invitation. As invitation, it must offer something universally acknowledged as desirable. In the context of our investigation into the possibility of cultural renewal, we can proceed under the assumption that it is precisely that encompassing meaning for people's personal life along with that of their surroundings, which may serve as an initial (and so far not further specified) placeholder for what is thus universally desirable. Our exploration of the possibility of a particularistic cultural renewal will therefore also seek to develop a more substantial understanding of that placeholder.

This essay deals with traditional Christians and traditional Confucians who, precisely by endorsing paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethos of self-submission, attend to those very personalising frameworks which the dominant social democratic mainstream discounts. Such traditional Christianity and Confucianism seek universal recognition not primarily through discursive appeals to mental contents (such as values or norms). Instead, they promote the universal appeal of their particular cultures through a revived awareness of the significance of rituals.

From the very start, it is important to note that Christians and Confucians go about this project in different ways. The difference is not restricted to the content level of what Christian faith and Confucian traditions (Ching, 1993, p. 9) respectively "are about". This difference also derives from the fact that Christianity's ritual culture has survived intact within the Orthodox Church, whereas Confucian rituals, at least to a large extent and especially after the Chinese Fourth of May Movement and its turn to a communist "Enlightenment" (Schwarcz, 1986), have been disrupted. Moreover, Christians and Confucians occupy different positions vis à vis the intellectual currents which, throughout the last two centuries, have de-ritualised large portions of (non-Orthodox) Christianity and (more recently) Confucianism: Christians, unlike Confucians, can recognize these currents as outgrowth of a distorted form of their very own culture. Christians can therefore interpret what opposes their rituals as deriving from various attempts to fill a vacuum left by distorted Christianity itself. They can attribute the de-ritualising trivialisation of their faith to Christians' own failures, and assure themselves of the necessary safeguards. Confucians, in contrast, at least today, are easily led to attribute Confucianism's own loss of ritual integrity to the hostile impact of a foreign influence. Insofar as the integrity of a culture also might require a certain watchfulness in view of its own members, such an interpretation might easily present a temptation.

Yet irrespective of these differences, Christian and Confucian rituals today are exposed to the same threat of modernity and its post-modern upgrade. This threat centrally engages the denunciation of paternal authority, filial piety and the ethos of self-submission as de-humanising in the sense of being incompatible with human freedom. Even among post-traditional members of their own respective cultures, traditional Christians and Confucians compete against the same modern–post-modern quest for cultural renewal. This common exposure

renders a Christian-Confucian interchange mutually beneficial. Christians in Western countries, accustomed to the moralising trivialisation[5] a succession of rational reconstructions of the faith (H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr. 2000, pp. 18–22) inflicted on Western[6] Christianity, can profit from beholding traditional Confucians' endorsement of paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethic of self-submission, as well as from noticing traditional Confucians' disaffection with the liberalising spirit of modernity. Even if such Christians have lost touch with the ritual heritage of their own faith, attention to traditional Confucians' struggle for ritual renewal might help them question those rationalist prejudices which have compromised their own cultural integrity. Conversely, so this essay proposes, Confucians who value their ritual heritage might profit as well. On the one hand, such dialogue confronts them with conceptual resources for better presenting their case for paternal authority, filial piety and the ethics of self-submission to a Western audience. After all, those Confucian intellectuals who are in charge of the cultural competition have themselves internalised at least elements of a Western academic education. The concepts into which they translate their Chinese thought are burdened with Western cultural assumptions, in particular assumptions about the importance of morality and social organisation.[7] A dialogue with Westerners who endorse a traditional ritual culture of their own might therefore offer useful terminological and argumentative material. On the other hand, such dialogue also provides access to a paradigmatic way of framing ritual's underlying theory, in this case, Orthodox Christianity. Its theological resources concerning paternal authority,

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[5] When using "moralising" in a derogatory sense (as implying a trivialisation), I refer to a narrow concept of morality as a good in itself, which should therefore never be subordinated to anything else. On such a view (as exemplified by Immanuel Kant), morality is conceived as exhaustively accessible to human cognition and therefore (in particular) occupies a purely immanent space. While indeed religions often have moral implications, these may (as indeed in Christianity they do) remain conditional on more basic goals. (A thorough discussion of this difference can be found in Engelhardt, 2007).

[6] The term "Western" is not used in a geographical but in a cultural sense. It refers to that Christendom which grew out of the Western part of the Roman Empire, and which is defined by an either affirmative (in the case of Roman Catholicism) or critical (in the case of the various Protestantisms) relationship to the Vatican. These Christianities are to be distinguished from Orthodoxy which grew out of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (even though, today, it enjoys its largest growth in the geographical West, i.e. in the United States).

[7] On a superficial reading, Confucianism thus appears quite compatible with the commitments of an "enlightened" modernity. Only if one looks very carefully at the way in which Confucians apply such concepts (i.e. extend "morality" to piety in view of deceased ancestors, affirm continued family lines, endorse collective experiences, cf. Wang pp. 101 f) does the *proprium* of their very different approach become visible. Similarly, when Fan treats the concept of "Confucian virtue" by opposing it to MacIntyre's account, he carefully points out the different sense of that concept by linking it with Confucian rituals (pp. 146 ff, 151). The same difficulty is very carefully addressed in view of the meaning of "moral principles", which Fan in the end distinguishes from Western "moral principles" by defining them in terms of what orients and limits rituals (p. 156).

filial piety, and the ethos of self-submission, allow this traditional culture to resist both, the de-ritualising spirit of rationalist modernity, and the culturalist trivialisation of Christian rituals through post-modernity.

In thus engaging with the Christian-Confucian dialogue undertaken in this volume, the present essay explores conditions for ritual renewal which, while inspired by the Christian tradition, can also be accessed by Confucians. For this purpose, "common enemies" are identified right at the outset. These encompass not only (and trivially) those who are altogether hostile to any ritual culture (i.e. adherents of a rationalist and liberal modernity as inspired by Immanuel Kant, 1724–1804). These enemies also (and less trivially) encompass those (post-modernists) who culturally celebrate mankind's rich reservoir of rituals, but at the same time aesthetically relativize their meaning. Such "false friends", in joining modernists' dis-affection with paternal authority, filial piety, and the ethos of self-submission, repudiate rituals' orienting, unifying, and transforming power (cf. Chapter 3).

Because of this twofold nature of the (explicitly hostile and implicitly trivialising) resistance which traditional cultures encounter today, the project of cultural renewal through ritual renewal requires more than warding off rituals' outright opponents. It requires, in other words, more than a defensive strategy against those outside. In addition, this renewal requires efforts at recapturing one's own robust tradition, i.e. a strategy of strengthening those inside. Unlike post-modernity's distortion of "tradition" into something contingently enjoyable (like a style, or a fashion), a tradition is "robust" if it has not internalised cultural pluralism (but merely suffers it to exist). Robust traditions in this sense defy the post-modern call to a welcoming kind of tolerance. They stubbornly proclaim each their own affirmation of universal validity[8] in view of rightly orienting human life (around, if I may once again repeat myself: paternal authority, filial piety, and the ethos of self-submission). As Engelhardt's contribution to this volume shows, such stubborn proclamation, along with the ritual renewal devoted to its support, require a reference to the transcendent. This reference must go beyond merely symbolical hints at something (by definition) inaccessibly "out there". A mere horizon that secures humans' "openness to the transcendent" as a "humanising" device, as endorsed by one of the major "renewers" of Confucianism in the majority of her works (see e.g. Ching, 1993, pp. 84, 167) is not enough. In order to sustain what a robust ritual culture posits as its authority to rightly orient, that transcendent source of authority must be recognised as having accessed human immanence on its own

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[8] While the Christian invitation rests on Christ's unconditional command to teach and baptise all nations (Mt. 28:18–20), Confucianism is less unambiguously explicit on this point. Some evidence however supports the view that Confucianism as well was a "robust" cluster of traditions in the past (cf. Han Yü's "On the origin of the 'Way'" or Chu His's work, as quoted by Bauer, 1974, p. 286), and remains so until today, as Julia Ching suggests (1993, p. 1), when she invokes Confucians' claims to "both uniqueness and even superiority".

initiative. It must have disclosed some substantive (and thus unavoidably particular) truth about human flourishing, which, in addition, can only be represented ritually. That transcendence, in other words, must be proclaimed as having revealed the manner in which properly oriented rituals give access to itself as to those rituals' right-making (and ultimately: "saving") power. Such a transcendence must be personal.

The present essay leads the discussion about the transcendent conditions for the possibility of ritual renewal one step further. It examines the argumentative strategies through which the proclaimed right-making authority (of the transcendent person) can secure the persuasive power needed for rendering even a confessedly particular traditional and ritual culture universally inviting today. This essay delineates how paternal authority, filial piety, and the ethos of self submission, as affirmed by traditional ritual cultures, can aspire to a vision of human flourishing that appeals even to contemporary liberals. In other words, this essay defines such flourishing by reference to that very personhood, and to the fullness of its rightly ordered freedom, which the modern and post-modern enemies of ritual cultures celebrate in misguided and distorted ways.

The first part pursues the defensive (other-directed) strategy mentioned above. It maps the conceptual landscape of hostility to ritual culture. This part describes in greater detail (than the above introductory remarks) the intellectual environment against which a properly traditionalist project of cultural renewal (i.e. through recaptured awareness of its ritual implications) must defend itself. It exposes the poverty of an understanding of personhood and personality that reduces freedom to arbitrary choice. The second part pursues the internal conditions for cultural renewal. Here a closer look at Christianity's own distortions highlights the justified concerns which underlie some of the modern and post-modern hostility to ritual and tradition. It thus becomes possible to show how traditional Christianity offers theological safeguards against such distortions, and thus how such a Christianity can be presented as universally inviting even for its contemporary enemies. The conclusion turns back to Confucianism and proposes criteria for safeguarding its integrity, and thus for strengthening its own persuasive power.

14.2 A Geography of Hostility to Ritual Cultures

In the first section, the surface level contrast between modernity's opposition to ritual, and post-modernity's patent tolerance and even celebration of ritual variety is shown to disappear at a deeper level: Both movements agree in rejecting traditional ritual cultures' combining cultural particularity with a call for universal allegiance. Both movements therefore seek to either altogether replace or at least to contextualise such ritual cultures by subordinating their orienting impact to some universally obligatory or accepted morality.

The second section explores the common commitments underlying modernity's and post-modernity's rejection of robust ritual cultures. A comparison of their respective presuppositions discloses why an out-rightly anti-ritual modernity and a ritual-friendly post-modernity, in spite of their mutually incompatible anthropologies, can agree in a common liberal vision of human flourishing. It is that vision which renders both movements either hostile or at least oblivious to the life of the family (along with its commitment to paternal authority and filial piety), which traditional cultures affirm as a central condition (not only for that ethos of self submission which nurtures moral personhood but also) for the preservation of ritual integrity.

14.2.1 The Modern and Post-modern Reliance on Morality

(a) Varieties of Hostility

Looking at social structures from the outside, one might get the impression that life in the technologically developed West even today is indeed permeated by rituals.[9] Some of these rituals retain memories from older traditions; others have been custom tailored to their users' contingent needs.[10] In exploring what renders contemporary societies nevertheless so hostile to ritual cultures in the robust sense, one therefore cannot restrict oneself to rituals' explicit critics. The "enemies" must also be sought among those who affirm ritual as a conservatory or creative cultural resource.

(i) Explicit Hostility

Wide areas of contemporary Western thought on what should orient human (and societal, and political) life still root in the 18th century's Enlightenment. These areas define our contemporary understanding of "modernity". The most patent opposition to ritual and ritual cultures was offered in 1793 by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1960, Book IV, Pt. II, #3 [B 270–278], pp. 163–173). In 1797, he again denounced ritual cultures as belonging to an immature stage in human development, which would be overcome as man advances to rational personhood (2003, Pt. I–II, App. 8 B [B:368 f], 134 f). Such advancement was to secure an ever more accomplished ability to derive orientation about true human flourishing from reason alone. A less obvious opposition is offered by another strand of Enlightenment thinking, with David

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[9] This omnipresence has been described by Iltis and Solomon in this volume. See also Dücker (2007).

[10] That such needs can also accommodate a pointed opposition against modernity can be gleaned from the way in which family rituals are celebrated in literary works such as Adalbert Stifter's 1857 *Nachsommer* (2008).

Hume's (1711–1776) naturalism as most prominent example.[11] In his posthumously published essays (1777), the engagement in "rituals" is treated as a symptom of superstition (1987, X, 73 ff). What would correspond to an "enlightened" approach in the context of Hume's philosophy does not consist in the affirmation of reason as self-sufficient. Instead, that philosophy from its very start (1739) cultivates a (reflectingly) sceptical distance from what is recognized as the at bottom merely emotionally suggestive power of the imagination underlying any (supposedly rational or even just reasonable) claims (1973, Book I, Pt. IV, sect. 5, 238 f, sect. 7, 270, 273 f). Whereas for Kant traditional rituals violate the ideal of man's canonical rationality, for Hume those same rituals violate the ideal of canonical scepticism only when they form part of a self-understanding that fails to acknowledge man's dependence on the ultimately biological givens of human nature.

(ii) Implicit Hostility

The post-modern celebration of traditional cultures focusses on their plurality. It values each culture as (pretty much) equally helpful toward unfolding humanity's potential for human flourishing. In welcoming diversity, post-modernity rejects any one particular ritual culture's claim to exclusive validity. Instead of canonically orienting their members' self-understanding and behaviour (and sometimes urging all humans into that membership), post-modern ritual cultivation is a matter for individual choice.[12] Post-modernity retains rituals as contingently available resources for arbitrary self- or group-cultivation, or else as emotional or educational resources that can be engaged for given moral (and thus also political) goals.

(b) The Moralising Basis of Hostility to Ritual

Both, Enlightenment inspired modernity and its post-modern modification, conceive what is universally valid for human orientation in morally normative

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[11] To associate an Enlightenment thinker like David Hume with today's concept of modernity might at first sight seem incongruous, because he himself considered his naturalism and respect for established societal customs more akin to political conservatism. In comparison to Kant-inspired modernists, Humeans seem not committed to human progress. Nevertheless 18th century naturalism is part of the project of modernity through its hostility to ritual traditions, and through the implications of its having re-construed the conditions for human flourishing in terms of empirically ascertainable pleasurable sensations. This naturalism thus became a basis for certain kinds of utilitarianism, which in turn lent themselves to "modern" projects for promoting progress in view of enhanced human well-being.

[12] In post-modern accounts, the concept of "culture" has a wide application. It encompasses not only relatively stable traditional systems of beliefs and habits, but also whatever ritual-enriched orientations people may adopt at certain times or in certain contexts.

terms.[13] For Kant and his followers, morality is also the source of as much of a highest good as is humanly achievable: the peace secured by a good conscience. For Hume and his followers, the proper virtue results from chiming in with what (an optimistically conceived!) human nature decrees (1973, Book III, Pt. III, sect. VI, 618 ff), – even if the desired peace of mind in addition requires the philosopher's (mitigated, cf.1955, sect. 12, pt. 3. 169) sceptical distance. On the other hand, post-modernists, even though they trust human flourishing to the cultures and rituals people may have adopted for themselves, try to safeguard the earthly peace required for such flourishing through an inter-culture traffic that imposes, once again, moral norms.[14] These norms are mostly derived from two sources. Either they are still thought to spring from the verdicts of a Kantian-style reason.[15] Or such norms focus more on ecological and further "embodied" issues and are harvested from what cultures, traditions, and religions, all over the world, (supposedly) affirm in common. They are recommended as comprising a collective "world ethos".[16] In either case, the supposedly universal moral norms or values, whether engaged for modern (i.e. ritual-hostile) or post-modern (i.e. ritual-tolerating) purposes, are taken to sustain what cultural renewal today is universally about. They thus oppose a cultural renewal which centrally focuses on ritual.

(c) The Source of Orientation

To place what is universally orienting in morality (or some value or virtue) is to assume that orientation in life is describable by, and therefore exhaustively accessible to, discursive reasoning. It is precisely this discursive accessibility

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[13] It is worth noting that there are also non-moralizing ways of trivializing ritual. Moses Mendelsohn (1729–1786) for example reduces their function to the communication of "ideas" about God (1983, 118 f). Since his own view of theology goes beyond such fixed ideas and allows to form "conjectures" and "draw conclusions," he (already in 1783, when his *Jerusalem* first appeared) argues for leaving rituals altogether behind. Since the informative function of rituals is conceived not in terms of morality but (in an immediate sense) concerns "public and private felicity" (op.cit. p. 128), Mendelsohn in the end considers the particular rituals of the Jewish religion superfluous (op.cit. p. 139).

[14] The problem with such frameworks is that they rest on the assumption of a "universal reason of mankind" authorising the framework's norms. The extent to which the existence of such rationally accessible norms is an illusion which vanishes as soon as these norms are applied to particular conflicts has been extensively discussed by Engelhardt (2000, 28 ff) The multiplicity of cultures thus corresponds to a multiplicity of moral rationalities. It is revealing, as Engelhardt observes, that more blood has been shed over the question whether the individual bourgeois or the workers' class is the only true subject of humans' moral progress than over – for example – religious differences.

[15] Here one might especially think of the affirmation of human dignity and therefore of human freedom, along with extensive political and claim rights in excess of what Kant himself would have endorsed, as advocated by prominent thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls.

[16] Affirmation of such a world-ethos can be found even in the Christian – Confucian dialogue, as pursued by Hans Küng (Küng and Ching, 1988, 140 f, 302 ff).

which traditional ritual cultures reject. Only such a rejection, after all, keeps the orienting impact of their rituals from being implicitly repudiated. If moral reason suffices, why not promote that general Enlightenment which in the end will render rituals obsolete? This danger, inherent in reliance on rational discourse is known to both Christians and Confucians. When (Kant-inspired) post-Enlightenment Christians narrowed down the Gospel to its "moral teaching", they rendered Christian rituals obsolete, at least for those capable of intellectually grasping that moral teaching. When Confucians reduce the societal significance of Confucian rituals to their role for securing compliance with independently accessible moral norms, they render the rituals obsolete. Such moralising Christians and Confucians are enemies of their respective ritual cultures. The former might still (in a post-modern mode) welcome Christian rituals for satisfying believers' emotional needs, or their desire for collectively unifying experiences, and for the symbolic affirmation and maintenance of trust in the benevolence of the "supreme being". The latter (in a similar mode) might also welcome Confucian rituals as serving educational and expressive functions with respect to goals that are defined on other grounds.[17] Yet in each case, it is no longer the rituals that secure the orientation, and it is no longer their anchoring in an unchanging tradition (as disclosing their transcendent roots[18]) which secures their legitimacy. Accordingly, one can change the design of rituals, adjust old rituals or develop new ones,[19] and re-phrase their

[17] In the present volume, Bell's essay (Chapter 11) can be taken as representative of this position. Even though he defends rituals against their Western enemies, he engages them merely as support for his utilitarian concern with inducing the powerful and social elite to assume responsibility for the weak and vulnerable. Ritual is thus deprived of its independent orienting, and reduced to its educational function.

[18] An instructive example for a Confucian regard for various ways in which "transcendence" is relevant for ritual is provided by Wang's references to the cosmos and god (p. 90), ultimate reality (p. 92), transcendent meanings (p. 98), a sacred and mystic world (p. 99) and mystery and sacredness (p. 101), by Zhang's reference to the principles of Heaven and Earth (p. 109), as well as by Lo's insistence on the religious dimension of Confucianism (pp. 127, 129, 133), along with his regard for the spirit of Confucius, prayer, the gods, and the principle of heaven (p. 126).

Without such roots, rituals' orienting function remains limited to those who happen to share the underlying value commitments. Thus in Bell's account, the utilitarian value of ritual is described with a view to a society with fixed social classes. Such a view might be persuasive to Japanese and old fashioned Britains, not however to societies that prize social mobility and change, like the US. This lack of universal appeal is honestly acknowledged when Bell observes that even the terms required for presenting a ritual culture find no adequate Western counterpart (p. 191). Bell recommends rituals' usefulness in terms of their offering a tradeoff between economic and social inequality in the sense that ritual cultures are easier reconciled to those economically redistributive policies which he takes to be universally desirable. Still, his intellectual integrity forces him to recognize that the economic equality he prefers profoundly differs from the social equality endorsed in modern (in the sense of change-friendly) societies (pp. 191 f).

[19] Cf. Bell's government agency for ritual design (pp.188 ff) and in the West the new profession of a "ritual advisor" (Welt der Frau, 2009).

surrounding traditions, wherever believers' emotional needs or changed circumstances and priorities for moral socialisation suggest such intervention.[20]

In order for ritual to be culturally orienting, several conditions must be met.

(i) It must be authoritative. Its authority must answer a twofold why-question: Why (lacking external coercion as well as immediate bribery) one should feel compelled to follow ritual's guidance, and why (lacking any immediate relationship to participants' momentary interests) ritual prescribes one way of behaving rather than another. That is, the authority of ritual must be both objective and informative.

(ii) As "orienting", ritual must occupy a fixed position vis à vis those whom it orients (such as the "nature of things", or a "divine power"). It must do so from a place that is both remote enough not to be affected (or, for Confucians, not overly affected) by changing times and circumstances, and clearly visible for all. It must, as Engelhardt (p. 42) nicely unpacks the etymology of "orienting", be like a morning star, or like the rising sun. In particular, it must be kept clear of arbitrary interference,[21] or interference by those not clearly singled out as "in charge."[22] Arbitrariness would detract from ritual's orienting authority.

(iii) Whatever is accepted as orienting must also determine the place or the purpose of those who are to be ritually oriented. A "nature of things" that can ground a culture-orienting ritual must be such that it imposes on human behaviour and action an obligation to harmonise themselves with what and how those things ultimately are. Similarly a divine power that underlies such orienting must impose on humans a purpose for their life. In each case, whether with a metaphysical (or mythological) order of

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[20] Thus Protestants, after having exorcised much of Christianity's traditional ritual life, are discovering today that they have lost their hold on believers' heart, and are trying to re-ritualise their religious practice (cf. Epd, 2009). Thus Roman Catholics, after having sacrificed much of their still viable ritual life to the demand for change at Vatican II, are discovering that they have disoriented their members' piety, and are trying to recapture what they abandoned (see for example Benedict XVI's renewed emphasis on the traditional Latin mass, 2007). And similarly modern Confucians, or the modern variety of "Neo-Confucians" (Wang, p. 94, Fan, p. 157, Lo, p. 137 [where they disagree with the historical Neo-Confucians], along with their Western sympathizers, such as Bell in this volume), discovering that their own version of Enlightenment has impoverished what Chinese understood as their cultural identity, try to harmonise the Confucian rituals of the past with the moral goals that frame their present (Westernized) understanding of a global order. But here as well, changing moral fashions require ritual re-configuration. It is no longer the ritual that orients the Chinese but the Chinese who re-design their rituals.

[21] Cf. Xunzi, as quoted by Bell, p. 176, in this volume.

[22] And again, the authority of such persons must be based on their envisaging an orientation which maintains stability over and against social change, so that they, in taking their bearings for ritual adjustment, are enabled to assess the relevance of different aspects of the change to which they adjust.

things or with a divine power, the ritual implementing such impositions will offer its participants awesome glimpses of a greater order of the world. In view of such glimpses, ritual engenders piety.[23]

(iv) Finally, no less importantly, in order for ritual to be culturally orienting, what it orients its partakers to must be something that cannot be accessed independently of participation in the ritual. In other words, that goal must be such that it cannot even theoretically be dissociated from such participation.[24] As Rui Ping Fan has made clear, ritual must have an "internal" goal.[25]

Already this short survey reveals that the opposition between friends and enemies of traditional ritual culture cannot be reduced to the difference between "transcendent" and "immanent" sources of orientation envisaged by each. First of all, the contrast between "the transcendent" and "the immanent" suffers from ambiguities. To be sure, modernity in the spirit of both Kant and Hume does affirm the un-accessibility of anything that transcends humans' cognitive capacities. Yet for Kant, "reason" is as much a place-holder for a (non-arbitrary, and in that sense) "transcendent" source of orientation as "human nature" is for Hume. Moreover, just as Kant in 1788 posits the philosophical indispensability of a hypothetically assumed god (2002 Pt. I, Book II, chap. II, sect. V [A 223 f], 157f), so Hume[26] leaves the question of a transcendent being strategically undecided (see especially part XII, 1947, 214 ff). Secondly, at least the postmodern affirmation of man's cultural diversity comes in both resolutely immanent and transcendence-open varieties. Post-modernity can either endorse restricting oneself to the contingently "natural" ways in which cultures are initially generated in different places and times. Alternatively, post-modernity can endorse referring these cultures to a transcendence which, precisely because

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[23] An especially impressive example of such cosmic orientation is provided by Chang Tsai's so-called "Western inscription" (as quoted by Bauer, 1974, p. 293).

[24] As long as Confucian rituals are engaged because it is more efficient to teach people to regulate their behaviour internally, through a sense of shame, than to bridle them through external sanctions (cf. Lun Yü, as quoted by Bauer, op.cit. p. 41), ritual is still instrumentalized for independently conceived moral purposes. Such an understanding is insufficient for a robustly traditional Confucianism in the sense proposed in this essay.

[25] Ruiping Fan's concept of an "internal" goal captures the point of the story about Confucius who, when asked about *ren* (humanity, or loving humans) answered by "doing the rituals". Or, as Wang also put it: "Li is not just sensible, external and prescribed act, but the real bearer and embodiment of the spirit of ren" (p. 90) and "Morality and ren is impossible without ritual". Somewhat like the way in which Confucian filial love is defined by the ritual governing children's' comportment vis à vis their parents, and can be achieved only through perfection in that ritual, is Christian love defined by what can be achieved – as a rule – only in the course of a life that is oriented by the ritual of the Church. It is precisely this link between human accomplishment and ritual, in which Orthodox Christians discover Confucianism as of kindred spirit.

[26] See especially his posthumously published *Dialogues concerning natural religion* (1779).

of its inaccessibility to man, can only be symbolically envisaged, where such envisaging in addition happens in irreducibly diversified ways.

It is precisely the confinement of the assumed transcendent being to its "proper place", i.e. within a separate "space" called "transcendence", which renders such religiously fragranced post-modernity incompatible with any seriously traditional ritual culture. The latter, after all, cannot but derive its orienting authority from a claimed (even though not autonomously realised, and therefore discursively cognizable) human access to the transcendent. Proponents and enemies of ritual cultures are thus distinguished only to some degree by their admission or rejection of transcendence, merely as such.[27] Even those who concede some transcendence but reject the idea of its reaching out into the immanence of man will reject rituals in the robustly and irreplaceably orienting sense. Those, on the other hand, who accept such rituals, will assume a transcendence which in addition discloses itself to, and thus invites ritualised access from, immanent humans.

14.2.2 Human Flourishing in Liberal Thought and Traditional Culture

(a) Individualism

At the bottom of modernists' hostility to, or distance from, ritual one finds either a rationalist or a naturalist anthropology. In either case, human embodiment, while acknowledged as indispensable for life on this earth, presents an embarrassment. Such embodiment imposes limitations which any accomplished human person will seek to overcome.[28] By contrast, at the bottom of post-modernists' hostility to traditional ritual (in the unconditionally normative sense of the term) lies an anthropology which accepts man's embodiment as an essential resource for human flourishing. Yet such flourishing is seen as ultimately contingent on individuals' choice of how to develop themselves and their own identity.

Despite their different anthropologies, this affirmation of choice links post-modernity with what modernity has lately come to be. Eighteenth century modernity, after all, must be distinguished from its contemporary re-interpretation. The modernity established by the various philosophers of the 18th century Enlightenment conceived of human freedom (whether realised through Kantian moral autonomy or through Humean epistemological scepticism) in the context of human virtue. Contemporary re-appraisals of the Enlightenment, in contrast, have limited their concern to the securing of every one's right to do as he pleases. He merely has to allow the same to others and

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[27] That is to say: All those who reject the notion of transcendence altogether will also be opposed to rituals in the strong, orienting sense of the term.

[28] Such overcoming is achieved either, for Kant, by morally subjecting the inclinations rooted in humans' animal nature or, for Hume, by sceptically discounting one's own instinctively unavoidable beliefs.

must in addition subscribe to substantive (if ambiguous) commitments, as for example to equality and life style pluralism. For Kant, legal respect for persons' self-determination envisaged a self that was designed for accomplished rationality. Respect for autonomy thus implied a regard for an identifiable goal of human excellence. Contemporary respect for human self-determination, in contrast, takes the human selves as they come. Freedom has become arbitrary. This is why contemporary modernity in effect has come to endorse that very ideal of self-creative individual choice which also underlies post-modernity's friendly obliviousness to rituals, cultures, and traditions. Modernity and post-modernity today have thus joined forces in affirming moral (and also political) liberalism. Both endorse the individual's contingent commitments as source of all authority and value. Both take mutual respect for individual self-determination[29] to be the essence of that allegedly rational morality which they either (as modernists) oppose to, or (as post-modernists) impose as peace-securing framework on, traditional cultures.

All of this implies that both modernists (today) and post-modernists base their case on individualism. This canonical individualism connects contemporary liberals, underlying Enlightenment rationalism and endorsement of a universally recognisable moral personhood, as well as their post-modern update as culturalism, with yet another (romantic, and subsequently existentialist[30]) current. Here man's normative essence is placed in the deep recesses of his personal idiosyncrasy. A person's external behaviour is judged in terms of its authenticity exclusively, and appreciated only if it "genuinely" expresses what goes in "inside".[31] Emphasis is placed on self-creative spontaneity and the general conditions for non-interchangeable identity and the authentic integrity of each particular human personality. Such "internalists" tolerate no rituals at all, not even for educational purposes: They suspect any imposition of external behaviour from outside as alienating the self from its embodied manifestations.[32]

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[29] Such respect can be offered in terms of abstaining from interference, but also in terms of providing goods and services which are indispensable for successful self determination in a world of scarce resources and limited opportunities. Depending on which option is chosen, the corresponding political framework will engage either a less or a more invasive (i.e. income-redistributing) state. In the present context, these important political ramifications must however be left aside.

[30] As Zhang's critique of Heidegger (p. 108) makes clear, it is the prejudice that time experiences are authentic only if they concern the individual by himself (and especially each individual's prospect of his own death) which is responsible for Existentialists' inability to appreciate the embodied, and thus relational character of humanity, which underlies the significance of rituals.

[31] See e.g. Wang's reference to Rousseau, p. 93, and David Solomon, pp. 169 f.

[32] For another prominent example, consider Sören Kierkegaard's 1855 criticism of "official Christianity" in 1972, 117 ff.

(b) Hostility to Families

Individualism has two implications for liberals' understanding of human flourishing. Liberals render the communities sustaining different cultures contingent on their members' individually and contingently offered consent. They do so either (as modernists) immediately or (as post-modernists) mediately. Far from acknowledging the family as a primary given for humanity (cf. Xianglong Zhang, p. 109), they see family life either (if they are rationalist moral modernists or internalists) merely as a temporary procreation and nurture provision, or (if they are post-modernists) as a merely potentially significant safeguard of the culture one might wish to adopt. In either case, such prioritisation of the individual motivates hostility to families' allegedly irrational (in the case of modernists), suppressive and alienating (in the case of internalists) or at least confining (in the case of post-modernists) impact.

Post-modern individualism, to be sure, is not in principle incompatible with the affirmation of "family values". A post-modern Western individualist may cherish partaking in the French tradition of rhythmicizing his weekly engagements around a schedule of festive family dinners.[33] With similar freedom, post-Enlightenment Christians may join with enlightened Confucians in highlighting the irreplaceability of families when it comes to eliciting an attitude of either religious or filial piety in the young. Yet such liberal "traditionalists" will also lobby for government policies that reduce the burden which child care and care for ageing relatives place on women who wish to pursue their professional career. Both kinds of familism, in other words, conceive of family life as contingently re-definable according to changing fashions of individual self-realisation, not however as a source of orientation. They do not accept the powerful side constraints such a life places on what should count as members' legitimate wishes. Nor do they acknowledge the family as the basis for fixed gender roles authorising unequal such constraints for husbands and wives. Liberal familists in particular oppose paternal authority. It is characteristic for the advocates of the "Chinese Enlightenment" of the Fourth of May Movement that they deplored the "backwardness" of Chinese culture precisely in view of the "ethic of subservience to patriarchal authority", both in the family and in the state (Schwarcz, 1986, p. 2). The target of their criticism was the Confucian ethos of self-submission that "kept sons obedient to fathers" (op.cit. p. 3).

Traditional cultures, in contrast, realise that rituals can unfold their orienting impact only if they are taught through and maintained by the natural bond

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[33] The liberal tolerance for families presupposes, of course, that the definition of "family" has been rendered contingent upon changing societal commitments. Governmental policies seeking to implement the – for example – German constitution's confessed commitment to protecting the family are thus re-framed so as to either focus on the presence of children, or on an odd mixture of sexual bonding and willingness to take some extended care of one another. All of this renders the stability of families a function of each of their mature and thus equal-status participants' contingently maintained good will (cf. Schwab, 2004).

of love (cf. Hsün-tzu's Hsiao-Ching, quoted by Bellah, 1991). Such bonds are created and cultivated in families which in turn derive their own orienting authority from such cultures' transcendent source.[34] In traditional ritual cultures, the life of the family thus embedded is itself normative. Here children are not only recognized as requiring family care, in order to grow into proper persons, and they are not only (in some cases) seen as morally obligated to offer some (more or less encompassing) gratitude for that care. Rather, they are taught to conceive of their very selves as immersed in their familial tradition as representative of their respectively particular native way of being human. Children, in such cultures, are taught to always conceive of themselves as having parents, grandparents, siblings, and further relatives. They are, moreover, encouraged to become parents and grandparents by themselves. Traditional cultures thus rest not only on an incarnate, but also on an essentially communal anthropology: By taking families as normative, they challenge their members to appreciate that some of their most intimate and enduring contacts remain forever withdrawn from their choice.[35]

Moreover, even the normative impact which man's embodiment has in traditional cultures differs from the naturalism endorsed by some Enlightenment thinkers. This normative impact refers to a transcendent, and at the same time self-disclosing source of orientation in life. As this source of orientation discloses itself to essentially incarnate beings, it does so through incarnate, i.e. ritualised ways, which in turn allow those beings to internalise, express and harmonize themselves with that transcendence. As a result, traditional cultures are not only anti-rationalist (as well as anti-moralist) in taking rituals seriously, but also essentially anti-individualist in taking family life seriously. Such cultures are therefore anti-liberal. They endorse obedience, or the ethos of self-submission, as a basic frame of mind which reflects the order of rules governing the proper ritual comportment, as these rules in turn are specified by the order of authority within a gender-differentiated natural community.

Looking back at the diverse intellectual currents which have entered into the contemporary "cultural" mainstream of the West, with its characteristically secularising attempts at conceptualising what gives meaning to human life, both its poverty and its seductive appeal can now be better appreciated. On the one hand, post-modernists share with contemporary modernists and the more idiosyncratic romanticist and existentialist thinkers an understanding of human flourishing and of the source of all authority that reduces freedom to individuals' arbitrary choice. Whatever such choice may focus

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[34] For Christians, the Divine endorsement of the family is powerfully proclaimed in – e.g. – the Decalogue's 5th commandment and in Col. 3:20; for Confucians one might cite the neo-Confucian view of the family as an image of the universe (Bauer, 1974, p. 292, see also Bellah who quotes Hsiao-Ching (1991, 87 f, and also Ching, 1993, 57 f).

[35] According to traditional cultures, even if some people refuse to fulfil their roles as fathers or sons, this refusal does not relieve them from having failed as fathers and sons.

on, as source of meaning for a person's life, remains contingent on that person's own wilfully sustained consent. That source of meaning is thus incapable of sustaining that person precisely in those situations of weakness and disorientation in which he is most in need of normative support. That normative identity which identity was to enable persons to navigate the multiplicity of available options and that constant change which characterise contemporary life in developed countries, and the lack of which identity was recognised as the motive behind the general call for cultural renewal in such countries, is unavailable in the context of the "culture" of individualist liberalism. On the other hand, that very complex mainstream derives its seductive appeal from a commitment to human dignity in terms of two mutually incompatible, but nevertheless each in itself almost irresistible construals of freedom: freedom as moral responsibility and freedom as spontaneous self-directed creativity. It is this twofold (if inconsistent) craving for universally uniform personhood and uniqueness of personality which traditional cultures must take seriously if they are to succeed on the global market of competing cultures. Or it is this twofold craving which traditional cultures must address when immunising their commitment to paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethos of self submission against its liberal rejection. But before we turn to an exemplar of such immunisation, it will be helpful to juxtapose the liberal mainstream with a short characterisation of its traditional counterpart.

14.3 Internal Conditions for Cultural Renewal

After having laid out (and exposed the poverty of) the intellectual environment which puts robustly traditional ritual cultures in the defensive (i.e. against external enemies) today, the second part of this essay discusses possibilities for strengthening such cultures internally. Here the decisive question "how cultural renewal can be undertaken effectively" (p. 21) has been nicely specified by Ana Iltis: should one start with the rituals or with the underlying commitments, or does this question merely raise the paradox of chicken-and-egg priority?

As a way of approaching this paradox, this essay recommends the twofold approach Iltis also seems to propose, but integrates it into an ongoing challenge. Each mature participant of a traditional culture is seen as responsible for that culture's integrity. This requires from each an ever renewed effort at exploring the narrative at the basis of rituals' authority, in order to disclose and ever recall and deepen one's grasp of the fullness of the meaning these rituals embody. Such efforts at internalisation also include willingness to protect the integrity of that narrative against the disruptive influence of reductive interpretations, even from within one's own culture, which merely seek to humour the spirit of changing times. At the same time, this responsibility also requires that, while engaged in their rituals, participants seek to open their hearts to the truth these rituals embody. Such a quest in turn

implies ever renewing their meticulous and untiring faithfulness to what those rituals impose. This second part of the essay, while surely also endorsing the second of these tasks, will focus on providing some guidelines in view of the first.

A first section explores the different ways in which Christianity and Confucianism traditionally have defined both the significance of ritual itself and its embedded-ness in the life of the family. Despite their differences, both cultures emphasise fatherhood, authority, and filial obedience in a way that offends today's modern and post-modern commitment to the freedom of spontaneous self-expression and self-realisation. The second section deepens the Christian account. Here fallen humans' constitutive vulnerability is exposed to the temptation not only of sin in general, but also of subjecting traditional Christianity to a rationalist distortion. It is this distortion, as highlighted with exemplary vigour by Western scholasticism, which renders contemporary liberals' illiberal intolerance (to a Christianity they no longer recognize as distorted) even understandable. Their (modern or post-modern) (either moralistic or selfhood idolising) aggressiveness can thus be appreciated as arising from concern about important elements of human flourishing, which an already de-spiritualised understanding of Divine and earthly paternal authority had left sadly un-attended to.

These elements are commonly addressed today under the heading of respect for human dignity; at bottom, as has already been indicated, they arise from a quite legitimate commitment to human personhood and personality. Given these justified aspects of today's unjustified hostility to robustly ritual cultures, the third section attends to the way in which traditional, properly ritualised (i.e. Orthodox) Christianity fulfils both desiderata for a properly orienting culture: On the one hand, such a Christianity presents the Divine authority backing its universal invitation (Lk. 14:23) in terms of an urgent paternal love that is in an exemplary manner personal (i.e. realised in its fullness among the three persons of the Holy Trinity, and expressed in view of this fullness by the Triune God's personal creation of and offer of redemption for each human being). On the other hand, that same Christianity offers theological resources, which, if only properly attended to, provide a safeguard against its own ("paternalist") distortion. With the subsequent Conclusion turning, once again, to Confucianism, it will become clear that among those resources, those which guard against misconceptions of authority, filial obedience, and the ethos of self submission are particularly salient. The recognised indispensability of proper safeguards, once established for Christianity, presents a challenge also for the Confucian endorsement of paternal authority and the filial piety of obedience: It encourages Confucians to secure comparable safeguards against any de-personalising distortion of their corresponding cultural norms.

14.3.1 The Role of Ritual and Family Within Traditional Christianity, as Compared with Confucianism

(a) Ritual

(i) Similarities Between Christian and Confucian Engagement of Ritual

In both Christian and Confucian contexts, rituals govern specific series of bodily postures, gestures, and motions. They sometimes require special attires and objects, and often also a specially prepared place. They encompass humans as spatially and temporally located. Unlike behavioural conditioning (which also involves the body), rituals do not seek to realise immediate and finite empirical results. They are designed so as to encompass the mind (cf. Wang, pp. 95 f).[36] Yet unlike mere mental stimuli (such as threats or promised rewards), they engage the mind as it conceives of the self. While immediately governing only very specific situations in which closely related humans are taught how to cooperate, rituals in addition seek to inspire attitudes and emotions which will eventually sustain such interaction even outside the regulated occasions.[37] By closely regulating specific situations, the corresponding attitudes and emotions can subsequently radiate into to other situations, and even into other relationships.[38] Recognition of such a "spill-over" effect does not defeat rituals "internal" goal. It rather extends that goal so as to have it encompass a person's integration into a ritual-directed life.[39] Even beyond its particular training effect, rituals' impact on persons' self-awareness thus supplies a meaning for their life and their ritual-mediated self-cultivation, which in turn supports the desired compliance with what the embedding culture normatively imposes.

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[36] In the present context of a comparison between Confucian and Christian rituals, further dimensions of ritual must remain unaddressed. For example, we will not be able to discuss ritual's function of presenting actors with a stage on which their passions and feelings can run their course in a civilized manner, as portrayed in Kolesch (2006).

[37] For Confucianism, with its much greater attention to defined relationships, this is confirmed e.g. by Ching (1993, p. 59) and by Li Zehou (1992, p. 91).

[38] It is characteristic that the robbers (in the classic novel *The outlaws of the marsh,* Nai'an, 1993), (because they represent the truly ordered life as opposed to a political system that has succumbed to evil, are portrayed as pervasively ritual-faithful.

[39] The particular affinity between ritual and love is highlighted by Gallatin: "Without such repeated, predictable interactions, there is no ongoing love *story*.... Because what makes love real is its constancy and its predictability... It is a powerful *sameness,* an invariability lying beneath all the changes and alterations of life." This affinity is even higher when the "object" of love is the unchanging God, Who revealed the rituals through which He wants to be loved: "worship whose object is the unchangeable God must in itself be changeless in nature. Trying to touch Sameness through random acts of spontaneity... is like my attempting to hold in an unbroken embrace someone who is standing immovably on solid ground, while I myself am standing on a revolving carousel" (2002, p. 86).

Through ritual, humans learn to extend what they then recognize as their social (Jonathan Chan, pp. 197 ff) and their cosmic inclusion into every aspect of their own conduct of life. Thus bringing themselves in line with that cosmic context, they (at the very least) come to define their own, merely finite and limited existence in terms of that integration. In the process, humans find themselves symbolically transferred onto another stage, on which other, much more significant performances take place.[40]

In thus imposing its own goals on its participants, ritual discloses itself as something that is not so much 'performed as "entered into". Partaking in ritual involves submitting to a superior authority not only insofar as one obeys all the particulars prescribed. The submission also extends to one's aspiring at leaving even that self (who had initially resolved thus to obey) behind. Such submission involves a self-dedication that is *kenotic* ("self-emptying") insofar as it renounces the (un-accomplished) self one presently still carries along, and exchanges it for the self one hopes to develop. The act of partaking in ritual means recognising humans' vocation itself as ritual-mediated.[41]

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[40] Cf. Fei, as quoted by Chan (pp. 197 f). This importance is reflected in Confucius' saying that one should always behave as if one were about to perform an important sacrifice, and that one should deal with others as if they were very important guests. In a kindred way, Irenaeus of Lyon speaks of God calling fallen humans to "things of primary importance by means of those which were secondary; that is, to things that are real by means of those that are typical; and by things temporal to eternal; and by the carnal to the spiritual; and by the earthly to the heavenly" (Chap. XIV # 3, 1995, p. 479).

[41] When Confucius is recorded of having dedicated himself for 60 years to the rituals, before his freedom of will had been re-fashioned in such a way as to naturally harmonise with what ritual prescribes, it becomes clear that he led a life that did not merely make room for ritual, while at other times pursuing other business. Instead, he must have integrated whatever other business was needed into the spirit of the ritual, so as to become an altogether other person. In a kindred spirit Christians, in order to rightly partake of their central ritual (the Holy Eucharist), are called to integrate the entirety of their earthly life, including all their contingent business, relaxation and socialising, into that purity of heart which renders them worthy participants. Even more, they die and are re-born: "This offering strips us of everything: we are lost [Mt. 16:25]. We cease to exist. We die. At the same time, this is the moment when we are born into life; we partake in divine life through offering everything, through becoming an offering of thanksgiving. So the loss of our life is at the same time the emergence of our existence into a world 'new and uncompounded': and when we have reached that world, we are truly human beings" (Vasileios, 1998, p. 59).

(It is with some misgiving that I speak of "partaking in ritual", especially in view of the Eucharist. Strictly speaking, what Christians here partake in is a bread and wine that has been mystically transformed. Engelhardt and Cherry have therefore rightly spoken of the ontologically transforming impact of ritual. It is precisely because that ontological change is at the source of all ritual, that I have refrained from even using the term "performative": Insofar as that term suggests that ritual can do something of its own, a Christian must insist that whatever is accomplished is due to the grace of God. The ritual here constitutes rather a setting for the required human cooperation in that grace-given ontological change.)

Apart from such general structural similarities, Christians, just like traditional Confucians (as portrayed by several essays in this volume), lead a ritual-saturated life. There are services for the first day after a woman has given birth (*Service* 1996, 266 f), for the naming of the child on the eighth day (op.cit. 267 f), for the woman on the 40th day after giving birth (op.cit. 268), baptism (loc.cit. 271 ff),[42] with chrismation (in case of adult persons, a blessing of their state as catechumens precedes) and holy communion during Divine Liturgy [43] (op.cit. 64 ff), along with the occasional thanksgiving services (*Service*, 1996, 512ff, 559 ff). As a full member of the Church, baptized Christians partake in the Holy Liturgy (along with Vespers on Saturday night and Matins, op.cit. 1 ff) every Sunday, and they prepare themselves according to the relevant rules (cf. *Liturgicon*, 1989, 219 ff) so as to be able to worthily partake of communion as often as possible, and add a proper thanksgiving (op.cit. 327 ff). Usually, this preparation includes the further ritual of confession (op.cit. 286 ff) and absolution. The major yearly commemorations in a Christian's life celebrate the day of his baptism and – if these differ – the feast of the saint whose name he bears (cf. the "Order of the blessing of the slava", *Book of Needs*, 2002, 279 ff), along with the yearly commemoration of his deceased Orthodox family members (office of "Panikhida", *Service* 1996, 437 ff, and of the blessing of the "Koliva", *Book of Needs*, 2002, 266 ff). Apart from that, Christians endeavour to partake of the full yearly cycle of church memorial days and feasts,[44] along with the prescribed fasting periods and other preparations,[45] all the while participating in the life of their parish (from the office for the founding of a church, *Service*, 1996, 479 ff, to the yearly patron saints' feasts). To an even greater extent, the whole life of those who have dedicated themselves to monasticism (cf. the hour services, *Service*, 1996, 38 ff) or who serve the church in the world, from Metropolitans and Patriarchs down to the priests (cf. the *Liturgicon*, 1989, 3 ff), deacons, and readers (with their respective consecration services, *Service*, 1996, 307 ff), choir members and the women preparing the meal for after-liturgy fellowship, is permeated by particular church-related rituals. Rituals further accompany even lay Christians throughout the week.[46] These encompass their daily (morning and evening) prayers (*Divine Prayers*, 1993, 23 ff, along with those at meals) and for special

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[42] A profound commentary on Holy Baptism is given in Schmemann (1974).

[43] A good introduction into the rituals of the Divine Liturgy is offered by Schmemann (2003).

[44] A good survey of the feasts of the Church year is found in Schmemann (1994) and Vlachos (2000). See also the detailed accounts in Festal Menaion (1996), in *Divine Prayers*, 1993, 219 ff, also the services for the blessing of the waters (*Service*, 1996, 470 ff).

[45] The most prominent example of a special fasting period is Lent (Schmemann, 1969), see the Lenten *Service*s in the *Liturgicon*, 1989, 374 ff, and in *Greek Orthodox*, 1985. The Pentecostarion is included in *Synaxarion* (1999).

[46] The ritual of invoking the name of God and of thanksgiving is even to permeate every moment of a person's life: "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Co. 3:17).

occasions, like the beginning of a journey (*Service*, 1996, 524 ff), occasional priestly blessings of their home (*Book of Needs*, 2002, 211f, 269 ff) or other objects (such as a cemetery, op.cit. 237 ff, a cross over a grave, op.cit. 248 ff, a grave, op.cit. 251f, or any kind of other objects, op.cit. 269 ff), beginnings of school, work, travel (op.cit. 313), warfare (op.cit. 349 ff), various kinds of misfortune (op.cit. 313 ff) or major changes in life (such as marriage[47], holy unction in case of illness[48], and special undertakings such as pilgrimages). In minute form (to take up Fan's term), rituals permeate Christians' every activity in life (such as the entering of a church, *Divine Prayers*, 1993, 106), most frequently and visibly as crossings on innumerable significant occasions, as taking holy bread and water upon rising in the morning, as kisses and seasonal greetings exchanged when meeting one another, and as alms offered to those who beg, the burning of incense, kissing of icons, and prostrations. Rituals and larger ceremonies accompany Christians' passing away (office for the parting of the soul from the body, *Service*, 1996, 360ff, the office after the parting of the soul, *Book of Needs*, 2002, 137 ff), their burial (op.cit. 368 ff), the office at the first forty days after their repose, the half-year service and the subsequent yearly memorial and intercession services, both on the yearly date of their completion and on the memorial days prescribed by the Church.

The biblical texts lack any specific term for "ritual", precisely because rituals form such an integral part of (Jewish and) Christian life, that no special term is even needed.[49] Not only the Old Testament which devotes the whole book "Leviticus" to ritual details, but also the New Testament is saturated with references to the importance of ritual. These concern:

- the veneration of God,[50]
- Christ's own obedience to the law and its ritual implications,[51]
- Christ's enjoining others to obey the ritual rules of the law,[52]

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[47] The full marriage rite is available e.g. in Meyendorff (1983, 113 ff).

[48] The full Rite of the anointing of the sick is available e.g. in Meyendorff (2009, 113 ff).

[49] The deeper reason, of course, is provided by St. Basil of Caesarea, when he distinguishes between that part of the teaching of the Church which is expressed in words (the "kerygma"), and that other part which permeates the life of the Church (the "dogma"). The latter remains covered in silence so as to keep it from being desecrated (Basil of Caesarea, 1995, *On the Holy Spirit*, chap. 27). This account also allows integrating Moses Mendelsohn's observation (1983, p. 102), that in the Hebrew tradition it was "at first, expressly forbidden to write more about the law than God had caused Moses to record for that nation".

[50] In the NT, see Math. 2:3, 11 where the wise men come to worship Jesus as King of the Jews, 6:9 where Jesus teaches his followers how to pray the "Our Father", 14:33 and 28:17 where the disciples worship Jesus, 17:4 where Peter suggests building "tabernacles", 26:7 where Magdalena applies ointment to Jesus' feet, Mark 11:7 where the people of Jerusalem celebrate Jesus' arrival.

[51] cf. Math. 5:17–20, 3:15, His letting Himself be baptized by John (cf. Math. 3:6), Lk. 2:21–24), His being named, circumcised and presented in the temple according to Jewish rituals, Math. 14:23, and the many occasions of His praying.

[52] Matt. 8:4

- Christ's using ritual forms for accomplishing what He could also accomplish without ritual,[53] and
- Christ's instituting rituals for the Church.[54]

In particular, the Gospel of St. John has Christ Himself summarising the "gaining insight through complying" – principle of any traditional ritual culture: One must do the will of God, i.e. pursue the path of a ritualised life, in order to acquire knowledge about its Divine origin,[55] i.e. about the validity of the normative orientation provided by that path.[56]

This is why, just as traditional Confucians (as portrayed by several essays in this volume[57]), so traditional Christians are taught that merely external "ritualising", without participation of the inner man, does not suffice (Rom. 2:25, 28–29).[58] Thus St. John's baptism of purification is insufficient without the fruits "meet of repentance" (Math. 3:8, 10, 12). The ritual of presenting offerings at God's altar are not accepted unless the one offering such gifts has first made peace with his brother (Mt. 5:23–24), and the sacrifice must be "salted" with a salt that "resides" in the person making the sacrifice (Mk. 9:49–50). The Pharisees are castigated by Christ because they clean the outside of the chalice (and that also means: they correctly perform the rituals) without cleansing the inside (Mt. 23:26, i.e. their heart). The ritual of thanksgiving in the temple for the gift of having been healed is not complete without thanksgiving to the Divine healer (Lk. 17:17). And in general, Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees and Scribes (which motivated their deadly hostility) rests on the fact that they reduced their ritual behaviour to mere externalities, without adjusting their

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[53] Mk. 7:32–35, 8:23–25, Lk. 9:6.

[54] Matt. 16:18–19 and 18:18, where He authorises the Church to bind and to lose members' sins, 17:21, where the Church's healing power is linked with praying and fasting, 26:26–28, where the ritual of the holy communion is instituted (cf. Jn. 6:35, 48, 53–56), Math. 28:19, where the disciples are commanded to teach and baptize, Mk. 6:13, where holy unction is exemplified.

[55] In his commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Archimandrite Vasileus writes: "It is in this praise and thanksgiving that we come to know theology, and the origin of the world is revealed" (1984, p. 57).

[56] "Anyone who resolves *to do* the will of God *will know* whether the teaching is from God [i.e. offers valid, transcendence-based orientation] or whether I am speaking on my own [i.e. as the merely human being those around him assumed him to be]" (John 7:17) (italics mine, CDH).

[57] Cf. Fan (p. 155), also the *Analects*, 3:3, 3:12, 15:17, as quoted by Ching (1993, p. 60), Fung Yu-Lan's observation that Confucius prioritised the "heartfelt distress" over the ritual details in the rites of mourning (1952, 64), and also Eichhorn's distinction between *li* and *jen* (1964, 55 f).

[58] Citations from the Old Testament would be legion, e.g. Jes. 1:11–17, 13:29, Hosea 3:6 (cf. also the Patristic echo, e.g. in St. Cyprian of Carthage, 1995, *Treatises* Book III:1, 530 f., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV:16, 1995, 480 ff, and the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* I:37, 1995, p. 87). I shall restrict myself to the New Testament.

personal and social life to what these rituals teach (Math. 23:1–7, 13–31, Mk. 7:1–8, Lk. 11:37–48, 16:15).[59]

(ii) Differences Between Christian and Confucian Attitudes to Ritual

Christians and Confucians differ concerning the manner in which knowledge about and perfection in virtue depend on ritual: For the latter, both seem to result from human application exclusively; they constitute an exhaustively human achievement. For the former, by contrast, both ultimately result from the gift of Divine grace.[60] To be sure, even for Christians that gift in turn requires some (either antecedent or subsequent) Confucian-type personal application[61] as a necessary correlate.[62] Still, there is a difference in emphasis which accounts for the unique way in which Christian rituals' importance are limited.

Just as traditional Confucians,[63] so Christians know that ritual rules can be relativised when compliance would hinder their ultimate purpose. Thus it is more important to heal a suffering human than to observe the Sabbath (Lk. 13:14–17, 14:1–5). Yet unlike for traditional Confucians, for Christians this holds even as a general principle: to love God and one's neighbour is "greater than" all sacrifice and burnt offerings (Mk. 12:32). In particular, Christians recognize the relativity of rituals in two respects. First, they see themselves as occupying a specific position (as placed "in the last days") within a Divine history of salvation, which profoundly re-interprets previous rituals'

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[59] Thus Xunzi (as quoted in Chapter 11) emphasises the importance of a "good will" that is spontaneously, yet in a clearly ritual-training-inspired manner, directed to self-perfection. And this perfection concerns not only mastering the externalities, but especially also the specific human excellence which ritual is to develop. As Bell argues, Xunzi demands that before one begins a ritual, one ought to place oneself into that very frame of mind which the ritual was initially supposed to generate, then to call it up, and subsequently to express it. We may assume that at the stage of mastery, this relationship between the internal and the external is reversed: instead of the external forms supporting the internal attitude, now the internal attitude enlivens the external forms.

For Christians, this emphasis on the internal focus of external ritual is even more radical. As St. John Cassian claims: "he who does not pray with an earnest mind cannot perform that threefold bow of reverence which is customary among the brethren at the conclusion of the service" (*The first conference of Abbot Isaac,* 9: 34, 1995, p. 400).

[60] Cf. Bruschweiler, Symeon, Archimandrite: "The liturgy is not only human. Before the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration the deacon, addressing the priest, says: 'It is time for the Lord to act' (Ps. 118, 126). The human action during the liturgy is also Divine action, this is why it is called *Divine Liturgy*. It is a divine-human cooperation" (2003, p. 76).

[61] The extent to which Christians are called to sanctify every aspect of their lives can be seen to correspond to Fan's emphasis on the minute rituals (e.g. p. 146).

[62] Thus St. John Cassian emphasizes that the ritual of prayer will work its effect ("if we ask according to his will", op.cit. p. 399, i.e. if what is desired promotes a person's sanctification) in proportion to a person's serious application in faith, perseverance, importunity, almsgiving, and purification of his life (op.cit. p. 398).

[63] Cf. Fan's discussion (pp. 154–157) of limits to the obligatory character of rituals.

orienting impact (1.Peter 1:18–19). While already the rituals imposed on God's chosen people in the Old Testament were oriented towards training in love of God and neighbour, the New Testament recognizes that these same rituals (the "law of Moses") served the additional goal of exposing humans' inability – on the basis of their own efforts – to achieve that love. The Law of Moses thus was meant to confront its subjects with their inability to work out their own justification (Rom. 3:20); it prepared the way for the "law of Jesus" as the law of grace and truth (Jn. 1:17, Rom. 8:2, Gal. 2: 16 f).[64] Or, as Luke has it: "The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed" (LK. 16:16).

This new context for the old rituals is laid open by Christ's presenting Himself as the Divine master of rituals, Who is therefore also entitled to set aside what He established (cf. Math. 15:1, 10–11, 19–20, Mk. 2:23–28, Jn. 4:7–10, Acts 26:4 ff).[65] It even happens that the Divinely imposed order of initiations is subverted, as when the Roman commander Cornelius encounters the Holy Spirit even before having been taught and baptized (Acts 10:1 ff).

Second, Christian rituals' internal goal, while never leaving ritualising as such behind,[66] also envisages periods of a purely spiritual mode of being which, while they persist, transcend the actually performed ritual. Just as for traditional Confucians and their vision of wisdom and humanity, so for Christians such a vision (as communion with God) is not cognitively accessible (and practically attainable) independently of the ritual-saturated life. Only that life offers the (transcendently revealed) way of approaching such a "beyond". But unlike with traditional Confucians, traditional Christians recognize that at certain stages of a person's development (i.e. toward sainthood as the gift of grace), that "beyond" can be experienced as immediately given (as intimate transformation through the Divine energies). For a more or less extended time,

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[64] This thought is well expressed in the way St. Ephrem the Syrian links the proscription in Paradise (not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge) with the temple service instituted by Moses: "God did not permit Adam to enter that innermost Tabernacle; this was withheld, so that first he might prove pleasing in his service of that outer Tabernacle; like a priest with fragrant incense, Adam's keeping of the commandment was to be his censer; then he might enter before the Hidden One into that hidden Tabernacle. The symbol of Paradise was depicted by Moses, who made the two sanctuaries, the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies; into the outer one entrance was permitted, but into the inner, only once a year. So too with Paradise, God closed off the inner part, but He opened up the outer, wherein Adam might gaze" (1990, p. 96).

An especially patent example of the way in which the old law got replaced by the new law is offered in Acts 10:11 ff, where St. Peter receives in a vision instruction about the way in which he must abandon the old Jewish laws of ritual cleanness in order to obey the new law of turning to all the nations (cf. also Acts 15: 1 ff, 21:21 ff on the law of circumcision).

[65] Thus also, as St. Cyril of Alexandria points out (1983, p. 198), the woman with an issue of blood is healed by Christ not only even though she violated the law in touching His garment, but precisely because her faith exceeded her fidelity to the law.

[66] As we learn from Rev. 4:8–11, even the angels in heaven, as embodied in a different, non-corporeal manner, "celebrate" and "worship" in some fashion.

such gifts transform humans' embodied nature in such a way as to exclude all possibility of ritual.[67] Or, to put it differently: like with traditional Confucianism, traditional Christianity conceives of rituals not as "means" but as a "way". But unlike the former, the latter is nourished by the experience that God's special friends are at times entirely taken off the ground on which that "way" is paved.[68]

(b) Family

A similar ambivalence characterises traditional Christianity's view of the family.

(i) Similarities in Christians' and Confucians' Affirmation of Family Life

Traditional Christians, just like the Confucians represented in this volume, take families and the obligations binding their members very seriously.[69] Restricting

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[67] See for example Motovilov's experience of St. Seraphim allowing him to partake in the Divine uncreated light (Moor, 1994, p. 167).

This realm of experience is also addressed in Katos' analysis of the way in which Evagrius Ponticus treated noetic prayer as tantamount to liturgical ritual': "Evagrius argued that noetic prayer is the equivalent of an offering or even a sacrifice unto God. . . . He suggested that noetic prayer is analogous to various aspects of Old Testament ritual offering and sacrifice. For example, Evagrius likened noetic prayer unto incense. . . . Evagrius' metaphor suggests that the smell of this sweet incense arose only from a fire of self-purification, in which one purged the soul of sin and passion. . . Evagrius also incorporated the imagery of an altar into his metaphor of noetic prayer as an offering.." (2008, 58 ff).

[68] One might ask whether the regard for such a "beyond" does not, once again, introduce that very external purpose for ritual, which we took pains to reject when discussing its merely morally instrumental understandings (see above, pp. 11 ff). It is at this point that we need to dissociate our understanding of "internal" and "external" goals from that offered by MacIntyre (2007, p. 181), and approvingly invoked by Solomon (p. 164). Surely we can agree with MacIntyre that a goal of a practice is internal if it does not transform that practice into a mere means. And surely, acknowledging that getting candy is not an internal goal of chess-playing (because chess was not invented for the sake of candy) accords with acknowledging that sanctification is indeed an internal goal of Christian ritual (because that ritual was instituted for the sake of rendering humans receptive to God's sanctifying grace). Yet unlike playing chess for the joy of achieving excellence in it, sanctification as the internal goal of Christian ritual can also be Divinely granted within non-ritual settings (e.g. repentance, suffering, offering works of love). Moreover, while surely the Church prays during liturgy for sanctification of all who "love the beauty of the Church" (and thus of the Church's ritual, Hapgood 121), thus endorsing the value of ritual in and by itself, she does so ultimately because ritual prepares humans for sanctification. While for MacIntyre, external goals can be appropriated (at the exclusion of other owners), this does not hold for Christian ritual's "beyond", namely sanctification.

[69] Moreover, just as with Confucianism, so Christianity understands the obligations in view of one's parents to also imply obligations in view of teachers, elders, masters, rulers, and benefactors (Nikodemos, 2006, p. 94).

ourselves again to New Testament sources,[70] ample evidence supports this similarity:

- As evinced by the two family trees for Jesus given by two of the evangelists, the identity of a person is embedded in his ancestry (cf. Math. 1:1–17, Lk. 3:23–38, Eph. 6:1).[71]
- Among the Mosaic commandments, the one that enjoins Jews to honour their father and mother (Deut. 5:16) is the only one that is strengthened by a reward, and thus particularly highlighted. Accordingly, Christ castigates those who hypocritically invoke ritual rules so as to "justify" avoiding to fulfil one's obligation to parents (cf. Math. 15:4–8, Mk. 7:10–13).[72]
- Already when first confronted with his female "alter ego", Adam in Paradise is represented as prophesising concerning the indissolubility of marriage (Gen. 2:24), which was later confirmed by Jesus (Math. 19:3–9).[73]
- Already in Paradise, a Divine injunction imposes on the first couple the duty to multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). This commandment was also endorsed by St. Paul when he taught that married women are sanctified by giving birth to children (1. Tim. 2:15a).

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[70] The Old Testament provides, of course, a still much more fertile source (Ex. 20:12, Lev. 19:3, 20:9). For the Christian-Confucian dialogue pursued here however, the one example of how Jacob's sons performed the mourning rituals for their deceased father may be sufficient, see Gen. 50:1 ff.

[71] The depth of Christians' obligation to their ancestors is highlighted by the following remark of Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov): "The Lord has justified and sanctified the ascending line of His ancestors according to the flesh. Thus, by obeying Christ's commandments, each of us can restore the image of God which is darkened in us through the tears of repentance, and thereby justify his own personal existence as well as contribute to the justification of the existence of our preceding generations" (2003a, 10 f, translation CDH). Confucians might be pleased to discover a Christian manner of "ancestor worship" which not only honours ancestors, but even improves that spiritual state which they continue to endure (until the final day of judgment), without however their being able any longer to influence on their own.

[72] Jesus himself not only spent the first thirty years of his life as the obedient carpenter son of his carpenter foster father, but even obeyed his mother, when she prompted him to do a miracle even before his "time had come" (Jn. 2:5). Even when approaching a tormenting death while nailed to the cross, he still took care of his mother, entrusting her to his favourite disciple, thus making sure she would not be left without support (Jn. 19:25–27).

[73] When Adam foresees that a man will leave father and mother for the sake of his wife, this does not imply any obliviousness to the obligations of a son to his parents, but instead an affirmation of the stronger link between the sexes.

The character of marriage as a Divine ordinance, and thus the metaphysically revealed binding force of the crowning ritual, are highlighted by a comparison with John Locke's 1690 *Second treatise on government,* where "natural rights" (i.e. a rational moral account) supplement the contract account of marriage (chap. 7, # 82f, 1955, 65f).

(ii) Differences in View of the Limitation of the Role of the Family

Perhaps unlike traditional Confucianism,[74] traditional Christianity limits its affirmation of the family by a wider horizon. This happens on various levels, and leads to different degrees of modification of family obligations.

On a first level, the (biological) concept of family is widened.

- The two family trees of Jesus (offered by Matthew and Luke) disagree with each other. Not only did different legal rules (such as Levirate marriages and laws about female inheritance) suggest different accounts, but both also seek to establish Jesus as the Messiah (the promised redeemer of Israel) according to different symbolic methods.
- In particular, Mathew's account introduces four mothers, including Ruth and Rahab, who, even though they did not even belong to the chosen people, were distinguished by outstanding commitment (in the first case) to her mother in law and (in both) to the people and God of Israel.
- Both St. John the Baptist and Jesus Himself argue that (biologically) belonging to the "seed of Abraham" is irrelevant, unless one also acts according to the commandments of God (Math. 3:9, 8:11–12, John 8:33–40, cf. also John 4:20–24).
- St. Paul restricts the saving impact of bearing children by the proviso that those children will remain in the faith, in love, and in holiness (1. Tim. 2:15b).

On a second level, just as Abraham was tested in view of his willingness to leave the gods of his own fathers (Jos. 24:1–2) and to sacrifice even his only son when ordered to do so by God, so also Christians' faithfulness to God is portrayed as overruling family loyalty and obligation (Gen. 22:12).

- Even though He obeys her, Christ still rebukes His mother when she demands a miracle He is not yet ready to give (John 2:3–4).
- When calling disciples, Christ imposes on them the neglect of their duty to bury their father (Mt. 8:21–22, cf. Lk. 14:20, 24).
- When preparing his disciples for their future ordeals, Christ foretells them that brothers, parents, and children will deliver up one another to death (Math. 10:21, cf. 10:35–37).

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[74] From the literature available to me, I venture to conclude that different Confucians seem to occupy different positions in view of the possibility or necessity of relativizing family loyalty. At the one end of the spectrum, we find in the *Analects* 13:18 (as quoted by Ching, 1997, 78 f) the claim that sons must not give away fathers, nor fathers sons, even if either one of them broke the law. A middle position (which is not necessarily incompatible with the first one) is occupied by Hsün Tzu (as quoted in Bauer, 1974, p. 90), who rules that if filial obedience would endanger the parents or expose them to shame or cause them to behave in an uncultured way, such obedience should not be offered. But clearly the first position is incompatible with its opposite extreme, where filial piety is seen as a way of inspiring a merely generalized humanitarian virtue and benevolence, which sheds all "family partiality". This latter position seems to characterise Confucius himself, at least in Bauer's presentation as the "great discoverer of the virtue of humanity" (46).

- Christ promises everlasting life to those who forsake, and even hate, their families for His sake (Mk. 19:29, Lk. 14:26).[75]

On a third level, "family" is re-defined on the basis of Christians' having been "born again" (John 3:3).

- Christ refuses to offer any special privilege of family-access to His mother and brothers, and defines His relatives as those who do the will of His Father in heaven (Math. 12:48–50).
- Through His saving death and resurrection, i.e. through having assumed human flesh, overcome death and sanctified that flesh by taking its resurrected form to the seat "at the right hand" of His Divine Father, Christ has re-established man's filial relationship to God.[76] This relationship had – as it were – been obfuscated[77] through Adam's fall. Christ therefore not only includes non-Jews among those who will receive healing (Math. 15:26–28) and the promise of salvation (cf. John 4:23, 10:16), but He also endorses a universal brotherhood of all human beings (Mt. 5:16, 23, cf. also Mk. 9:36).[78]

On a still further level, Christ's twofold, human and Divine nature is designed in such a way as to – among other objectives – render Him a model of filial piety in view of His own eternal Divine Father (John 4:34, 5:18, 30, 7:16, 8:42)[79] and to invite humans into a kindred filial piety. All affirmations as well as limitations of both ritual and family values can thus be explained (in a preliminary short-hand manner) by reference to God's Divine Fatherhood: Both rituals and family life are affirmed insofar as God generally endorses them, and both are overruled whenever God's particular paternal providence intervenes. Traditional Christians therefore differ from Confucians in endorsing ritual obedience and filial piety only to the extent that these can be integrated into man's more basic obedience and filial piety as directed to their heavenly Father.

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[75] Cf. Deut. 33:9.

[76] Cf. Cyprian of Carthage, 1995, *Treatise IV,* 9–11, 449 f.

[77] While God Himself continued His paternal care unchanged even after the fall of man (for example by clothing those He had just expelled from Paradise in a garment of hide, Gen. 3:22), humans no longer could muster the confidence necessary to invoke that fatherly care on their own. It is this confidence which Christ restored and extended to all mankind.

[78] This extension of human son-ship to man's relationship to God also encompasses the replacement of humans' spirit of servitude (of obedience to the old law's ritual prescriptions) by a spirit of son-ship (Rom. 8:15), i.e. it links the transformation of family with the transformation of ritual.

[79] Of course, the Trinitarian theological context adds a still further dimension to this filial piety: cf. Christ's declaration of His unity with the Father (as in John 5:19–23).

14.3.2 Adam's Fall and the Temptation of Rational Self-Sufficiency: Power, Judging, and the Destruction of Freedom

The previous section has laid out the background of Christianity's specific way of affirming, but also limiting, the significance of ritual (and its embedding family life). The following section attends to the causes and consequences of Christianity's cultural distortion, and thus of the conditions for the modern liberal rejection of family life and ritual.

(a) Mankind's Fall and Redemption

According to the Patristic tradition,[80] Christians' filial obedience is required by their heavenly Father with a view to their Divine vocation.[81] As created in the image of, and called towards likeness with God,[82] man is designed for life in a communion of love with his Creator. As image of God, man reflects God's own (as it were) royal position (cf. St. John Chrysostom *Homily 9 on Genesis* 11, 1986, p. 123).[83] Among the many dimensions of this royalty, the most important one for the present essay concerns man's mastery over himself, his free will (cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, 1995, IV, p. 391). Man is thus in particular endowed with the freedom of accepting (or rejecting) this Divine offer of love,[84] which

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[80] As will become clear further down, paternal authority permeates Christianity not only in view of God's own having revealed Himself as "Father", but also in view of human access to theological knowledge. This knowledge, one must keep in mind, does not primarily concern theological "matters of fact about" God and man. God is in a strict sense inaccessible to the human understanding. One is entitled to speak about Him only insofar as He revealed Himself to His creatures, condescending in the process to the limited concepts of the human mind. Theological knowledge thus is designed so as to facilitate human access to such Divine Self-revelation. Accordingly, each of the fatherly teachers of the Church integrates his own such experiences into his teaching. It is therefore a risky undertaking (for those who have not themselves experienced God) to even compare the (differently expressed) teachings of different Fathers. On the other hand, recognition of a theological teaching as "Patristic" depends on that teaching's harmonising with what the Church has taught at all times and in all places. There exists, thus, beside the primary formative also a secondary informative dimension to such teaching, which can be invoked in scholarly undertakings, such as the present essay.

[81] This vocation (which recalls Zhang's Confucian principle "always demanding a becoming", p. 110) calls humans onto what may be depicted as a bridge, established by the transforming Divine energies, and across which the Creator seeks to reach out to those who are separated from Him by an ontological abyss.

[82] Cf. St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 9 on Genesis* 7, 1986, 120.

[83] In his role as lord of the created world, man is called to sanctify that world by offering it back to the Creator in thanksgiving. In a remotely similar way Ching (1993, p. 62) describes the emperor's cult to heaven as a cult of thanksgiving, thus suggesting a kindred task of sanctification.

[84] Cf. Maximus the Confessor, 1984, *1st Century on Theology*, p. 116: "By exercising this freedom of choice, each soul either reaffirms its true nobility or through its actions deliberately embraces what is ignoble".

calls him onto the path of acquiring the likeness with God.[85] Accepting that offer is tantamount to correctly appreciating one's nature as created: It implies willingly obeying the Creator's commands.[86]

Man's fall from his initial communion with God was brought about by disobedience.[87] This disobedience consisted in man's independently arrogating to himself what seemed to promise that "likeness" to God which had been meant as a Divine gift, to be offered to the measure of man's already achieved maturity in Divine love. As a result of this disobedience, man's royal freedom of self-mastery became subjected to the slavery of worldly passions. Even though losing his capacity for truly free, spontaneous growth towards the likeness of God, man retained rudiments of his character as image of God: He retained, along with his moral responsibility, the ability to repent, to turn his will back to God. Such turning constitutes a first step towards a renewed obedience,[88] even if the capacity to achieve that obedience to God's commands is contingent on man's subjecting himself to the narrower educational obedience of proper human, and at the same time spiritual, guidance. The place which has been Divinely instituted for such guidance is the Church (Georgios, 2007, p. 34). Here, obedience emulates the obedience which Christ Himself (in His human form) offered His Divine Father.[89]

Fallen Christians' return into Paradise thus integrates them in the ascetical and liturgical way of life which revolves around the rituals of the Church. The guidance offered towards that life takes the form of pastoral, and in that sense

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[85] Cf. St. John Chrysostom: "As the word 'image' indicated a similitude of command, so too 'likeness', with the result that we become like God to the extent of our human power – that is to say, we resemble him in our gentleness and mildness and in regard to virtue" (1986 *Hom. 9*, #7, 120) The idea that the only likeness to God which is humanly accessible must concern God's humility (cf. 2. Cor. 8:9, Phil. 2:5–7) is also supported by St. Gregory of Nyssa's *Homilies on the beatitudes* (2000, I-4, 26 f). For likeness as the assimilation to God through virtue see St. John Damascene, *An exact Exposition*, book 2, chap. 12.

[86] Cf. St. Maximus the Confessor (1984, *2nd Cent.* #7, p. 139): "he who through obedience has kept the commandments . . . has not cut himself off from union in love with Him who gave them".

[87] As some of the Fathers emphasise (viz. Symeon the New Theologian, 2001, p. 113), Adam's failure consisted not only in his disobedience, but also in his unwillingness – when being questioned by God – to repent. This essay, in seeking a dialogue with Confucians and concentrating therefore on ritual as a common ground, can address only one very thin layer of the Christian teaching.

[88] "Indeed, he who has perfect obedience will be counted worthy to receive a great name in heaven, a name of sonship, which will be revered even by the angels – a double crown in the heavenly glory" (Elder Ephraim, 1999, p. 102).

[89] This is also why Columban's rule for monks, following St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian, invokes the model of Christ in demanding unlimited monastic obedience, even unto death (2007, p. 16). Since the point of obedience is to recapture the true humility of son-ship to God, and to overcome pride, therefore even a misguided command will be rewarded by God (op.cit. p. 33).

"spiritual" fatherhood.[90] The Divine command shaping that life requires devoting oneself to the service of God and fellow men (Phil. 2:5–8). Except for monastics, that latter service includes the family. *Service* to God and fellow man thus engages spiritual as well as biological fatherhood. Obedience to God is trained through obedience to the Divinely ratified authority of (either kind of) fathers.

The required "ethos of self-submission" helps fallen man to work himself out of the fetters imposed by his own fallen nature, and in particular by his own idolized self-will.[91] Beyond the initial turning of the will, such a project can be sustained only with the help of the Holy Spirit Himself. It is by reference to this additional necessity, that the limitations placed on rituals' and families' obligatory impact, as described in the previous section, can be explained in greater detail: Both their significance and their limitation refer to ritual as well as familial obedience's function[92] for inviting the Holy Spirit's support. The extent to which a person's obedience in either sense is successful in extending such an invitation can, obviously, again not be evaluated by fallen man himself. Fallen man is always prone to spiritual self-delusion. His assessment in this regard depends, once again, on the Spirit's guidance, as accessed through his spiritual fathers. Even within a Christian's life, it is with the help of such guidance that the particular point at which ritual and familial obedience are either required or overruled can be discerned. As guideposts for such discernment, Christians and their pastoral fathers are referred to the Church's Holy Tradition.

According to St. Basil of Caesarea, that "Tradition" comprises the Church's teaching, both in view of what is expressed in words (*kerygma*) and in view of the *dogma,* as the truth of the faith as experienced in the mysteries, cult and life of the Church (Basil, 1995, ch. 27). But even that *kerygma* derives from what God's chosen saints, whether prophets, evangelists, apostles or other holy teachers, have experienced as an illuminating indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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[90] In taking up a theme of Lk. 10:16, where Christ empowers the seventy disciples sent out to proclaim the kingdom of God by decreeing: "Whoever listens to you, listens to me", Elder Ephraim generalizes: "Every spiritual father is an icon of Christ. So corresponding to how one obeys his spiritual father, he obeys Christ" (Elder Ephraim, 1999, p. 113).

[91] Once again this might at first sound similar to the way in which Ching (1997, p. 75) has Confucius stating that the virtue of "jen" means self-conquest for the sake of recovering propriety. Yet for Christians, unlike for Confucians, the possibility of pursuing such a path of such self-willed denial of one's own willing self, and of bending that self into obedience to fatherly authorities, is impossible without Divine support.

[92] Since the ritual-directed life is possible only as supported by the Holy Spirit, it accomplishes two objectives at the same time: as a means, it invites further such support, and in an anticipatory way it already implements that purpose. Traditional rituals' "instrumental character," thus understood, unlike ritual's moralising instrumentalisation, can therefore be recognized as successfully goal-directed only from the Divine perspective.

Their "noetic"[93] experience, or theology in the original sense of the term,[94] may later be passed on to disciples, or recorded, and subsequently systematised and explained by theological scholars so as to reach a wider audience.[95] Even though those chosen saints thus become the "fathers" of the Church, their own ability to distinguish the promptings of the Holy Spirit from the promptings of other forces working on their hearts depends on their – again obediently – integrating their lives with the already existing Holy Tradition embodied by the Church. Christianity can thus realise its culturally and spiritually orienting mission only as embedded in that Tradition.

(b) Theology's "Fall" for Rationalism and the Distortion of Fatherhood

All the same, on this earth "the Church", as the assembly of God's saints, is still involved in struggle. Her members are wounded by their fallen nature: "... we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2. Cor. 4:7). As fallen, they tend to fail in their required obedience. This even holds for theological scholars. Their personal failure may eventually extend to their view about how theological knowledge is obtained. What such scholars then present as "theology" is compromised by arbitrary additions and emendations, which fallen humans' dis-oriented opinions may suggest. Once theological teachers "liberate themselves" from the guidance of the fathers of the Church, i.e. from Patristic Tradition, and once they arrogantly rely on their purely human cognitive capacities,[96] they sacrifice the orienting efficacy of their teaching.[97] Once the revealed mysteries entrusted to man's

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[93] The term "noetic" refers to a knowledge that is received through the Divine self-revelation. It is empirical, but not sensible. The "nous" represents a faculty of the human soul that, on the one hand, attends to what goes on in the mind, and, on the other hand, can be rendered receptive to Divine revelations, if a person's heart is properly purified. While Thomas of Aquinas still retains the difference between nous and logos in the duality of *intellectus* and *ratio*, the subsequent Latin theologies have blurred the difference between both. Eventually (especially after the quarrel between St. Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Calabria) the existence of a separate cognitive faculty beside reason was altogether discounted in the Christian West.

[94] As Evagrius Ponticus notes (2003, # 60): to be a theologian means to pray truly.

[95] Christian Tradition thus, with respect to both its *dogma* and its *kerygma,* is based on spiritual experience. In that sense, Ching's claim that Confucianism is more experience-based than Christianity (with, as she puts it, its "faith in revelation", 1993, p. 227) should be modified. While surely the Christianity of the Latin West, after an initial period of faithfulness to Tradition (with Gregory the great and Cassian the Roman), developed into an increasingly abstract, notional affair, at least Orthodox Christianity rests on "noetic" (i.e. truly spiritual) experience.

[96] To be sure, this turn to human reason was taken to be justified in view of the claim that this reason, as Divine endowment, provided a "natural light", supposedly unaffected by the fall. Patristic teaching however has always taken seriously Christ's denouncement of man's worldly wisdom (Matt. 11:25), as confirmed by Paul (Rom. 1:22, 1. Cor. 3:18–21).

[97] To cite just a few relevant consequences: Once theology is subjected to human reason, God's revealed omnipotence can no longer be adequately distinguished from His equally revealed omniscience. Accordingly, it is no longer possible to allow for His freely limiting the

obedient faith are instead subjected to the grasp of discursive reasoning, theological scholars reduce what there is "to (mystically) know" to what is accessible to their finite and fallen rationality.[98] Such scholars disregard the "ethos of self-submission", which should have enabled them to restore their receptivity to Divine illumination.[99]

Thus theology changed from a discipline that was nourished through the radical ritual obedience cultivated in monasteries into an academic field of scholarship taught at secular universities. This change came to characterise the dominant Christianity in Europe's Latin West. The distortion resulting from scholastic rationalism amounted to a first version of that (supposed) "Enlightenment" within academic theology, which ultimately triggered the second (alleged) Enlightenment's opposition to Christianity in the 18th century: Once Christian scholars had connected their knowledge with claims to rationality, they had implicitly authorised even non-Christian, anti-Christian and a-religious rationalists to evaluate the rational credentials of those claims. In the name of their freedom to think for themselves, such Christian scholars had compromised the noetic authority of the Church's Tradition. They had thus implicitly endorsed the rational authority of the Church's enemies.

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former while retaining the latter, and thus to account for human freedom. Moreover, God's revealed unconditional authority – as in the example of the command that Abraham sacrifice his son Isaac – can no longer be squared with what a rational approach privileges and singles out as "the moral implications" of the Divine laws. It thus becomes necessary to subordinate God's omnipotence and authority to those very moral norms which are accessible to human reason. Just as God's Divine freedom and will must therefore be re-construed in terms of his supposed rational morality, so must the freedom granted to humans be identified with their theoretical and practical compliance with a theology which in turn has changed from a mystical therapy to a dogma.

[98] This development eventually reduced what was still confessed as the "trans-rational" element of the Christian faith to a mere "openness for transcendence," where the latter term signifies nothing beyond an empty point of reference. It is this reduction, which suggests an easy path to ecumenical cooperation, even with Confucians. Thus Küng (Küng and Ching 1988, 303 f) claims that a Christian can both develop a common world ethos with other religions and at the same time "take seriously" those others' religious concerns, conceptions, and practices, - as long as these do not contradict the Christian faith. He thus in effect separates that faith from concerns, conceptions, and practices. He renders it a purely theoretical undertaking. In thus trying to both keep his cake and eat it (or separate ritual from faith and retain their connection), his project depends on its strategic ambiguity: While piously opposing "double citizenship" in Christianity and Confucianism, Küng liberally endorses an enculturation "in the spirit of Jesus Christ". But since he has reduced what he calls the "Jesus event" to such a degree that Jesus' twofold human-divine nature is discounted, the remaining "spirit of Jesus Christ" in effect can refer to no more than morality. In what concerns the recommended "taking seriously" of religious practices, nothing seems left beyond "respectfully" appreciating their aesthetic quality.

[99] Adam's failure which consisted in wanting to understand "good and evil" independently of God is thus re-enacted: Such "theologians" seek to philosophically usurp that likeness to God which is accessible only as a Divinely transforming gift.

Among the many implications of this distortion, two are particularly significant for Christianity's ritual culture and family life.

- The turn to reason as authority for truth abandoned Truth as impersonated by the incarnate Christ. This re-interpretation destroyed a central safeguard against disregarding human embodiment. Unlike a truly spiritual illumination, rationality prioritises the mind over a body which is no longer recognized as receptive to the mysteries of Divine transformation.[100] A disincarnate rationalist anthropology was encouraged, which in turn separated humans' merely rationalist "dignity" from their biological existence. Birth, suffering, and death, and thus also the substance of family life in its orientation to paternal authority and filial piety, were thus discounted. While true monastic theology is hyper-familial, i.e. recognizes families as both hotbeds for future monks and what sanctifies the Christian life "in the world", university theology became a-familial as well as anti-paternal. It replaced the communities surrounding embodied (and thus ritualised ascetical and liturgical) existence by the intellectual community of (father-less) autonomous, and thus also anonymous, intellectuals.
- The ensuing habit of rationally distinguishing between matters of fact and matters of value disrupted the unity of fact and value which had been noetically recognized in God as the source of both being and goodness. Academic theology thus split into different disciplines, such as metaphysics and moral theology. Once the latter was integrated into philosophy, universal claims to "rational" moral knowledge were advanced. These implied the proclamation of supposedly unconditionally valid norms. The Christian life thus seemed reducible to proper comportment in compliance with what was imposed with rational objectivity, no longer in the context of a Divine relationship of love, but from an un-loving "without". This had two unfortunate consequences.

First, such compliance could be taught, judged, and enforced through a love-less authority, in particular through clerical[101] and familial sanctions.

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[100] A merely superficial reading of the traditional text might be misleading. It is only in connection with man's fallen nature, that the body with its needs and cravings presents that powerful distraction from a spiritual life, which renders a particular discipline necessary. This is why these texts – because of their pastoral orientation - often take the term "body" as emblematic of all such distractions. Thus on closer look it becomes clear that what St. Paul – to take the most important theologian in this regard – understands by "flesh" is the entire compass of a worldly life that affects not only the body's supposed "needs" and a person's emotional desires, but even his intellectual predilections. The pride of the rationalist thus also discloses his "fleshly" orientation. It is not the body as such which is hostile to a life in Christ but the whole this-world-centred focus of man's strivings.

[101] The survey offered here must remain sketchy and superficial. We cannot attend, for example, to the Protestant reaction which led to an abolition of traditional ecclesiology and anthropology. In rightly denying that an institutional "mediator"-church between Christians and God is necessary, Protestantism deprived Christians of their dignity as mystical members of the Church. In rightly opposing clerical arrogance, they sacrificed the spiritual fatherhood

Originally, the Divinely commanded loving service to God and neighbour was to provide a training ground in familial and spiritual obedience, with a view to developing the free gift of a kenotic self-dedication of the human heart. As such, it was, to be invited,[102] received and judged by God alone, as by the "knower of human hearts" (Prov. 15:3, cf. Acts 1:24). Now however, this service appeared as a human performance that could be measured by any rationally competent and educated expert.[103] Paternal authority for offering guidance, both in the church and in families, was thus transformed into an exercise of judging and sanctioning power.

Second, the required compliance subjected each Christian to an externally determined model to which he had to adapt.[104] Originally, the Divine offer of a communion of love was to sustain man's growth towards a likeness with his Creator (Matt. 5:46). In the course of this growth, man was to develop what in

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image of the Divine fatherhood. The resulting confusion for the Christian-Confucian interchange can be studied in Bellah (1991, pp. 91–93).

[102] St. John Chrysostom (*Homily 14 on Genesis,* 11, 1986, p. 186) expressly points to the gentle, "instructing" character in which God informs Adam of the one command not to eat of the forbidden tree. He emphasises how this mode of communicating harmonises with the Divine gift of free self-government and royal dignity offered Adam in Paradise. To be sure, after the fall this obedience took on the harsher meaning of repentance, of having to turn around and distance oneself from (i.e. renounce) all one's fallen orientations. But even here, and even before Christ re-opened the door to communion with God, the point of that obedience to the law of Moses was to re-train through a ritualised life the mis-directed heart in the art of loving God.

[103] Perhaps we can compare the phenomenon of legalism in Confucianism with its consequence of rendering the ethos of self-submission more oppressive than liberating (cf. Ching, 1997, p. 267) with this change within Christianity.

[104] More specifically, Christianity's focus on love as an endowment with the Divine energies was replaced by a moral principle of universal human solidarity. This is the reason why Christians in the Latin-tradition West today have no spiritual resources left for defending allegiance to the particularity of family life (as the natural unity endorsed by the Divine will) against its liberal destruction.

It is this moralising spirit, still dominating our present times, which makes it also difficult to discern the real meaning intended by Confucian scholars educated in the West, who describe Confucianism in terms of its moral implications. Often such scholars introduce a distinction between Confucianism's ritual and moral aspects, but the question of their either instrumental or constitutive relationship to one another remains un-addressed. Where Confucian morality is associated with the pursuit of wisdom, it is usually unclear whether that wisdom is exhausted by moral compliance with socially established rules or also encompasses a cosmic vision. A good example for this ambiguity is Julia Ching. When she calls Confucianism the "moralist" answer to existential questions (1993), she seems to endorse an autonomous morality. When she specifies this answer by adding an "existential quest for wisdom or moral perfection" (loc.cit.), that autonomy of morality seems relativised, especially since she immediately afterwards places morality's "horizontal concerns" in a "vertical, transcendent" context. Her invocation of a "soteriological" aspect of sage-hood (1993, p. 226), on the other hand, seems infected by her Christian dialogue-partners' willingness to settle for a vague moralisation-cum-transcendence-touch paradigm. Once Confucians' Western dialogue-partners have ceased to take seriously the idea that God is alive, their theology becomes mumbled and confusing for their non-Western interlocutors.

human terms can only be translated as the Divine "virtues" of gentleness and humility of heart (Mt. 11:29). The Divine meekness does not deny what the Divine creativity granted as the inexhaustible richness of specific uniqueness in human characters; instead it opens that character to the possibility of filling its own irreplaceable position as integrated in the larger Divine-human community. Man's entering into the Divine glory (or this increased receptivity for the transforming Divine energies) was to disclose each human being's created irreplaceability in ever more luminous perfection. Now however, such growth was imposed in terms of conformity to a common schematism. It thus implied a loss of personal profile that defeats the Divinely ordained (Rom. 12:4–8) mutual complementarity among humans. Such conformity renders persons exchangeable for one another. The rich variety of the Divine creation within humanity was thus discounted. Paternal guidance, both in the church and in families, was transformed into an imposition of conformity to a pre-determined model.

(c) Liberalism as the Quest for Un-distortion

Given this development, it now becomes possible to understand the more respectable motives underlying the modern and post-modern hostility to traditional ritual and family, and thus to traditional cultures in the strong sense of the term. In the first part of this essay, this hostility had been linked with the endorsement of liberalism. It now appears that the intellectual basis for the secularising impetus driving both the Enlightenment's and the romantic and existentialist hostility derives at least to some extent from the scholastic distortion of Christian theology. In any case, this distortion informs that hostility in two ways, one positive, as dependence, the other negative, as opposition.

First, as our initial view at liberalism's hostility to ritual cultures has revealed, at least one of its conditions lay in a separation of man's (initially still objective, not yet arbitrary) vocation from man's embodiment, and thus in a one-sided emphasis on rational autonomy. But such rational autonomy (in the sense of independence from the Divine self-revelation) is just what Western scholastic university theology had also pursued.

Second, and almost trivially, Western liberals' hostility to ritual roots in their awareness that something is deeply wrong with distorted Western Christianity. The pity is that this wrongness got attributed to the Christian part and not to its distortion: Once the Divine gift of human freedom had been re-framed in terms of a rational (in the sense of body-hostile) morality, the asceticism required of fallen man for re-accessing that gift was no longer recognised as liberating. It was no longer experienced as helpful in freeing incarnate fallen humans' body, soul and mind from their encompassing slavery to the passions. Instead, this asceticism was seen as merely suppressive of humans' "natural" animal and emotional aspirations. Instead of liberating man from the impact of what is fallen about human nature, such distorted Christianity could rightly be charged

with devaluing, even blotting out, large areas of what originally belongs to human nature. Unwittingly, liberals' very hostility to what they encountered as "Christianity" rests on a yearning for freedom in the incarnate sense of the term, – a yearning which indeed reflects the Divine imprint on incarnate man.

Among the many dimensions in which that yearning manifests itself today, two are especially relevant for liberalism's modern and post-modern hostility to traditional ritual cultures. One dimension discloses a hidden awareness of what even fallen humans retain from their original creation in the Divine image, the second the unconscious attempt to compensate for what fallen humans lost: the opportunity to pursue the Divine likeness.

- Once the Christian life was exhaustively construed in terms of canonical "facts" and "values", "Christian correctness" reduced to (1) willingly accepting as true a doctrine which was claimed to be rationally irresistible anyway, and (2) streamlining one's behaviour in accordance with supposedly equally incontestable norms. The spontaneity of man's still retained ability to repent, i.e. man confrontation with a God Who patiently waits for His creature's answer to His ever renewed offer of love, was thus obliterated. Understandably, liberals responded by affirming precisely that spontaneity, even if they engaged it no longer for repentance but for the celebration of worldly independence and autonomy. They defined human dignity in terms of a personhood that rests on spontaneity, but linked spontaneity with arbitrary choice.
- Once the Christian life was thus reduced, man's native quest for the glory of his divinisation, which retains a vague memory of his Divine vocation[105], remained unsatisfied. Understandably, liberalism encouraged the devising of worldly substitutes. It became receptive to (romantic or later existentialist) quests for uniqueness and distinction, individual idiosyncrasy, for imaginative self-creation, for a culture of taste and style, for personal narratives, authenticity and ever new re-definitions of major life projects. All those attempts were to fill the vacuum experienced by a self-ridden self finding itself thrown into the midst of an oblivious cosmos and fated to perish without leaving more than a feeble trace in others' public or private memories.[106] That is to say, all those extremely diversified concerns which define contemporary modernity and post-modernity can be read as strategies of numbing one's sense to the greatness of mankind's loss. The demand for "respect of human dignity" thus came to encompass not only freedom rights

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[105] See for example St. John of Damascus' analysis of what it meant for Adam and Eve to have their eyes opened to their nakedness.

[106] There are, of course, many more dimensions to fallen humanity's loss of integrity, which must remain beyond the scope of this essay. One of these concerns their finitude. Much of the modern quest for progress and the post-modern quest for "making a difference" or "leaving an impression" has to do with securing surrogate eternities among those who have lost faith in eternal life.

but also the craving for "recognition", or an accepting tolerance of each individual's irreplaceable personality.

It thus becomes possible to appreciate in both, rationalist modernity and post-traditionalist post-modernity (with all its intermingled supplementary intellectual currents), an attempt to recapture – under the flag of "human dignity" – two crucial dimensions of man's distinction as a Divine creature from their captivity to a misguided paternalism: spontaneity (whether as internally directed morality or as self-creative autonomy) and uniqueness. But if this is the case, liberalism's opposition to Christianity's (and all other) traditional culture presents not merely a threat from without. Instead, that opposition can be recognized as arising from an (obfuscated) concern for human personhood (in its fullness) and personality – a concern, the (non-obfuscated) original of which is shared by traditional Christianity. That opposition can then be understood as a (misguided) attempt to restore what Christianity's distortion had destroyed. Traditional Christians can (to some degree) even sympathise with the modern and post-modern quest for human spontaneity and uniqueness. They can restrict their disagreement to the liberal form of that quest, i.e. either its (secularised) rationality or its turn to auto-creative self-realisation.

Thus, traditional Christians, perhaps unlike traditional Confucians, can (grudgingly) concede that liberalism's opposition (to itself) vaguely echoes man's Divine vocation. Traditional Christians, perhaps unlike traditional Confucians, can therefore pursue their project of cultural renewal by seeking to (profoundly!) reorient that echo in order to restore the harmony of (legitimate) liberal and Christian concerns.

14.3.3 Orthodox Christian Resources for Re-orienting, and Thus Sustaining the Competition of, Liberalism

Once liberalism has been recognized as sharing (if in misguided ways) its appreciation of human personhood and personality with traditional Christianity, it becomes clear why that powerful contemporary movement presents such a serious competition for traditional Christianity. If there is indeed something spiritually right about taking human personhood and personality seriously, then non-liberal cultures, and especially the traditional cultures which are concerned with the renewal of their rituals, must be prepared to face that competition and to extend their universalising invitation in terms that respond to such legitimate concerns.

(a) Divine and Human Fatherhood

On superficial survey, Orthodox Christianity and Confucianism, in both affirming the importance of a paternal authority and an ethos of self-submission, seem to oppose the spontaneity and self-creative dynamism entailed in true human freedom. They thus find themselves in the defensive

against the modern liberal endorsement of these values. Orthodox Christianity however, while agreeing with Confucianism about the importance of tradition and ritual, also offers safeguards against that distortion of paternal authority and obedience, which distortion allows tradition and ritual to stifle human spontaneity and self-creative dynamism.

The liberal pursuit of freedom and affirmation of personhood is anti-"paternalist". Traditional Christianity, unlike its distorted version, links paternal authority with the foundation and eternal safeguard of all human personhood and freedom. From a Christian perspective, liberalism's grasp of paternal authority is limited to the "fallen" aspect of the "earthen vessels" (2. Cor. 4:7) engaged for its exercise. Thus Christians understand why liberals tend to see such authority as nothing but a cover-up for the selfish pursuit of power. But Christians also insist that the liberal reduction of fatherhood to its merely biological and (limited) social functions destroys an indispensible communal resource for furthering character formation and goal-directed human development. It destroys the base on which even a merely moral or cultural personhood can be built up. Beyond that, so Christians argue, such reduction renounces a crucial chance for setting fallen humans on a path on which they may pursue personhood in terms of its Divine vocation. In either case, one fails to cultivate relationships of personal intimacy and confidence, as these develop through filial love and spiritual friendship, for enabling beginners to trust themselves to the wisdom of more experienced guides. Traditional Christianity, instead of permitting the (admitted) risks involved in the abuse of paternal authority to defeat goals such as character formation and man's Divine vocation, offers remedies for avoiding (or at least diminishing) these risks. These remedies consist in framing paternal authority in a way that avoids depriving its exercise of its Divine fruits (of truly spontaneous self determination and co-creative dynamism). These remedies thus secure the original of that personhood and personality for which liberalism offers its humanly fabricated (impassioned, i.e. un-redeemed) substitutes. They can be described in view of how human fatherhood is ontologically positioned, how it theologically orients, and how it is exercised.

(i) Paternal Authority's Ontological Position

In order to effectively and properly design their guidance, fathers in families and in the Church must remember Christ's warning: "Call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9). Christ did not mean to deny the institution of fatherhood as such. But he demanded fathers to exercise their authority as borrowed and to correctly appreciate their dependence on Divine authorisation. This has three consequences.

- First, fathers must recognise the common human brotherhood in Christ that places fathers and sons ultimately on the same spiritual footing.
- Second, human fatherhood, whether biological or spiritual, provides a training ground for the acquisition of the virtue of a filial piety, which aims at a restored son-ship to God. Human fathers are thus mere mediators, working

in the name of the Divine father. They seek to ultimately even direct their children's deepest personal attachment away from themselves, directing it to the Divine Father.

- Third, the way in which God's Divine Fatherhood has been revealed to men sets a model for the way in which human paternal authority should be exercised. In emulating the Divine original, fathers are to offer their guidance in terms of the Godly kenosis of self-giving.[107]

Adequate human fatherhood, both in the Church and in families, thus realises itself in terms of Fathers' own son-ship to God. Just as Adam in Paradise was to rule over creation in terms of his own being placed under the rule of God (and hence under obedience)[108], so paternal authority on earth is exercised under the paternal authority of God (and hence also under obedience). Just as Adam in Paradise was to sanctify the world over which he was to rule as lord by offering it back in thanksgiving to God, so human fathers must conceive of their children as a Divine trust that should be sanctified and offered back, as though "re-stored to the owner". And just as Adam in Paradise exercised his authority as "in the image of" God's authority and "called to His likeness", so human fathers should be the first to acquire the Divine virtues of meekness and humility (Mt. 11:28–29).

(ii) Paternal Authority in Teaching

The implications of a fatherhood thus contextualised are particularly important for warding off liberals' anti-paternalist suspicions.

- To begin with, among those who aspire to be theological teachers, and thus to realise one form of fatherhood in the Church, their own obedience to the Divine Father implies their willingness to listen. They must listen to the voice of the Patristic Tradition and, as far as possible, to the voice of the Holy Spirit Himself. Such a listening attitude requires that those who aspire to guide others must render themselves receptive to that latter voice through the ascetical and liturgically ritualized life of the Church.

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[107] To be sure, the fact that God is revealed as "Father" (when Christ teaches His disciples to address Him so) also constitutes an accommodation to humans' earthly experience. In that sense we must understand the Fatherhood of God in a merely analogical sense. This becomes especially clear when one remembers that God's relationship to His human creatures is based on His desire to unify them with Himself, - an act of love that resembles more the human experience between husband and wife (as poetically portrayed as erotic love between God and the human soul in the Song of Songs). It is just that the way in which humans are encouraged to access God's condescension in terms of "fatherhood" also presents a model in keeping with which humans are to design their own diverse fatherhoods.

[108] Cf. St. John Chrysostom, 1986 *Hom. 14,* #9–10, 1986, 185, 1990, *Hom. 30,* #15, 177). The idea of Adam's authority "as under obedience" is generalised so as to apply to all human authority in Col. 4:1.

- The obedience required in view of that receptivity is incompatible with claims to rational autonomy. A theology that thus remains true to its noetic source is in particular immune to the temptation of devising a philosophical "concept" of God. Such a theology will avoid objectifying Him into a subject of cognitive grasp. It takes seriously, as Archimandrite Sophrony points out, that "The revelation "I AM THAT I AM" shows the hypostatic dimension in the Divinity to be of fundamental significance. The principle of the *Persona* in God is not an abstract conception but essential reality possessing its own nature and energy of life" (1988, p. 193). Such a theology is designed to open space for the saints' person-to-person experience of the Divinely condescending love.[109] While scandalous to the rationalist, this experience is recognized in noetic theology as a goal that integrates all human striving into a selfless love, a self-effacing desire for union with God.[110]

(iii) The Exercise of Paternal Authority

In the context of such a theology, paternal authority is not exercised in terms of doctrinal or moral dominance.

- Theologically, such authority pursues the spiritual progress of those who are trusted to its guidance by following the Divine model. It frames theology around its pastoral centre.[111] God Himself has rendered humans' progress contingent upon their spontaneous offer of good will and their continued cooperation in the process. This cooperative model also extends to ritual, and this shapes "ritual obedience" as a free response to a Divine offer.[112] This also marks the spirit in which Christians do not "perform" but "participate in" their ritual: even if there are no humans present, rituals are designed so as to remind their participants of the Divine presence. God Himself, in His way of inviting such good will and cooperation, thus safeguards the freedom with which He endowed His human creatures. Accordingly, instead of

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[109] God's omniscience can here be reconciled with an omnipotence, the exercise of which God Himself freely limits when offering His human creatures a share in freedom. Similarly, God's authority is envisaged in its revealed, trans-moral integrity: The point of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac can – with St. Paul – be situated in the context of a quest for an unconditional faith, which (unlike with the first-created man in Paradise) overcomes the temptation to seek the "good" in terms of human independence.

[110] "Every soul that cleaves to God is softened like wax and, receiving the impress and stamp of divine realities, it becomes 'in spirit the dwelling-place of God' (Eph. 2:22)", St. Maximus the Confessor, *1st Century on Theology*, #12, p. 116.

[111] Characteristically, one of the *prosomia* for the Vesper service for three great Hierarchs of the Christian Church (Sts. Basil of Caesarea, Sts. Gregory of Nazianz, *the Theologian,* and Sts. John Chrysostom, Jan. 31st) speaks of "them as shepherding the people of Christ through their divine teaching" (*Megas Hieros Synekdimos,* n.d., 848).

[112] Perhaps one could read into Wang's remark that the ritual "system itself may be reinforced by every performance of ritual" (p. 96) some awareness of a similarly dialogical design between the cosmic order and humans' reaffirming, along with their ritual integration into that order, their commitment to that order itself.

Christianity suppressing human spontaneity, its liturgical life is permeated by the encouragement of, and demand for, such spontaneity. Moreover, God Himself continues to call His creatures into a likeness with Himself that displays His boundless creativity. Instead of Christianity suppressing humans' uniqueness and irreplaceability, it secures those objects of humans' deep desire. In both respects, God Himself is thus the guardian of that human dignity, which in secular terms is addressed as "personhood" and "personality". As Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex summarises it: "The Name of God is I AM THAT I AM. For man, the image of the All-Highest, this word I is one of the most precious of all, since it expresses the principle of the *persona* in us. Outside this principle there would be no meaning, nothing. Let each of us hold on to his personal worth, which alone contains the wealth and beauty of our being."(1988, p. 204). Or in other words: It is the personal way[113] in which God, who reveals Himself as a Trinity of persons, addresses His human creatures, and offers them the glory of partaking in His own eternal life, which safeguards those creatures' personal existence and personality, even for all eternity.

- Practically, human fathers can follow that Divine model only if they restrict any use of compulsion to what is indispensable for children, and if they impose the general rules imposed by the canons of the Church with extreme discretion.[114] Called, along with all other humans, to imitate the Divine meekness and humility, they will impose obedience in such a way as to transform its offering into an exercise in self-mastery. Even in the midst of their warfare against their fallen nature, sons are thus guided back to Adam's royal station. A fatherhood that is oriented to such goals will be safe from even the mere temptation to compromise biological or spiritual sons' personal spontaneity (as what sons must engage in responding to their Divine calling), or to discount their quest for personal uniqueness (as what sons may hope to find epitomized through God's turning to them personally). Either failing, after all, would defeat the paternal mission. Fathers who exercise their authority in this sense recognise that their task of guiding others requires the help of the Holy Spirit. Because of their responsibility, not only for themselves but also for others, they will have even greater need to apply to themselves the therapy of self- submission to the guidance of others.[115]

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[113] Cf. Jn. 14:23 "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them…", a promise that is confirmed by the experience of the saints (see for example Evagrius, 2003, # 54 "One who loves God is ever communing with him as with a father", or # 65 "If you long for prayer, do nothing that is opposed to prayer, so that God may draw near and journey with you")

[114] For example, exclusion from the Holy Mysteries is applied to those (heretics) who mislead others.

[115] The Biblical texts are permeated with admonitions about the necessity for all those in authority to do nothing without seeking council (Sir. 32:19, Deut 32:7 are just two examples). This principle is also confirmed by the Tradition (see e.g. Columban 2007, Rule 3, 36). A model of humility in this regard is offered by Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) in his letter

(b) The Culture-Transcending Impact of Cultural Renewal

A culture that conceives of fatherhood in the way just described immunizes its endorsement of tradition, ritual, and family against those distortions which motivate liberalism's criticism. Such a culture can also sustain the liberal competition in view of the latter's justified (if distorted) ideals of human spontaneity and co-creative uniqueness. What it has to offer in fact out-shines liberalism's self-made spontaneity and uniqueness: Such a culture's nurturing resources provide proper guidance, enabling members to seek access to God as the source of all human freedom and personhood.[116] Here humans' desired spontaneity and uniqueness are gifts bestowed in the context of a person-to-person relationship between God and His human creatures.[117]

Christians proclaim that humans reach the fullness of their freedom and irreplaceability only in communion with Him Who personally called them into personhood (i.e. the personhood of lordship under the acknowledged Divine Lord) and personality (i.e. the eternal uniqueness that derives from being beheld and loved by God). Christians undergird their universalising invitation by reference to a God Who presents Himself as love between the three persons of the Holy Trinity: Since the Divine love itself maintains the distinct personhood of each hypostasis within their common deity,[118] no human who (in entering into that love) integrates the meaning of his personal life into the cosmic meaning defined by traditional Christian culture, that is, into the mind (or consciousness) of the Church (Lossky, 2001, p. 194), needs to worry about thereby losing his distinct personhood and personality.[119]

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to David Balfour, a Roman Catholic spiritual son who converted to Orthodoxy. After accepting the risk of confronting his spiritual son with some of the more difficult truths about the life in Christ, Father Sophrony adds: "But I trust in the bravery of your soul and this is why I tell you, and later . . . , I shall tell you still a little more, so that afterwards I might receive your advice in turn, because my soul rejoices in submitting itself to you" (2003b, 15, transl. CDH).

[116] To put the matter in Archimandrite Sophrony's words: "Proceeding from the marvelous revelation I AM THAT I AM, we experience and live man, created 'in the image, after the likeness', first and foremost as *persona*. It is precisely to this principle in us that eternity relates" (1988, p. 194). A good theological compilation of the theology of personhood is found in Vlachos (1998).

[117] The way in which this relationship can be captured in a theology of the Divine image is well traced in Lossky (2001, p. 139).

[118] A helpful introduction into Trinitarian theology is offered by Lossky (1989, 45 ff).

[119] As Archimandrite Sophrony insists, the view toward the annihilation of the self is even a dangerous temptation: "we find those who aspire to divest themselves of their earthly mode of existence – they are fascinated by the profound quiet of some mysterious, all-transcending Non-being – and other s who, accepting Christ's word, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force' [Matt. 11:12] engage on the painful battle to overcome our mortality. . . It is characteristic of the former to think of the First-Absolute as trans-personal. For them personeity at its best is the initial stage of the degradation, the self-restriction of the Absolute. For the others it is precisely the *Persona* that lies at the root of all that exists [cf. John 1:3]" (1988, p. 191).

The contrast between liberalism's individualist conception of personhood and its superior Christian account is well summarised by Archimandrite Sophrony: in liberalism,

> "Individualism is cultivated in all its impassioned aspects. . . . This is the principle on which our social structure is based. But individuals *en masse* live in a state of decline and ineludible tragedy. The cult of decline leads to alienation from God – man is reduced when the Divine image is obscured in him. Contrariwise, an assembly of *personae* is 'the salt of the earth, the light of the world' (cf. Matt. 5:13–14). This is realised in Christ's Church and with particular force in the liturgical act – precisely where the true image of the Holy Trinity is made manifest. The whole content of the Divine Liturgy calls upon the priest to bring to God the ministry proper to the *persona* in the spirit of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane" (Sakharov, 1988, p. 205).

Yet this very basis for Christianity's universal persuasive appeal, while presenting a decisive trump card in the struggle for cultural dominance, also distances traditional Christians from the sphere of the cultural. Their calling to "teach and baptise all nations", while surely requiring ever sustained efforts at rendering their surrounding culture receptive for their universalising invitation, imposes on each "cultural warrior" a personal struggle toward self-transformation that focuses on rendering himself receptive to the Divine transforming energies. To be sure, humans should promote cultural renewal by writing persuasive essays about the importance of ritual and tradition. Christians should explain to their fellow members as well as to those outside how to appropriately endorse paternal authority, filial piety and the ethos of self-submission in the context of a theological awareness of a God Who challenges man on a decidedly personal level. Yet it is precisely this awareness of their confrontation with an awe-inspiring three-personal Divine love which imposes on them a certain reserve, not only in view of rituals and families, but also of "Christian culture" as such.

In fact, traditional Christians do not even speak of "Christian culture" in just the way in which (for example) Confucians speak of "Confucian culture". On the one side, Christian "culture" (unlike – perhaps – Confucian Culture[120]) is not a result of Christians' own cultivating activity but of their cooperation with the personal Divine sanctifying initiative. On the other side, Christians (unlike Confucians, insofar as the latter see their culture as a lasting embodiment of man's humanist vocation) integrate everything contingently "cultural" into their quest for sanctification.[121] Christian "culture", perhaps unlike Confucian Culture, is designed for being left behind, once man has reached his Divine

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[120] To be sure, as Ching admirably argues (1997), the roots of Confucianism's openness to transcendence lie in the shamanistic practices framing the early Chinese governors' priestly role. But one must bear in mind that a crucial difference between shamanism and theist religion lies in the fact that the shaman can "call up" spiritual agents, whereas the religious person can only "call on" the Spirit. That is to say, the initiative in the one case lies with humans, in the other case with God.

[121] It goes, in other words, against traditional Christians' grain to even speak of a project of cultural renewal, when, deep in his heart, he is aware of two requirements: that he needs to reform himself first, and that this is a life-absorbing occupation. St. Seraphim of Sarov

vocation. With humans' vocation for sanctification finally established to fill the introduction's "placeholder" in view of what offers an encompassing meaning for people's personal life along with that of their surroundings, we have arrived at a somewhat paradoxical result: That very craving for meaning and a normative identity which initially seemed to call for nothing beyond a robustly orienting culture has now been shown to leave the merely cultural manner of its satisfaction behind.

14.4 Conclusion

This essay's exploration of Christian and Confucian projects of cultural renewal also addresses the question how a non-trivially ritualised Confucian culture can withstand competition from modernity's and post-modernity's diversely liberal ethos. It turns out that such a project is indeed realistic. Confucianism can establish its universally inviting persuasive power, if, within its own tradition, proper attention is devoted to what can accommodate liberals' justified concern for human personhood and personality.

   This essay's argument involved portraying the way in which Orthodox Christianity's vision of human flourishing, precisely because it integrates that same concern, outshines (and goes beyond culturally outshining) liberalism's competing vision: Human personhood and personality, and thus also a rich and coherent understanding of human freedom, can indeed be accommodated within a traditionally Christian endorsement of paternal authority, filial piety, and an ethos of self submission. In portraying this exemplar culture, the previous sections sought to specify what should more generally be involved in the project of internally renewing a ritual culture. In order for such renewal to establish, in a properly inviting way, its rightly orienting character, a horizon of transcendence which (in a self-revelatory way) defines rituals' cosmic meaning was taken to be indispensable. But in order to also succeed on the "market" of competing world views, and especially against the liberal enemies of ritual cultures, the renewal project had to insure that ritual and filial obedience, paternal authority and the ethos of self-submission are therapies, to be applied on a pointedly personal (and personality-enhancing) level. Orthodox Christianity could satisfy this condition by emphasising the intensely three-personal, i.e. person-sustaining love through which God reveals Himself.[122]

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summarised this teaching when promising that, if a Christian renews himself, i.e. acquires the spirit of peace, then thousands around him will partake of his renewal and will be saved.

[122] The sketch of the Christian truth offered here had to remain incomplete. There is no room for further details of how and why a personal loving God has revealed Himself as the three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, - or as a Holy Trinity. For the inter-cultural dialogue undertaken in this volume, it must suffice to specify the challenge which the Christian perspective adopted here poses for similar Confucian projects of ritual renewal.

Confucianism's traditional ritual culture is not only exposed to the challenge of Western liberalism. Even its own history offers evidence that the nature and ground of paternal authority, filial piety and the ethos of submission have been subjected to rather diverse and critical interpretations. Confucius himself seems to have concentrated on saving the rituals of his ancestors from their being compromised by irrational and superstitious religious influences (as his objection to human sacrifice shows). He seems to have made a point of leaving any reference to the transcendent sufficiently vague so as to keep it safely at bay. Mencius, in contrast, seems to have reacted to the political instrumentalization of Confucianism. His turn to a more moralising interpretation seems to demand that, with all the attention devoted to external forms, the internal dimension of human virtue not be lost from sight. But as the second section of this essay's first part has shown, an outright moralisation of a ritual culture would destroy the ritual character of that culture. Moreover, the Fourth of July Movement, while surely influenced by its representatives' exposure to Western philosophy, science, and technology, can at least to some extent be seen to continue an inner-Confucian struggle to preserve the right balance between the rights and the obligations of (political and familial) bearers of paternal authority, or between the "principles of difference and of harmony" (cf. Siemons, 2007). So it seems to this onlooker from afar, that traditional Confucianism, just like traditional Christianity, requires a vision of fatherhood (along with paternal authority) which must be protected against superstition, rational moralisation and political and social misuse.

Confronted by the challenge from and competition of Western liberalism today, those who wish to renew traditional Confucian culture and ritual have, so it seems to this participant in our dialogue, two options.[123]

They can either endorse Confucianism's age old strategic ambiguity concerning the transcendent implications of their culture. During roughly two millennia, after all, this ambiguity has made it possible to integrate different cultural groups into Chinese society by providing space for the different sorts of religious commitments those groups wished to pursue. Whatever emotional or spiritual needs official Confucianism left under-served could thus be satisfied on the religious import market. In that sense, Confucianism historically has evinced a tolerant latitude that is reminiscent of today's Western culture of

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[123] A third option might be supposed to lie in Küng's turn to a rational examination of the various faith traditions, and among them Confucianism, so as to purge them from superstitions as well as from their ideological utilisation for particular interest groups. In invoking *Analects* 15:27 (Küng and Ching, 1988, 130 f), Küng claims that this method agrees with the basic attitude endorsed by Confucianism itself. But it is hard to determine, how the claimed authority of reason to effect such discernment is compatible with King's own rejection of rationalism (for which he invokes the agreement of both Jesus and Confucius) and the moralisation of religion on the one side, and his desire to retain space for transcendence (op.cit. p. 133) on the other side. Again one finds Küng wanting to have his cake (i.e. human access to a universal world ethos) and eat it (retain some relevance for transcendence).

post-modernity.[124] But it is hard to conceive, once Confucianism would make its peace with that post-modernity itself, how, under conditions of global exposure to the dominant liberalism of today, Confucians could still remain ritual- and family-oriented in a traditional, serious sense of the term.[125] It is in particular unclear, how such a Confucianism could escape the subjective arbitrarisation of its ritual culture which, under conditions of modernity's global exchange, post-modernity's obsession with universal tolerance seeks to impose world-wide.[126]

The other option takes its inspiration from the paradigm offered by Orthodox Christianity. This would imply that one might re-assess the Confucian tradition in search of indications for the personal character and the personal commitments endorsed by familial, social, and political bearers of paternal authority. One would engage in the very project of recognising the person as central, for which Chan invokes Fei (Chan, pp. 198 f). There are several dimensions to such a project, and they all hinge upon the circumstance that what may suffice for a purely immanent approach to human personhood (for whatever that may be worth) does not suffice for an account that aspires to unconditional and universal orienting authority, and thus an account into which a traditional culture in the robust sense seeks to invite all mankind.

1. From the very start it should be acknowledged that a secured reciprocity within Confucianism's hierarchically ordered relationships (Ching, 1993, p. 58), while potentially helpful, is yet, taken by itself, insufficient for this purpose: As the pathology of "mutual co-dependence" makes clear, a mere fit between contingently perceived rights and duties, or a mere mutuality of complementary duties, does not guarantee concern for the spontaneity and uniqueness of the inferior partner.
2. Similarly, the Confucian tradition of linking the exercise of authority to a struggle for self-perfection as exemplified in Chu His's *Li-chi* (as quoted by Bauer, 1974, p. 29), while securing at least a certain self-mastery among those

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[124] It is precisely such a solution which Ching, in one of her various modes of approaching Confucianism's relevance today, seems to recommend (1993, 229 f), when she demands that the concept of religion (which she takes to apply to Confucianism) should be adjusted so as to accommodate a liberal and secular humanism that downsizes transcendence by deriving it from the self-transcendence involved in human perfection.

[125] It is significant that among the "pre-modern ideological-institutional ballast" which Confucianism in Küng's view must discard in order to render its humanism modernity-proof, he includes patriarchialism (Küng and Ching, 1988, p. 249).

[126] In this connection a critical review of the impact which (if we follow Bauer, 1974, 284 f) Buddhist cosmopolitism had on the cultural integrity and stability of the Chinese empire might be illustrative.

who are masters over others, would require an additional input concerning the direction of one's perfection in order to secure the desired goal.[127]

3. Likewise, the Confucian tradition of supplementing political power by independent spiritual counsel (as for example the duke of Chou, who was advisor to King Wu, cf. Bauer, 1974, p. 49), will secure freedom-promoting governance only if that counsel in turn is rightly directed.

4. The Confucian opposition to the lack of "humaneness" or "human warmth" and "personal touch" in Western liberal societies (Ching, 1997, p. 270) is not conducive to a Confucian cultural renewal as long as that opposition motivates nothing beyond the demand for the political safeguards offered by human rights recognition (which she seems to recommend, 268). Such human rights are not helpful when it comes to protecting the familial and ritual support for the personality of those offering and receiving that "personal touch".

5. Nor is a vaguely "spiritual dimension" or "cosmic order" helpful for ritual renewal, since each of these tend to be somewhat taciturn when it comes to instructing their beholders about how to rightly direct (or re-direct) rituals.

6. Instead, Confucians might let themselves be reminded by Engelhardt (p. 45) of how their "transcendent source of orientation" can be conceived in personal terms.[128] Such a personal dimension of transcendence is, after all, not alien to the Confucian tradition. Not only the ancestors addressed in worship, but also the divine being itself, as the addressee of the ancestors' requested intercessions, must be able to receive those intercessions. As Bauer points out (1974, 84 ff), the de-personalisation of the divine being was

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[127] Fan himself emphasizes that there is self mastery and excellence among robbers. But once one goes beyond obvious examples of ethically ill-directed rituals, any purely ethical account concerning which "moral principles" might excuse a breach of ritual correctness in precisely which situations, once such an account is presented to an ethically plural audience, lacks resources for settling differences in interpretation. This is also why Fan's restriction to the domain of Confucian virtue, even if recognized as leaving out Confucianism's transcendent dimension (pp. 144, 152n9), weakens the universal appeal of that virtue: Only when placed within a cosmic perspective can Confucians not only specify their "Confucian identity" (as pointedly addressed in p. 145), but also establish Confucianism's ability to invite universal assent. And this is why Lo is right when he emphasizes the inseparability of Confucian ethics from religion (pp. 127, 129, 133), as shared with traditional Christianity.

[128] For this purpose, it is not enough to conceive humans' attitude to that transcendence as "proto-personally" as Ching does in her later book (1997), where she traces the Chinese "cultural heritage" to a common inspiration according to which humans are "open to", "attuned to", and "desirous of becoming one with" a still anonymous "the divine and the spiritual" (op.cit. p. 271). Precisely such unification would repudiate that very concern for personhood and personal uniqueness which Confucianism is challenged to offer in our time. Nor is it enough to invoke a "metaphysic of the self", as Ching does in the book she co-authored with Manfred Küng (Küng and Ching, 1988). In order to render someone a person and thus a self, another person must address him as person. In Christianity, accordingly, humans' openness and attunedness to, just as their desire for, the transcendent are recognised as responding to a Divine outreach, directed personally at each human being.

effected only by late Chou times.[129] For tradition-conscious Chinese this is a late, and thus easily discountable development.

If Confucians would decide to pursue this second, and more ritual- and family-friendly option, they might be able to demonstrate how precisely their family-embedded rituals protect that very concern for the human personality and personhood, creative uniqueness and spontaneous freedom, on which the liberal competitors in the midst of their cities and media claim to have a monopoly. Such a more encompassing Confucian personalism might therefore offer the needed security against liberalism's individualist and ritual-hostile impact. For the last two millennia, Confucians have endorsed the pursuit of humans' personal perfection through their integration into a cosmic whole. They have thus focussed their culture precisely on what it takes to develop the human person. They only need to conceive that cosmic whole in a way which allows its impact on integrated personhood to go beyond developing persons' performance in social roles (as suggested by Wang pp. 100 ff).[130] Perhaps Wang's added conception of respect for the human person as derivative of respect for (a properly "personal") god (pp. 91 f), once translated from his proposed succession of historical periods into a two tier account, could point in the right direction.

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[129] Even Ching admits "periods" and "circles" which endorsed a personalist view of transcendence (1993, 2 f). In her last book she is even more explicit: "Scholars have tended to agree that Heaven remained a supreme personal deity for Confucians" (1997, p. 80). She even claims that Confucius himself was a believer in a personal deity (1992, p. 55).

[130] They would also need to go beyond Zhang's phenomenological account (MS 17) of how certain structures of experienced time give rise to humanity in a normative sense, intimately connected with family and inter-generational piety. Instead, they would need to accommodate the way in which it is precisely the life of the family which gives rise to, as well as preserves, protects, and celebrates, the un-exchangability of family members' specific personalities.

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