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Reflective Judgment vs. Investigation of Things

A Comparative Study of Kant and Zhu Xi

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PhD Thesis

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Feb 2016

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for another degree at University College Cork or any other institution.

Signed:

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Abbreviation

Abbreviated Titles of Kant's Works

CJ: Critique of Judgment
CPR: Critique of Pure Reason
CPrR: Critique of Practical Reason
Enlightenment: "An Answer to The question: What is Enlightenment"
Groundwork: Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals
LM: Lectures on Metaphysics
Logic: Lectures on Logic
MFNS: Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science
MM: Metaphysics of Morals
NT: "On a New Tone"
Progress: "What Real Progress Has Metaphysic Made in Germany"
Prolegomena: "Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics"
TP: "On the use of teleological principles in philosophy"

Abbreviated Titles of Chinese Texts:

Huowen: Sishu Huowen 四书或问
Li: Liwengong Ji 李文公集
Shuowenzhu: Shuowen Jiezi Zhu 说文解字注
Xingzhuang: 勉斋集朝奉大夫华文阁待制赠宝谟阁直学士通议大夫谥文朱先生行状
Yishu: Ercheng Yishu 河南程氏遗书
Yulei: Zhuzi Yulei 朱子语类
Wenji: Huian Xiansheng Zhuwengong Wenji 晦庵先生朱文公文集
Zhangju: Daxue zhangju 大学章句
Zhengyi: Liji Zhengyi 礼记正义
Ziyi: Beixi Ziyi 北溪字义

Other Abbreviation

Meta.: Metaphysics (Aristotle)
GA: On the Generation of Animals
MT: My Translation
MTS: My Translation and Summarization

Abstract

This thesis is devoted to studying two historical philosophical events that happened in the West and the East. A metaphysical crisis stimulated Kant's writings during his late critical period towards the notion of the supersensible. It further motivated a methodological shift and his coining of reflective judgment, which eventually brought about a systemic unfolding of his critical philosophy via Kantian moral teleology. Zhu Xi and his Neo-Confucian contemporaries confronted a transformed intellectual landscape resulting from the Neo-Daoist and Buddhist discourses of "what is beyond the form". The revival of Confucianism required a method in order to relocate the formless *Dao* back into daily life and to reconstruct a meta-ethical foundation within a social context. This led to the Neo-Confucian recasting of "investigation of things" from *The Great Learning* via complex hermeneutic operations. By the respective investigation on, as well as the comparative analysis of the two events, I reveal the convergence and incommensurability between the two distinct cultural traditions concerning the metaphysical quests, the mechanism of intellectual development, and moral teleology, so as to capture the intrinsic characteristics of philosophical research in general.

Introduction

A. Issue and Method

This thesis investigates two historical “philosophical events” and their respective predicaments: 1) Kant’s third *Critique* and the coining of reflective judgment by a conceptual clarification of the third higher cognitive faculty – the power of judgment – has long been criticized as redundant for his critical philosophical system and deemed a typical Kantian architectonic failure. 2) Zhu Xi’s vital development of the doctrine of “investigation of things” (*gewu*) in his influential creative commentary on the Confucian classic *The Great Learning* (*Daxue Zhangju*) has been attacked for centuries for committing a hermeneutic fallacy. In their respective traditions, each thinker synthesized something new in order to achieve a great systematic body of thinking, but at the same time generated endless debates that persist to the present day..Can a comparative approach shed new light on the validity and legitimacy of the above-mentioned intellectual developments?

One often embarks on comparative philosophical projects with the purpose of seeking diverse approaches or solutions to a certain common philosophical issue. Such quests are challenged when the philosophical problem presumed to be shared by the different cultural thinking traditions often turns out to be an intellectual chimera or a simple constructed “truth” via translation. The question then becomes: what if the proposed philosophical problem is not even conceptualized in the other tradition? A pre-comparative predicament thence appears even before the suspicious intention to reduce different philosophical materials into certain essential elements of ideas. This research will be no exception to such a challenge when it is taken as a study of a common philosophical issue, say, Kantian and Neo-Confucian metaphysics. But it is immune to the above mentioned challenge insofar as it is understood as a comparative philosophical experiment which only creates a “test tube” and adds in the different thinking materials, so that the trans-spatiotemporal intellectual reaction or conversation can be observed in a determined context or framework.

In this thesis, each of the *comparanda* – the two above mentioned specific historical intellectual phenomena from Eastern and Western thinking traditions – first of all, on its own merit, demands an up-to-date treatment. In addition, even if the concrete philosophical

problems dealt with by Kant and Zhu Xi are not interchangeable in an essentialist sense, this does not rule out the possibility of a mutual interpretation and enlightenment from a comparative angle. In fact, a potential identification of the structural similarity in the transition of thinking and a compatible mechanism for the development of philosophical system are both demonstrated in the comparative analysis. This thesis wishes to provide one pavestone for the current lofty enterprise of comparative philosophy, as intercultural philosophical study *de facto*, to bridge the different cultural thinking traditions.

B. Thesis Structure and Chapter Arrangement

This thesis is divided into three parts and consists of nine chapters (and a conclusion). Let me explain the logic of this division and the coherence of the chapter arrangement, and then give an overview of the chapters to follow.

Part One “Unfolding the Issues and Methodological Preparation” is the preliminary investigation of research status and an introduction to the existing problems and methodological discourses. It considers current Neo-Confucian and Kantian studies to explain the reasons for my choice of these two *comparanda* and my research questions and objectives. Then I engage in a methodological reflection on contemporary comparative philosophical research. This part consists of two chapters: **Chapter One**, “Why Zhu Xi and Kant?”, and **Chapter Two**, “Methodological Reflections: On the Methods and Aims of Comparative Philosophy”.

The main argument of this thesis consists of two parts:

Part Two “A Contextual Comparison: Metaphysical Crisis and Transition to the Supersensible” is a study on the “ecology” of thinking. I examine the environment - the historical intellectual context in which the philosophical materials were generated. I try to identify the basic external factors that initially stimulated the process of the evolution of each line of thinking, namely Kant’s philosophy in his late critical period and Zhu Xi’s study of principle (*lixue*) in Neo-Confucianism. By comparing the two, I try to verify whether there are similar factors that contribute to the transitions in thinking; or beyond the comparable concrete philosophical issues, if there is a structural similarity between the trajectories of the evolution of thinking, which might indicate a certain common inner nexus. Two sorts of

‘lenses’ are used in my observation in this intellectual ‘ecological study’. The first one is of a historical ‘wide-angle’. It helps me to capture the dominant features of the intellectual vista of late eighteenth-century Europe (particularly Germany) and of the transforming intellectual landscape in China since the third century (and before Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism in the twelfth century). The other one is a ‘telephoto lens’. It first focuses on the German intellectual scene, with Kant as the coordinate, in a very specific period from 1784 to 1789, (before and during his writing of the *CJ*). Applied to the Chinese, this lens focuses on the Neo-Confucians’, and particularly, Zhu Xi’s intellectual encounters with Daoist and Buddhist thinking. Part Two consists of **Chapter Three**, “Kant’s Reflective Judgment in its Intellectual Context”, **Chapter Four**, “The Transformation of the Tradition and the Coming of Neo-Confucianism”, and **Chapter Five**, “Comparative Analysis: The Moments of A Methodological Shift”.

Part Three, “Kant’s Reflective Judgment and Zhu Xi’s Investigation of Things” is a complex study of the “ontogeny” and the “anatomy” of thinking. Ontogeny is the origination and development of an organism. In contrast to the first part’s external angle, I first carry out an internal examination, concentrating on the “organism”, or the system of thinking itself, and trying to find out how it organizes itself in the transition observed in Part One. In other words, investigating what the mechanism for the evolution or re-organization of the system is. This general question compels me to pay attention to the two concrete conceptual devices: reflective judgment and investigation of things. The genesis of these two conceptual devices epitomizes the systematization of each body of thinking and illustrates the mechanism of Kant’s and Zhu Xi’s intellectual development. Besides a holistic ‘ontogenic’ study, certain ‘anatomic’ techniques are used to dissect particular concepts or parts of the body of thinking. This leads to a comparative analysis of the nature of the two philosophy and their theoretical destinations. Part Three consists of **Chapter Six**, “Realization of the Systematicity: Kant’s Reflective Judgment in Critical Philosophy”, **Chapter Seven**, “Remodeling the Tradition: Zhu Xi’s Investigation of Things in Neo-Confucianism”, **Chapter Eight**, “Comparative Analysis: The Mechanism of Systematization of Thinking”, and **Chapter Nine**, “Destination of Transitions: A Moral Teleology”.

It is worth noting that the chapters on Western and Chinese philosophical materials in Part

Two and Part Three do not constitute a thesis-antithesis, nor are they mere juxtapositions, but are regarded as two samples or data to be analysed for a critical understanding and mutual illumination. The comparison in Part Two is conducted more in the light of Kant's relevant thinking, while the one in Part Three is inspired more by Chinese Neo-Confucian (and particularly Zhu Xi's) philosophical practice.

C. Abstract of Each Chapter

Chapter One

In the traditional narratives of Neo-Confucianism, Zhu Xi remains the centre of Confucian orthodoxy and is considered the greatest systematic and synthetic theoretician to have achieved a "great completion". Although the historical supremacy of Zhu Xi as the authority of the Study of the *Dao* is not questioned, contemporary views often vary in regard to his philosophical achievement in terms of philosophical originality. In this chapter, I unfold these issues: is Zhu Xi a "greatest synthesizer" and/or a creative reformer? What is the mechanism for his comprehensive synthesis of his predecessors and contemporaries? What is the mechanism for his critical digestion and creative development of previous Neo-Confucian thinking? Is Zhu Xi's towering theoretical novelty to be dissolved into the larger intellectual background by placing him in the historical context of colleagues whose contributions have conventionally been slighted? These questions concerning two big issues (on theoretical novelty and on philosophical systematicity) converge and can be illustrated by one concrete example - Zhu Xi's critical development of the Confucian thinking on "investigation of things" (*gewu*). To explain the philosophical importance and the mechanism of Zhu Xi's reinvention of "investigation of things" are major goals of the current research.

Chinese Kantian study, relatively young without a rich heritage, dates back to the late nineteenth century. It is developing strongly with much potential. In particular, the scholarship on Kant's third *Critique* and other minor writings has much room to improve. One unique contribution that has been made by Chinese scholars is a comparative approach to Kantian study. There are many issues in the current Western Kantian study in respect of the *CJ* and Kant's teleology. The *CJ* has long been criticized for its seeming lack of consistency due to the various distinct topics that it encompasses. It is also often regarded as a Kantian

architectonic failure or a redundancy in Kant's systematizing transcendental philosophy. Kant's teleological thinking is neglected notably or treated merely as Kant's philosophy of biology. The current research is largely motivated by the awareness of the research need in Kantian study, and it approaches the *CJ* and related issues from a comparative concern.

Chapter Two

I revisit the debates on the methodology of comparative philosophy in the 1950s. Comparative philosophy has been intertwined with the troublesome notion of "culture" from the very beginning. The cultural approach to comparative philosophy has somehow become the default method due to its pragmatic and utilitarian advantages. Weber proposes a meta-methodological "analytical tool" in order to deal with the methodological predicament of current comparative philosophy – a de facto established sub-discipline of philosophy which largely functions as "intercultural" or "trans-cultural philosophy". I show the possible problems of Weber's meta-methodological "analytical tool" in its application.

I argue that the legitimacy of the current de facto sub-discipline of comparative philosophy is not justified by an exclusive philosophical method of comparison. "Comparative philosophy" in a general sense (either the comparative study of philosophies or the philosophy of comparison) can be viewed as a name for philosophy with a peculiar emphasis on its engaging in making comparison — a basic function or apparatus of critical thinking which characterizes philosophy. However, by analogy to scientific research, I argue from a pragmatic perspective that inter-cultural comparison should be viewed as data analysis to achieve better an explanatory power for philosophical study. Looking for a standard comparison from a reductionist perspective and challenging the validity of the "unwarranted" cultural approach from a whig historical point of view are problematic. Culture offers merely a framework to begin the processing of the enormous philosophical material of different spatiotemporal origins. I argue that comparative philosophy as de facto "inter-cultural philosophy" is meaningful and also necessary in a few points as philosophical "data analysis", with a further historical legitimacy by functioning as a trans-cultural communication or conversation in the age of globalization.

I also focus on the special methodological predicament (a role predicament) of the

Chinese–West comparison. Philosophy as a discipline shipped from the West has, from a Chinese perspective, always had an embedded “innate” West-East (particularly, Western-Chinese) comparative dimension. It has largely functioned since its genesis, even without self-awareness or self-assertion as “comparative” philosophy, insofar as it deals with data analysis from intercultural sources. This “innate” Western-Chinese comparative dimension has had a remarkable impact on the birth and development of a narrative (the history) of so-called “Chinese philosophy”. I conclude with three characteristics of a meaningful and valuable comparative study of philosophy.

Chapter Three

I try to identify the basic external factors that initially stimulated the process of the evolution of Kant’s critical philosophy in his late critical period.

By reviewing the vista of the general intellectual background of late eighteenth-century Europe, and particularly Germany, a dynamic scene in German intellectual history is revealed – the different intellectual springs (namely, science, religion and metaphysics) flowed together, tangled and intertwined. I examine the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, which to a great deal transformed the predominant way of thinking, constituted the pervasive mood and the macro-context of the world of Kant, laid down the foreground for Kant’s critical philosophy, and to a large extent set the key tone of Kant’s philosophical practice, defining one of Kant’s major philosophical tasks: saving metaphysics. I then use Kant as the coordinate, focusing on the German intellectual scene in a very specific period, namely, before and during Kant’s writing of the *CJ* (from 1784 to 1789). Three intellectual controversies in which Kant was directly embroiled are analyzed. I argue that despite the distinct positions and various focuses of Kant’s rivals, their concerns often lead to a central issue: transcendental ideas. In light of the reaction between Kant and his rivals, I further reveal that a metaphysical pursuit of a proper method of ascending to the supersensible is the leitmotif of Kant’s late-critical period, which forced the evolution of critical philosophy and raised a direct need for a new *Critique*.

Chapter Four

I study the historical intellectual context of the revival of Confucianism. I first survey Neo-Daoism in the Wei and Jin dynasties. I indicate its syncretic spirit and synthesis of Daoism and Confucianism via a positive hermeneutic method. I argue that the Neo-Daoist exploration of the “horizon of the human domain and heaven” and its discourse on being and nonbeing surpassed the Han dynasty correlative cosmology. The Neo-Daoist establishment of “*wu*” (nonbeing) – “the nameless” and “the formless” – as a fundamental principle brought Chinese metaphysical cosmology to a new level. I then analyse Chinese Buddhism to identify its unique contribution to the transformation of Chinese thinking. I use Xuanzang’s Consciousness-Only School to exemplify Buddhist sophisticated discourse on the human heart-mind and consciousness. Buddhism added a new dimension – metaphysical psychology– into Chinese thinking. Neo-Daoism and Chinese Buddhism together caused a sea-change in Chinese thinking: a transition to the formless. Challenged by Neo-Daoist and Buddhist doctrines, ethics-centric Confucianism suffered a crisis, which exposed its meta-ethical explanatory weakness and methodological deficiency.

I focus on the Neo-Confucian transition to the realm “beyond the form” in the twelfth century. Based on his study and criticism of Daoist and Buddhist thinking, Zhu Xi pointed out the Confucian metaphysical quest was essentially distinct from those of the Daoists and the Buddhists in its aim for relocating the amoral and formless *Dao* back into daily (and social) life. I argue that this demand lead to a crucial Neo-Confucian philosophical-methodological redevelopment that would be realized in investigation of things.

Chapter Five

I first point out that a similar *Zeitgeist* characterized the two philosophical events: the revival of Confucianism was immersed in a syncretistic spirit of the age and it also became the best embodiment of it; comparably, Kant lived in a era characterized by “eclecticism” and his combination of the projects, saving metaphysics and the critical philosophical experiment, showed a strong syncretistic spirit. I then point out a similar pattern in each philosophy: a shifting of thinking in order to cope with the supersensible. The Chinese conception of “the formless” is comparable to “the supersensible” in Kant’s term. Kant’s definition and classification of metaphysics provides useful apparatuses for looking into the Chinese

phenomena and determining the nature of Neo-Daoist and Buddhist respective contribution to the discourses of “the formless”. It also offers a means of bridging the two unique traditions of metaphysics.

I further argue that the structural similarity: a transition to the supersensible with a strong syncretistic spirit and a metaphysical crisis, leads both lines of thinking to methodological development. This movement is explained in the light of Kant’s view of philosophy and its double obligation: systematization of philosophical cognitions and methodological development. For Kant, in order to cope with the remaining metaphysical questions after the *CPrR*, to fully realize the systematicity of critical philosophy, and to maintain the consistency of his thinking and terminology, the coining of reflective judgment is inevitable. For Neo-Confucians, the remodeling of Confucianism into a system of thinking with both pragmatic efficacy and metaphysical profundity in order to reinforce its ethics-centric ideology requires a proper philosophical method. Zhu Xi’s recasting of investigation of things would help to achieve this Neo-Confucian “great completion”.

Chapter Six

I defend Kant against the charge of being an "architectonic psychopath", arguing that Kant's striving for systematicity is stimulated by the maturity of his intensive reflection on critical philosophy in the late 1780s, and essentially stems from his rationalist understanding of philosophy and the duty of a philosopher, i.e., the appeal for consistency. From Kant's perspective, his critical philosophy is not a static body of doctrines set in stone, but a dynamic project of thinking as a whole – a fully presented system (since the first *Critique*) with continuous need of further conceptual clarification. In light of such an idea of clarification, the mechanism for his systematization of critical philosophy is explained: I point out that, due to an asymmetry in Kant's conception of the isomorphic structure between philosophy and human faculties, a systemic tension is introduced into his critical philosophy before the *Critique of Judgment*. This tension causes a dilemma, and therefore demands further transcendental conceptual clarification, opening up ground for a third Critique – the *CJ*.

I sketch the evolution of Kant's notion of “the power of judgment”, and analyze the source of his coining of reflective judgment in his pre-CJ critical philosophy—the

understanding-judgment ambiguity and Kant's provisional idea of reason's natural propensity. I suggest that the idea of reflective judgment functions as a solution to the problem of systemic asymmetry and leads to a coherent critical system. Finally, I orient Kant's newly coined reflective judgment to his concept of purpose, as a preliminary preparation for the unfolding of the comparison.

Chapter Seven

Chinese thinking tradition is deeply grounded in its hermeneutic practice. Corresponding to the division between the primary learning and the great learning in Chinese traditional scholarship, there are two basic hermeneutic approaches, viz., the "evidential study" and the "philosophical study". I argue for the theoretical and technical possibility of preserving tradition and developing thinking via the coordination of the negative and positive hermeneutic dimensions. Confucianism has always been the leading practitioner of Chinese hermeneutics. I argue that the aforementioned Neo-Confucian return to pre-Qin classics in search for a metaphysical transition essentially depended on a creative engagement with hermeneutic methodologies. The shift in Confucian primary Literature from Five Classics to Four Books grouped by Zhu Xi, in which *The Great Learning* is rediscovered and elevated, is first of all a hermeneutic victory.

Zhu Xi's Hermeneutic operations on *The Great Learning* provide a perfect example of the synthesis of the negative and positive Chinese hermeneutic methodologies. I first look in to his overall textual arrangement and his reinvented fifth interpretation and commentary (*zhuan*). I defend him against the accusation of committing a "supplementary hermeneutic fallacy". I then focus on a more concrete issue—the evolution of the doctrine "*gewu*" from Zheng Xuan's "events coming forth" in the Han dynasty to Zhu Xi's "investigation of things (so as to thoroughly probe principle)" due certain 'recessive' hermeneutic operations. For instance, based on the interpretations from Li Ao and Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi shifts the first-order derivation of the meaning of the character "*zhi*" to its second-order derivation. This philological interpretation offers the vital condition and catalyst for Zhu Xi's philosophical genius. It allows for continuity in a new linguistic and intellectual context, and at the same time provides a lever for Zhu Xi's critical reforming of the doctrine of "*gewu*". Finally, I point

out, the complexity of Chinese hermeneutics provides an adaptable mechanism for Chinese intellectual development. The employment of criteria like "theoretical novelty" or "philosophical creativity" in reflection on Chinese thinking tradition has to be placed against this background. The hermeneutic mechanism for intellectual development offers me a new angle for appreciating the systematization of Kant's critical philosophy.

Chapter Eight

I bridge Chinese and Western hermeneutic traditions. Dilthey's combination of philological exegesis and philosophical creation in "an effective hermeneutics" corresponds to Zhu Xi's synthesis of the negative and positive Chinese hermeneutic methodologies. I use Dilthey's theoretical reflection and Neo-Confucian cases to construct the conception of a "hermeneutic mechanism" for intellectual development. The contemporary conception of "creativity" shaped by scientific research is not an indigenous element within a living thinking tradition like the Chinese Confucian tradition which is characterized by a continuous and on-going hermeneutic evolution. An intellectual development via hermeneutic mechanism is fuelled by the dynamic between an ideal universality and its concrete realization on the basis of "the substratum of a general human nature". Therefore, from a hermeneutic perspective, "creation" is understood as a re-creation of the ideal universality in each concrete and particular context via "the individuality of the exegete". I also reflect on the hermeneutic nature of the Chinese idea of "transmission of the *Dao*".

Kant's problematic architectonics and systematization of critical philosophy can be defended in light of "hermeneutic mechanism" and Chinese hermeneutic practices. Kant's conceptual "clarification" is essentially hermeneutic. Kant's intellectual development after the first Critique can be viewed as a self-exegesis—a hermeneutic realization. Critical philosophy is viewed as an original "text" (*CPR*) interpreted and enriched by the two hermeneutic layers (*CPrR* and *CJ*). I particularly compare Kant's coining of reflective judgment and Zhu Xi's philological interpretation of "*zhi*" in light of the hermeneutic mechanism. Finally, I look into the conception of "hermeneutic circle". I argue that the Neo-Confucian remodelling of Confucianism manifests a "hermeneutic circle" at three levels: individual textual level, systemic codification level, and intellectual historical level. In light of the "hermeneutic

circle”, Kant’s critical philosophical project is understood in a dynamic view of as an on-going self-exegesis whole that was capable of responding to feedback, adjusting to changes and incorporating new ideas. I thereby argue that philosophy manifests the nature of an organism.

Chapter Nine

I first clarify what philosophical teleology is. By reflection on the relation between language and thinking, I reveal the trace of teleological thinking in everyday language. I study the different causal explanations. A linguistic reflection on the usage of common interrogatives helps me justify that the “transformation of the way of thinking” launched by the Scientific Revolution lies foremost in a still on-going conversion of many “why” questions into the “how” questions. In this process, a possible teleological explanation is eliminated. I use Aristotle’s thinking on *telos* as a classical paradigm, to reconstruct four main characteristics of a philosophical teleology, viz., primacy, criticality, atheism, and irreducibility. I thereby define philosophical teleology as a doctrine of using the concept of purpose and purposiveness and principles like the causality of purpose (*nexus finalis*) for explanation. A moral teleology is a sort of teleology which regards the *telos* (purpose) at the same time as moral property.

In my study of Kant’s moral teleology, I provide two innovative angles for understanding the relationship between Kant’s critical philosophy in general and his teleological thinking. The first one concerns the teleological coherence of critical philosophy. By reviewing the major themes (beauty, the sublime, natural purpose) investigated by reflective judgment in terms of purposiveness and purpose, and also an investigation of purposiveness in the *CPrR* and other works, I demonstrate a broader picture of Kantian philosophical teleology that surpasses the mere teleological reflection on organism. In addition, I argue that Kant’s philosophical teleology is a moral teleology. I reconstruct two arguments from *the CPrR* and the *CJ* concerning Kant’s central moral teleological thesis: the final purpose is identical to the highest good. I demonstrate that the three *Critiques*, despite their being devoted to different cognitive powers, finally converge into a common path towards a moral teleology. I evaluate Kant’s teleology. The second angle concerns the critical philosophical project as a whole. I

argue that it was driven by a teleological motivation, underwent a turn to teleology, and eventually proceeded toward a teleological destination. It can be unified in the moral teleological idea of a final purpose.

In light of my findings on Kant, I study the Neo-Confucian investigation of things and reconstruct the Neo-Confucian moral teleological elements. Firstly, I analyze the general philosophical impact of the Neo-Confucian re-invention of investigation of things. It updated the classical Chinese metaphysical dichotomy between the *dao* and utility into that between principle and *qi* energy in a Neo-Confucian context. I also present the rationale underlying the application of investigation of things as a method of metaphysical quest. It differs from the Buddhist or Daoist approach in its requirement for the accumulation of concrete principles and the gradual reaching to the state of “all penetrating”. I argue that the Neo-Confucian theoretical counterpart of the Buddhist ultimate truth, the “one root”, has a fundamentally different practical concern. In my reconstruction of Neo-Confucian moral teleology, I argue that the notion of principle is comparable to Kant’s concept of purpose. It is also a moral teleological property. The Neo-Confucian dichotomy between principle and *qi* energy provides a counterpart of the Kantian doctrine of double causality, despite also having significant incommensurability. In addition, I argue that through the Neo-Confucian philosophical method investigation of things and exhausting principle, a similar moral teleology is realized, but with disparate arguments and practical implications. The rationale behind Neo-Confucian moral teleology does not rely on a single idea of highest good (such as final purpose). I make a hypothetical argument in Zhu Xi’s name to criticize Kant. Finally, I point out that, although both philosophies bring meaning to the living world and provide the idea of a better life, Neo-Confucian investigation of things looks outward to find the moral coherence between us and things and it reveals what is alike in the human and natural domains, while Kant fundamentally rejects the natural world (as mechanical) for the sake of moral certainty in terms of freedom and he identifies what is unique in us.

Chapter One Why Zhu Xi and Kant?

This comparative study first of all believes that each of the two above mentioned *comparata* deserves new research in its own right. This belief has grown out of a primary concern for a proper understanding of the renewed problem of Zhu Xi's theoretical novelty, and the mechanism of the remodelling and systematization of Neo-Confucianism, both of which converge into a specific focus on Zhu Xi's critical development of "investigation of things" (*gewu*) into a doctrine of fundamental methodological and meta-ethical importance for Neo-Confucianism. It is also inspired by the unsettled disputation on the systematicity of Kant's critical philosophy and the necessity of the third *Critique* in its realisation, and further confirmed by the relative lack of research on the role of the newly coined reflective judgment in the process of the systemic evolution of Kant's critical philosophy.

Finally, It is motivated by a sympathy towards the comparative approach of Chinese Kantian Study (its unique contribution to international Kantian study and to the promotion of Chinese traditional philosophy in a modern and contemporary context) and a considerable lacuna in the comparative analysis of Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian philosophical method investigation of things and Kant's newly coined reflective judgment in his final *Critique*.

1.1 Why Zhu Xi and Investigation of Things?

1.1.1 The Greatest Synthesizer or Reformer – Zhu Xi's Historical Place and the Renewed Problem of His Philosophical Originality

Zhu Xi¹ 朱熹 (1130-1200) is often regarded as the Eastern "St. Thomas Aquinas" (1225-1274), due to historical coincidence and the comparable significance of both thinkers. Zhu Xi is arguably the most influential Confucian philosopher after Confucius and Mencius in Chinese history, or even perhaps, as argued by Wing-tsit Chan 陈荣捷 (1901-1994), "the

¹ For the sake of the consistency of my argument, I will use the Mandarin spelling for all the Chinese names and philosophical terms – thus, Zhu Xi instead of Chu Hsi, *dao* instead of *tao*, *lixüe* instead of *li-hsüeh*, etc. Accordingly, "Chu Hsi", "*tao*" "*li-hsüeh*", etc. in all quotations will also be replaced by "Zhu Xi", "*dao*", "*lixüe*", etc..

most prominent philosopher for the whole area of East Asia” (Chan, 1987, p. 71).² In the traditional narratives of Neo-Confucianism, “Zhu Xi remains the center of Confucian orthodoxy” and is considered “the greatest systematic and synthetic theoretician of Confucianism”. Conventional studies of Neo-Confucianism generally concentrate “on a single line of development to and from” him (Tillman, 1992, p. 1). Therefore, many commentators describe Zhu Xi’s accomplishment by using the words *ji dacheng* (集大成 “great completion”³). However, views often vary with regard to how exactly we are to understand this “great completion” of Zhu Xi.

Feng Youlan 冯友兰 (1895-1990) focuses on Zhu Xi’s speculative philosophy, or, metaphysics, and thus regards Zhu Xi as “the greatest synthesizer in the history of Chinese thought”, who synthesized “the ideas of all these predecessors into one all-embracing system... brought the Rationalistic school to full maturity, [and] in the process created a version of Confucianism that was to remain orthodox until the twentieth century” (Feng, 1953, p. 533). Wing-tsit Chan, taking a more comprehensive approach, stresses that “the fundamental changes he [Zhu Xi] made, the philosophical reasons for them”, and his remodelling of Neo-Confucian thinking be considered in addition to his role in synthesizing the ideas of his predecessors in order to carry out the “great completion” (Chan, 1987, pp. 103-104). Chan identifies “the fundamental changes” that Zhu Xi made in at least three aspects: **a.** ideas or philosophy, **b.** cultural tradition/lineage, and **c.** source materials and methodology; which, respectively, brought about three achievements: “the development and completion of the Neo-Confucian philosophy, the establishment of a new Confucian tradition of the orthodox transmission of the Way (*Dao-tong* 道统), and the grouping of the Four Books” (ibid., p. 104).

Most scholars would not question the historical supremacy of Zhu Xi as the most systematic and comprehensive thinker, as the authority of the Study of the *Dao* (*Daoxue* 道

² Chan thinks that “no one has exercised greater influence on Chinese thought than Zhu Xi except Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi. He gave Confucianism new meaning and for centuries dominated not only Chinese thought but the thought of Korea and Japan as well” (Chan, 1969, p. 588). According to Chan’s account of the transmission of the thinking of Zhu Xi, Zhu Xi was “introduced into Korea in the early fourteenth century”. “The golden peak was in the sixteenth century” and his thinking “practically overwhelmed the entire *Yi* dynasty (1392-1910) for five hundred years”. In Japan, Zhu Xi’s work was available since the middle of the thirteenth century, and his philosophy was made “the official ideology for the entire *Tokugawa* period (1603-1867)... [and it] prevailed throughout the land and lasted for three hundred years” (Chan, 1987, p. 71-72).

³ For instance, Chen Lai 陈来 writes in his influential work on Zhu Xi’s philosophy, “朱熹是北宋开启的理学的集大成者” (Chen, 2000, p. 2).

学)⁴ since the late twelfth century, whose philosophical depth surpasses all his contemporaries (Tillman, 2002, p. 304),⁵ and whose “breadth of insight and ... scholarship are equalled by few men in Chinese history” (Chan, 1969, p. 589). Nevertheless, the sense in which Zhu Xi’s great “completion is a mere synthesis, a reconstruction, or a creative achievement is a matter of opinion” (Chan, 1987, p. 104). Some scholars, such as Zhou Yutong and Tokiwa Daijo, “regard Zhu Xi as not original” (ibid., p. 104n7). In his book *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* Tillman (1992, p. 2) dissects Zhu Xi's “intellectual development in the context of his relationships and interchanges with his major contemporaries” and believes that “observing the exchange of ideas with his colleagues will yield a significantly different picture of Zhu Xi and his thought” (ibid.). To some extent, “this historical approach” of Tillman’s undermines the portraying of “Zhu Xi as an isolated and unique philosopher”, and reduces to a certain degree Zhu Xi’s towering theoretical novelty into the larger intellectual background,⁶ despite his claim that “the intent is not to denigrate

⁴ There are still debates on the usages of terms like *Daoxue* and *Lixue*. A clarification of these terms is necessary. Tillman uses *Dao-xue* in a broader sense, as standing between the learning of Song dynasty (the Neo-Confucianism in the Song dynasty) and the *Cheng-Zhu* school of Neo-Confucianism (Neo-Confucian orthodoxy). Tillman justifies his usage of *Daoxue* by referring to the book *Dao-ming-lu* 道命录 or the *Record of the Destiny of the Tao* (Tillman, 1992, pp. 2-3). (“I will follow the lead of the *Record of the Destiny of the Dao*, for in 1239 it highlighted the interaction of philosophy and politics in the fluctuating fortunes of the *Dao-xue* group” (ibid, p. 9)). His broader use of *Daoxue* concerns his research focus – “I will use the *Daoxue* rubric to highlight the progressive evolution of the fellowship throughout the period from the late eleventh century through the Southern Song” (ibid, p. 2). In the Chinese version(reversed) of his book (renamed as 朱熹的思维世界), he criticizes that “many Chinese scholars still cannot rectify the opinion that *Daoxue* is equivalent to *Lixue*” (MT: “可是许多中国学者犹未能避免道学就是理学的看法”). Tillman regards *Li-xue* as a narrow concept used since the last phase of the Southern Song dynasty (Tillman, 2002, pp. 2-3). Based on Tillman’s distinction between *Daoxue* and *lixue*, Lu Jiuyuan, for instance, is included in Tillman’s account of the tradition of *Daoxue*. Chen Lai holds a rather different distinction. He argues that the specific name of *Daoxue* in the Song dynasty exclusively indicates the school established by the two Chengs (later developed by Zhu Xi into the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism, or the Confucianism orthodoxy, or *Lixue* in a narrow sense). Chen points out, 1) the name *Daoxue* is used earlier than the name *Lixue*. *Daoxue* is the name of *Lixue* in its early phase; 2) *Lixue* in a general sense is the whole body of the dominant learning/scholarship in Song and Ming dynasties. Within this body, there are two schools. One is *Daoxue*, or the *Lixue* in a narrow and specific sense. It is dominant in the Song dynasty, also called the school of Cheng-Zhu. The other is *Xinxue* (the study of xin, 心, hear-mind), represented by Lu jiu yuan and Wang Shouren. It is dominant in the middle and late Ming dynasty (Chen, 2011, pp. 8-11). Therefore, according to Chen’s distinction, Lu Jiuyuan does not belong to the tradition of *Daoxue*. In the current research, I prefer Chen’s definition and usage of those terms. In order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding, I will restrain from generally using simple terms like “*Daoxue*” or “*Lixue*” but always specify my terms, like the Cheng-Zhu School of Neo-Confucianism or Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism, etc.

⁵ “朱熹为什么能够在十二世纪末期成为道学的核心?朱熹是道学内部最有系统的理论家, 发展出最全面的哲学思想, 尤其能在哲学思辨的层面超越其他道学家。”

⁶ In the Chinese revision of Tillman’s book (renamed as 朱熹的思维世界), Tillman (2002, pp. 312-313) points out that a new angle of understanding Zhu Xi’s thought is generated by viewing Zhu Xi’s intellectual development in the context of his relationships and interchanges with his major contemporaries. He argues that various thoughts and practices of Zhu Xi were influenced by his contemporaries. For example, using “*xin zhi de*” (the virtue of the heart) to interpret the Confucian “*ren*” is directly from Zhang Shi; Zhu Xi’s organization and regulation of *shu-yuan* might be inspired by Lü Zuqian; Zhu Xi’s comments on Book of Changes and Book of Odes are based on Lü’s research, so on and so forth. “本书将朱熹的思想发展置于他与同时代学者交流的背景理解, 以使产生新的角度研究他的思想。例如, 朱熹与许多学者都致力建立儒教的理想社会, 而借用他们的社区组织的模式, 发展社仓书院等组织。朱熹在一封写给吕祖俭的信中承认, 以“心之德”一语解释仁, 其实是直接来自张栻的观念, 但后人往往忽略这封重要的书信。朱熹备受赞扬的书院组织与书院学规, 其实吕祖谦早

Zhu Xi as a philosopher but to place him in the historical context of colleagues whose contributions have conventionally been slighted" (ibid.).

Zhu Xi's creativity was not an issue for centuries. Huang Gan 黄干 (1152-1221), a disciple of Zhu Xi, uses the words "*pouji fangming* 裒集发明" (roughly, synthesis and development) in his widely influential biography of Zhu Xi,⁷ which approves both Zhu Xi's comprehensive synthesis of his predecessors and contemporaries, and his critical digestion and creative development of previous Neo-Confucian thinking.⁸ Chan points out that Zhu Xi "did not use any new source material or create any new term", but still at the same time creatively remodelled Neo-Confucianism and "gave Neo-Confucianism a new character and a new completion" (Chan, 1987, p. 104). Finding a proper angle for analysis – and perhaps also a concrete example in Zhu Xi's philosophy to illustrate the mechanism that constructs Zhu Xi's theoretical novelty within his synthetic "great completion" – primarily motivates the current thesis. Moreover, Zhu Xi's philosophy is highly praised for its unprecedented "systematic structure", which "gives the study of principle (*li*) a careful, rationalistic and integrated demonstration" (Chen, 2000, p. 7).⁹ I think, to some extent, Zhu Xi's great synthesis is not only a selective incorporation or a systematic classification of the philosophical doctrines of the five masters in the Northern Song Dynasty, but first of all the systematization lies in his unification of the previous questions which demand the response of a coherent methodology with a certain unity. The question of how to analyse, understand, appreciate and estimate this systematization and its methodology of realization is another key motivation of this research. In this thesis, I will show that those two big questions (on theoretical novelty and on philosophical systematicity) converge and can be illustrated by one concrete example – Zhu Xi's critical development of the Confucian thinking on investigation of things.

已着手进行这些工作, 朱熹或许是受他的启发; 此外, 他对易经, 诗经的看法是以吕祖谦的研究为文献的架构"

⁷ See *Zhuzi Quanshu* 朱子全书 (*The Full Collection of Master Zhu's work*), Vol. 27, *Xingzhuang*, p. 562. Future quotations from this collection will only indicate the volume, the name of the specific text quoted, and the page number.

⁸ Chan comments on Huang's biography of Zhu Xi: "what Huang Gan said in his *xingzhuang* [biography] must have represented the general opinion of his time" (1987, p. 17), "not only because it is the primary source of the life of Zhu Xi but also because it represents the final opinion of history about him" (ibid., p. 18) "The clear implication is that the account was extensively revised as a result of various criticisms. What this means is that the account is not that of one pupil alone but of many people. It is not an exaggeration to say that the appraisal in the *xingzhuang* is the final post-mortem opinion of the Chinese people on Zhu Xi" (ibid., p. 19).

⁹ MT: "为'理'学进行严密的, 理性的完整论证, 导致了朱熹哲学的体系构造, 朱熹首先必须把周敦颐, 张载, 程二程结合起来".

1.1.2 Investigation of Things and Neo-Confucian Methodology

The investigation of things (*gewu*) is the first of the eight concrete goals or steps for moral accomplishment in the program offered by the short Confucian Classic *The Great Learning*,¹⁰ which was originally a chapter of the Confucian *Book of Rites*. *The Great Learning* was “rediscovered” and increasingly stressed by Neo-Confucian proponents in the revival of Confucianism since the Tang Dynasty, and finally elevated to one of the “Four Books” after Zhu Xi’s editing and commentary. *Gewu* is usually translated into “investigate things” or “investigation of things” (also “recognize things”, or “recognition of things”). It is often combined with the second goal *zhizhi* (“to extend one’s knowledge [and wisdom]”, or “extension of knowledge [and wisdom]”) to form the basic step or preliminary method for moral self-cultivation. In Neo-Confucian re-interpretation and discourses on Confucian classics, investigation of things has been associated with one of the central Neo-Confucian notions, principle (*li*), to form the proposition “*gewu qiongli*” (格物穷理 roughly, “to investigate things in order to exhaust principle[s]”), which combines two of the six major Neo-Confucian theoretical achievements (Chan, 1969 p. 589). “Investigation of things” has been considered to be of fundamental methodological importance in the establishment of a systematic Neo-Confucian philosophical enterprise. As Chen (2000, p. 284) points out, Zhu Xi’s thinking on “investigation of things” and “extension of knowledge” is of irrefutable significance due to 1) its direct relevance to one focus of all the systems of Study of the Principle (*Lixue*), viz. the methodology, and 2) it being a terminus of Zhu Xi’s entire philosophical pursuit.¹¹ In fact, Chen treats “investigation of things” as one of the three core themes of Zhu Xi’s entire philosophy. Qian Mu 钱穆 (1895-1990) emphasizes that although

¹⁰ Here are two very brief but representative introductions on the importance and the main ideas of the book *Great Learning*: **a.** “the Importance of this little Classic is far greater than its small size would suggest. It gives the Confucian educational, moral, and political programs in a nutshell, neatly summed up in the so-called ‘three items’: manifesting the clear character of man, loving the people, and abiding in the highest good; and in the ‘eight steps’: the investigation of things, extension of knowledge, sincerity of the will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of the personal life, regulation of the family, national order, and world peace. Moreover, it is the central Confucian doctrine of humanity (*ren*) in application” (Chan, 1969. p. 84); **b.** “The Eight-Step program is a straightforward means to show that self-cultivation can connect to the promise of community harmony and even peace among communities or among nations...The eight Steps are as follows: 1. Recognize (or Investigate) Things and Affairs, 2. Extend One’s Knowing, 3. Make One’s Intention Sincere, 4. Rectify One’s Mind, 5. Cultivate the Person, 6. Regulate the Family, 7. Order the State, 8. Bring Peace to All. Their objective, as understood by Zhu Xi, was a program for self cultivation that would allow each person to understand and access the inherent goodness within the person” (Keenan, 2011, p. 40).

¹¹ “朱熹的格物致知思想直接关系到一切理学体系的着眼点——为学之方，又是他全部哲学的一个最终归宿，因此有着不可忽视的重要意义”

among Zhu Xi's thought "to investigate things in order to exhaust principle[s]" is valued most by the later philosophers, it is also most disputable (1971, p. 504).¹² As Chan also points out, there is a bifurcation in Neo-Confucian interpretations of the "investigation of things" – "bitter opposition among Neo-Confucianists" – and debates between the two schools, namely, Study of the Principle (*Lixue*) and Study of the Heart-mind (*Xinxu*) respectively represented by Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming 王阳明 (1472-1529), which lasted for centuries (Chan, 1969, pp. 84-85). This, in a sense, again proves the fundamental status and methodological significance of "investigation of things". The perceived importance of the doctrine of "investigation of things" has been largely in concert with the fortune of *The Great Learning* and the intellectual movement of Neo-Confucianism in general; in which Zhu Xi's contribution (reconstruction, commentary and promotion) plays a vital and irreplaceable part.

Understanding Zhu Xi's development of "investigation of things" and its importance will help to decipher the above-mentioned two questions (on Zhu Xi's theoretical novelty and the mechanism of systematization of Neo-Confucianism); as such, it is the primary goal of this thesis. However, the novelty of current research is not limited to a new reading of "investigation of things". It also lies in the comparative approach that I am going to engage.

1.2 Why Kant and the *Critique of Judgment*

1.2.1 A Brief Sketch of Kantian Study in China

Kantian Study in China dates back to the late nineteenth century, when Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927) first presented Kant in 1886, ironically, as a scientist renowned for his nebular hypothesis rather than as a prominent philosopher. After that, leading scholars of the day such as Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873-1929), Wang Guowei 王国维 (1877-1927), and Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) started to introduce Kant's thinking and to highlight his significant influence on modern western culture. But these introductions were neither deep nor systematic, and were sometimes even misleading. The first notable wave of Chinese Kantian studies happened in the 1920s, marked by a few special issues on Kant's philosophy in major academic journals. It was generally believed to be provoked by Hans Driesch's

¹² "朱子思想, 以论格物穷理最为受后人之重视, 亦最为后人所争论."

(1867-1941) lectures on Kant during his visit to China in 1922-23. Although those journal articles covered various topics concerning Kant's philosophy, few of them were based on a first-hand study of Kant's original works. No monograph on Kant's philosophy was written by Chinese scholars in this period. The situation changed in the 1930s due to the appearance of a few Chinese translations of Kant's works and secondary literature on Kantian study. Almost at the same time, biographies of the philosopher Kant and monographs on Kant's thought written by Chinese scholars appeared. Kantian study in China made a breakthrough in the 1940s, when a book named *Kande Xüeshu* 康德学述 (*A Study of Kant's philosophy*) was published by Zheng Xin 郑昕 (1905-1974),¹³ a student of Bruno Bauch (1877-1942). Other scholars such as Zhang Mingding 张铭鼎, Qu Shiyong 瞿世英, Lü Cheng 吕澂, Zhou Fucheng 周辅成, Hong Qian 洪谦, and Fan Shoukang 范寿康 also contributed to Kantian study in the same period. From 1949 to 1976 there were hardly any remarkable academic studies on Kant in mainland China, where philosophical research was greatly affected by the dominant ideology.¹⁴ The only remarkable achievement in this period is Wei Zhuomin's 韦卓民 (1888-1976)¹⁵ translation of some of Kant's works and secondary literature on Kantian study. In contrast, scholars who emigrated to Taiwan and Hong Kong after 1949 made significant progress. For example, prominent work was accomplished by Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995), which I will introduce in more detail below. Although a new generation of Kantian scholars in Mainland China, including Qi Liangji 齐良骥 (1915-1990) and Yang Zutao 杨祖陶 (1927-), both students of Zheng Xin, started their research during this period, their important work on Kant would only be completed in the next phase.

The year 1978 is a landmark in Kantian study in China: Li Zehou 李泽厚 (1930-) published three articles about Kant's philosophy (mainly concerning Kant's epistemology, his

¹³ Zheng Xin studied in both University of Berlin and University of Yena, returned to China in 1932 and taught in Peking University from then on. He was elected chairman of the Department of philosophy three times. Even today, about 40 years after his death, he still remains one of the best Chinese experts in Kant's philosophy. Zheng Xin had no more work published after his book *A study of Kant's philosophy*.

¹⁴ According to the statistics from CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure, a leading database of Chinese Academic Journals), during that period of approximately 30 years, there were only 11 essays published in main academic journals titled with Kant, in which two essays were on Kant's science theories, and the others were devoted to a criticism of Kant in accordance with the popular ideology. Most participants who played an important role in Chinese Kantian study in last stage rarely made any new progress.

¹⁵ Wei translated Norman Kemp Smith's *A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*; John Watson's *The philosophy of Kant explained*; Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (co-translation with Zong Baihua 宗白华). Due to the aforementioned ideological reasons, Wei's works were largely ignored and Wei also had to publish the translation of the first *Critique* under the pseudonym Chuo Ran (绰然). Lan Gongwu's (蓝公武) translation of the *Critique* was published in 1957, though he actually finished it in 1935.

philosophy of history, religion and politics), once again drawing Chinese academia's attention to Kant. Thereafter, Kant was frequently mentioned in philosophical discourses and became somehow a symbol of western values such as science and democracy. Enlightenment by virtue of Kant's thinking was widely expected, and his epistemology and political philosophy were especially highlighted. New translations of Kant's essays were intensively published by a Chinese academic journal, *World Philosophy*, in 1981. Kant's other works besides the *Critiques*, e.g., *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*,¹⁶ were also gradually translated by scholars. However, original study devoted to Kant's philosophy was still rather limited. For some reason, there was little communication between Chinese and international Kantian scholars.¹⁷ Since the 1990s, Kantian study in China has been enjoying a resurgence. The number of academic journal articles on Kant has increased rapidly¹⁸. A new generation, the backbone of current Chinese Kantian study, has come onto the stage. The main representatives are Ye Xiushan 叶秀山 (1935-), Deng Xiaomang 邓晓芒 (1948-), Han Shuifa 韩水法 (1958-), Li Qiuling 李秋零 (1957-), Li Minghui 李明辉 (1953-), etc. One common characteristic of the research of these scholars is the emphasis on a first-hand reading of Kant's texts. The sets of Chinese translations of Kant's three *Critiques* by Deng Xiaomang and by Li Qiuling are both considered the current most popular versions. Meanwhile, communication between Chinese and international Kantian scholars becomes more and more frequent.

In current Chinese Kantian study, Kant's epistemology and ethics are the dominant topics. Attention to the third *Critique*, much less than to the first two *Critiques*, often merely focuses on its first part, the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" – considered as Kant's aesthetics. The second part, "Critique of Teleological Judgment", is often simply ignored.¹⁹ There is no influential Chinese monograph on Kant's teleological thinking until now. Among the leading contemporary Chinese Kantian Scholars mentioned above, Deng Xiaomeng has a special interest in and contribution to the study of the third *Critique*. However, his two

¹⁶ Translated by Miao Litan 苗力田 in 1986.

¹⁷ For example, it is said that Qi Liangji was not allowed to attend the International Kant Congress in America.

¹⁸ According to the statistic from the CAJD (China Academic Journal Network Publishing Database), research devoted to Kant's philosophy has largely increased - Journal article has "Kant" in title: 1981-1990, around 300 items, 1991-2000, around 500 items, 2001-2011, around 2000 items

¹⁹ According the statistics from the CDFD (China Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database) and the CMFD (China Master's Theses Full-text Database), there are only 4 dissertations on Kant's teleological thinking from 1984 to 2011 when my current research started.

influential introductory and commentary works on the third *Critique* aim at giving an overall preliminary interpretative narrative of the *CJ* following Kant's own structure rather than providing an integrated criticism. Ye Xiushan (2012, pp. 3-14.) in his paper "Approach to All Philosophy: A Study of Kant's Critique of Judgment" tries to shift the current Chinese Kantian research to an integrated understanding of the *CJ* via the a priori legislation of the power of reflective judgment and its principle of purposiveness. He argues that Kant's *CJ* bridges the two "domains" ("Nature" and "Freedom") with distinct "legislations" via the concept of "purpose". Thus, in light of reflective judgment and its principle, "we can understand how to some extent 'nature' in itself can be 'free', while 'freedom' in itself can be 'necessary'". However, Ye's argument in this paper is based almost entirely on material from the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment". Therefore, he seems to a large extent to equate aesthetic judgment with reflective judgment in general.²⁰

1.2.2 Comparative Approaches in Chinese Kantian Study

One unique contribution that has been made by Chinese scholars is a comparative approach to Kantian study. Since He Lin 贺麟 (1902-1992)²¹ initiated academic research on the comparison between Chinese and German philosophy in his paper "Comparative Study on Zhu Xi's and Hegel's Conceptions of the Ultimate"²² in 1930, German philosophy has always been one of the most important *comparata*.²³ Kant has been one of the most frequently referred to figures in German-Chinese comparative philosophy. It has become virtually paradigmatic for comparative philosophers in China to draw certain parallels between Confucianism and Kantian philosophy – as seen, for example, in the influential works of Mou Zongsan.

Li Minghui, a student of Mou Zongsan (and himself also a notable contemporary Chinese

²⁰ It is obvious in the English abstract of the paper, where Ye argues that "judgment... integrates the two split domains of 'nature' and 'freedom' and makes the aesthetic judgment of the things in the whole domain have their innate foundation /reason. In this sense, judgment has its legislative function, which makes the aesthetic judgment of the things in the whole domain have their legality" (2012, p. 111).

²¹ He Lin also wrote on Kant even though he is commonly known for his expertise in Hegel and Spinoza, as well as his contribution to the early introduction of German Idealism into China. He studied philosophy in the US, but soon found himself very much drawn by German Idealism. As soon as he received his Masters degree in Harvard, he went to Germany for further study. However, he did not complete his PhD research in the University of Berlin before he returned to China.

²² He Lin's paper was written in Chinese; here is my translation of the title "朱熹与黑格尔太极说之比较" (He, 2012, pp. 284-294).

²³ For example, as seen in the works of Zhang Dongsun(张东荪) and Zhu Zhiqian(朱之谦).

Kantian scholar), points out that the most characteristic and also most disputable part in Mou's whole scholarship is his translation and commentary on Kant's philosophy²⁴ and his interpretation of Chinese philosophy based thereupon (Li, 1995, p. 184). Mou's commentary²⁵ contains the comparison between Kant's philosophy and the relevant ideas in Chinese philosophy, which, as Li thinks, significantly improves the value of Mou's translation. Mou's remarkably rich comparative study of Kant's and Confucian moral thinking, particularly in his commentary to the *CPrR*, demonstrates his profound understanding of both philosophical traditions (ibid., p. 186). Li argues that Kantian influence on Mou's interpretation of Chinese philosophy has two aspects: first, Mou's novel interpretation of Kant's famous distinction between appearance and the thing-in-itself provides him a structure with which to clarify the differences in the respective ontologies of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. This structure persists in all Mou's further works devoted to the interpretation of Chinese philosophy. Second, Mou interprets and also classifies the various Confucian moral theories in terms of Kant's conception of "autonomy" – for instance, to explain the immanence of human-heartedness (*ren* 仁) and righteousness (*yi* 义) in Mencius' thinking and to indicate the problem that lies in the disputation between Mencius and Gaozi (ibid., p. 188). Finally, Li stresses that Mou's research on Kant differs from that of Western Kantian scholars in his primary concern, i.e., his using it to bridge the Chinese and Western philosophical traditions (ibid.).

Indeed, Mou is representative of a group of Chinese philosophers, either Kantian or not, who, by appealing to Western and modern philosophy, endeavour to give Chinese traditional thinking an updated form that allows for a systematic interpretation and contemporary application of it while at the same time preserving cultural identity in the assumed unalterable process of China's modernization. In this undertaking, Kant's philosophy constantly serves as an excellent source. Nevertheless, most of these comparative discourses – like Chinese Kantian Study in general – are preoccupied with conventional themes about ethics and epistemology. Except from the Kantian "aesthetics" of the third *Critique*, comparative study between Chinese thinking and Kant's thoughts on the power of reflective judgment, its

²⁴ Mou's translation of the three *Critiques* and the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* are often criticized due to the fact they are not directly translated from German texts but from English translation.

²⁵ Li classifies two kinds of commentary in Mou's translation. One is about the consistency of the context and argument, the other is the comparative study between Kant's and relevant ideas in Chinese philosophy (Li, 1995, p. 186).

peculiar principles in terms of purposiveness, and Kantian philosophical teleology still remains terra incognita for many. The current research is thus largely motivated by the awareness of this specific research need in Chinese Kantian Study and approaches to the *CJ* and related issues from a comparative concern. Nevertheless, it is not limited to mere comparison. Ideally, original contribution to the related topics in general international Kantian study from a unique (Chinese) perspective is also a desired outcome of the current research.

1.2.3 The Problematic *CJ* in Western Kantian Study

In Western Kantian study, Kant's *CJ* has long been criticized as a problematic work, particularly for its seeming lack of consistency due to the distinct topics that it tries to encompass and unify. As Rachel Zuckert (2007, pp. 3-4) points out,

this work has often been treated by scholars not as a unified work nor as central to Kant's critical project, but rather piecemeal, as an aesthetics or philosophy of biology or a discussion of empirical knowledge ... It has been argued, more strongly, that the *CJ* is a fundamentally dis-unified work, a collection of discussions treating distinct questions: whether judgments involving pleasure can justifiably require others' agreement (the *CAJ*), whether or how we can attain a complete empirical science (the introductions); why and to what degree teleological explanation of organism is justified (the *CTJ*). Kant's attempt to unify these discussions by reference to the principle of purposiveness has been considered unsatisfactory, moreover, because it merely exploits the vagueness and ambiguity of this principle.

Historically, most scholars found difficulty in giving a systematic interpretation of the *CJ*. For them, part one of the *CJ*, Kant's aesthetics, deals with the "universal validity of our judgments of taste" (Guyer, 2006, p. 540), while part two is Kant's teleology, which deals with "design and purpose in nature" (ibid.). It seems that Kant's teleology in part two has nothing to do with aesthetic issues except for the sharing of a few terms, and it is merely either a biological discussion subsumed under a larger theory of philosophy of science beyond the realm of aesthetics, or a theory of anthropology which is a prevailing theme in Kant's late writings.²⁶ In brief, "the critique of judgment is a disorganised and repetitious work, which gains little from Kant's struggle to impose on its somewhat diffuse subject-matter the structure of the transcendental philosophy" (Scruton, 1982, p. 79). In other words, the third

²⁶ In the Appendix of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Chinese translation), translated by Deng Xiaomang, Deng argues that the teleological reflection in the *CJ* is not merely for a scientific aim but also essentially as a transition to philosophical anthropology. (Deng, 2002, pp. 378-409)

Critique does not reach Kant's high expectations, notwithstanding the newly-coined conceptual tool, reflective judgment. It seems that Kant quite obviously fails to integrate the two parts of the book into a whole by giving certain "unified" a priori principles of the same power, reflective judgment (purposiveness), as he claims to; and even worse, he fails to justify the *CJ*'s alleged crucial function in systematizing transcendental philosophy. This kind of opinion results in a common practical approach whereupon the research is split so that an aesthetical treatment of the *CJ* often avoids the teleological arguments in part two of the book, and vice versa. The separation in the interpretation of the different topics of the *CJ* in return reinforces the belief in the inconsistency of the last *Critique*.

In addition, with respect to the historical acceptance of the *CJ*, the great success of its aesthetics²⁷ overshadows its overall task and other concerns. It is considered the most important work and likewise the virtual cornerstone of the discipline of aesthetics since Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762) established this branch of philosophy. Regarded as being "often profoundly misunderstood" and a book that "has been more influential on the subsequent aesthetics" (Guyer, 2006, p. 587), the *CJ* has been frequently stereotyped as a book "concerned largely with aesthetics".²⁸

In response to the difficulty of arriving at a unified interpretation of the *CJ*'s distinct topics, scholars like Paul Guyer try to rethink the motivation for a unified interpretation and, further, to question the validity of Kant's own claim. Guyer (2006, p. 539) proposes that "it would be profoundly misleading to attempt to reduce the topics of the book to a single idea (even though Kant himself attempts to do this with his new conception of 'reflecting judgement', or to respond to a single author (as one author has done in seeing the whole work as an argument between Kant and his one-time student Johann Herder))".²⁹ Guyer might be right in doubting the originality of the book, but I would argue that one can hardly rebut the efficacy of Kant's method of attributing the various topics to a common power, namely reflective judgment, and its peculiar principle of purposiveness, and consequently connecting

²⁷ "It could fairly be said that, were it not for this book, aesthetics would not exist in its modern form." (Scruton, 1982, p. 99)

²⁸ For example, in Scruton's narrative, "the *Critique of Pure Reason* dealt in a systematic way with metaphysics and the theory of knowledge; it was followed by the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), concerned with ethics, and the *Critique of Judgement* (1790), concerned largely with aesthetics". (ibid., p. 8)

²⁹ Paul Guyer thinks there are three distinct topics in the *CJ*: the necessary truth of particular laws of nature, the universal validity of judgement of taste, and the moral significance of a teleological conception of nature.

the various topics and even systematizing the whole of transcendental philosophy via a single Kantian teleological idea. Second, not merely the *CJ*, but Kant's philosophy in general indeed can be de-composed into different sources (all philosophers have their predecessors); however, this fact does not mean that Kantian philosophy lacks systematicity.

As Hannah Ginsborg (2013, SEP) ³⁰ points out, "over the last twenty years or so, more attention has been directed towards the project of interpreting the *Critique of Judgment* as a coherent whole". Rachel Zuckert has a brief account of "the increasing scholarly interest in a unificatory interpretive approach to the *CJ*" showed in the works of Christel Fricke, Clark Zumbach, Robert Pippin, and Hannah Ginsborg, etc. (Zuckert, 2007, p. 5n6).³¹ Her book *Kant on Beauty and Biology* claims to be the first monograph to interpret the *CJ* as a unified argument concerning all three domains and attempts "to justify...its integrity, by proposing a novel interpretation of Kant's principle of purposiveness and thereby of the *CJ* as a whole" (Zuckert, 2007, pp. 4-5). Still, numerous other scholars suggest that the real issue lies not in the incompatibility of the *CJ*'s different parts – or, its three separate themes – but rather in its revision of Kant's transcendental philosophy formed by the first two *Critiques*. For instance, unlike Guyer, who finds no single idea in the *CJ*, John H. Zammito (1992, p. 342) asserts that the *CJ* has a single idea (or, a single question):

the third *Critique* finds its decisive concerns neither in questions of beauty nor in question of empirical biology, but rather in the ultimate question of the place of man in the order of the world – his freedom and his destiny... The third *Critique* thus stands as Kant's master work on man's complex-being-in-the world.

Like other scholars, such as Michaelson and Patrick Riley, he also points out that in the third *Critique* Kant makes some crucial revisions to his former thought. He believes this "involved him in the creation of a higher metaphysical unity more characteristic of Hegel than of the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason*",³² which allows Kant to "come very close to sounding like Hegel". Zammito further remarks that "with the third *Critique* Kant signalled to his heirs the vision they were to try to realize. Kantianism itself made Idealism inevitable" (1992, p. 344).

Nonetheless, how to understand the systematicity of critical philosophy and its realisation

³⁰ SEP is the abbreviation for *Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy*. Full reference is listed in bibliography.

³¹ Zuckert thinks that "none of these scholars, however, endorses the particular interpretation of purposiveness that I shall propose. Despite this interest, moreover, there has not been to date any monograph treating the whole of the *CJ* as a unified argument." (Zuckert, 2007, p. 5n6)

³² Michaelson's view, as cited in Zammito, *The Origination: Historical Dimension of a Rational Faith*, (1992, p. 181).

in Kant's own terms is still not a settled issue. In the current thesis, I wish to offer some original ideas as to the mechanism of the systemic evolution of Kant's critical philosophy and the role of *CJ* and its newly coined reflective judgment in such a process. Those readings in turn give me some conceptions to examine and understand the pattern manifested in Zhu Xi's remodelling of Neo-Confucianism.

1.2.4 The Treatment of "The Critique of Teleological Judgment"

If the *CJ* earns the least attention among the three *Critiques* (and most research on the *CJ* adopts an aesthetical perspective), then "the Critique of Teleological [Reflective] Judgment", namely, the second part of the book, is often simply ignored, for various reasons, such as being less influential on subsequent thought (Guyer, 2006, pp. 578-580) or out-of-date due to the development of scientific theories (Wilkins, 1966, p. 176).³³ Since the beginning of "the first wave of discussions of Kant's conception of teleology occurs in the Neo Kantian period of the late 19th century until about 1924" (Henning, 2009, p. 249),³⁴ this relatively limited and intermittent research tends to treat Kant's teleology under an assumption that it is "Kant's extremely interesting view on biology" (Allison, 2001, p. 7), or plainly "the philosophy of science" (Wilkins, 1966, p. 185). Peter McLaughlin has made a special contribution to this approach in his excellent monograph *Kant's Critique of Teleology in Biological Explanation: Antinomy and Teleology*. He argues that "the 'Critique of Teleological Judgment', which... could perhaps best be seen as a fourth 'Critique', is almost exclusively concerned with the use of teleological principles in biological explanation" (McLaughlin, 1990, p. 3). He tries to read and interpret "Kant's critique of teleology as philosophy of biology" and "as a reflection on philosophical, in particular, methodological problems that arose through the constitution of an independent science of life, biology" (ibid., p. 1). Ginsborg notices that "Kant's views on natural teleology, very much neglected in comparison to his aesthetics, started to receive more attention in the early 1990s, and there has been greatly increased interest, during the last ten

³³ Wilkins argues that "now to accept Kant's belief that a nature moving without a purpose could not 'conform' to law, just as it is difficult to accept Kant's underlying assumption that nature does nothing in vain. It is easy enough to find organs in nature, such as man's appendix which are not used" (Wilkins, 1966, p. 176).

³⁴ Henning in his paper "An Annotated Bibliography to Kant's Teleology" points out that "the first wave of discussions of Kant's conception of teleology occurs in Neo Kantian period of the late 19th century until about 1924. The authors of this time typically connect Kant's teleology as philosophy of the organic with later theories in biology, like Darwin's theory of evolution" (Henning, 2009, p. 249).

years in particular, both in Kant's view of teleology in its own right, and in its potential relevance to the contemporary philosophy of biology" (Ginsborg, 2013, SEP). The fact that the first issue of the *Kant Yearbook* of 2009 is devoted to the topic of Kant's teleology serves as an affirmation of Ginsborg's observation.

This biological explanation of Kant's teleological thinking has been promising, but one cannot neglect that Kant's motive for developing "reflective judgement" as one of the general higher cognitive powers, and with an a priori principle of purposiveness was never merely restricted to solving biological and ecological problems. There are other ways of reading Kant's *CJ* and his teleology. For instance, Deng Xiaomang (2002, pp. 378-409) argues that the final purpose of Kant's three *Critiques* and even of the entire project of critical philosophy is to pave the way to Kant's philosophical anthropology, the shape of which is first seen in the third *Critique*. The teleological reflection in the *CJ* therefore is not only supplementary to a scientific explanation but is also a transition to Kant's philosophical anthropology. Others think that Kant's teleological thinking is also found in his philosophy of history.³⁵

Endeavours to place Kant's teleology in a more central place within critical philosophy and to seek a more integrated understanding of the whole critical enterprise completed by the *CJ* via a Kantian philosophical teleology never cease.³⁶ This kind of attempt usually tends to hold the position that Kant's teleology is not merely a philosophy of biology (nor a philosophy of science) and the *CJ* is a book with internal consistency rather than a patchwork. Kantian teleological thinking is related to many other themes of his transcendental philosophy – such as epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and theology. Kant has never restricted his teleology to any particular realm of knowledge. He developed it in the course of his critical project and finally consummated it in his third *Critique* with high expectations. Before one comes to a quick conclusion and declares that the *CJ* is "disorganised and repetitious" and Kantian teleology is simply an out-of-date philosophy of biology, various accounts of its seeming paradoxicality and inconsistency are still needed.

In brief, as a complex of philosophy of art, philosophy of nature, philosophy of morality,

³⁵ See Burleigh Taylor Wilkins' "Teleology in Kant's philosophy of history". (Wilkins, 1966, pp. 172-185)

³⁶ For example, Marcel Quarfood tried to place "Kant's views on biological teleology in the larger context of transcendental idealism" and he argues that "the difference between the discursivity of the human understanding and the idea of a non-discursive understanding, an important theme in Kant's solution of the antinomy, puts the question of biological teleology in relation to central tenets of transcendental idealism". (Quarfood, 2004, p.x)

and theological thinking, etc., the *CJ* welds discussion of art, science, and religion together in one book, even though Kant emphasizes that, unlike understanding and reason, the power of judgment has no specific “domain” of its own. To some extent, just because it has no such exclusive “domain”, judgment is unconstrained and can reach various realms, or, “territories”, through its subjective principles without any contradiction. In a nutshell, I think it is permissible to compare the *CJ* to a confluence. At the confluence of rivers one can still tell the different currents by the colours of the water, but all join in the same direction led by the new channel. The different subject matters are the currents of the confluence of the *CJ*, and the newly coined power of reflective judgment is the new channel of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, which has been shaped by the general intellectual inclinations of the age and by Kant’s own intellectual transition in the late critical period. It thus follows that a study of the formation of Kant’s reflective judgment will shed light on a proper understanding of Kantian teleological thinking, and the specific theoretical function of teleological (reflective) judgment as a species of the reflective judgment in general.

1.3 On the Comparison and Objectives

This comparative study is not a symmetrical comparison in two senses: 1) it does not devote an equivalent degree of explication to both *comparanda*, and believes that each group of philosophical materials shows different merits in the comparison; 2) it holds the position that the concrete philosophical problems dealt with by Kant and Zhu Xi are not interchangeable in an essentialist sense, and therefore it is impossible to conduct a reductionist comparison of or a direct dialogues between them in terms of the same philosophical elements or problems; hence, I more specifically call it a ‘critical’ and ‘interpretative’ comparison. Moreover, both groups of philosophical material have very different origins, which is to say they are asymmetric – not only in the sense of the spatiotemporal quality, but also because while one was accomplished by an individual philosopher within a few years, the other was formed through a collective effort over a rather long historical period. However, these differences do not reduce the philosophical comparability in the least.

I regard my treatment as a comparative philosophical experiment on two long-controversial intellectual developments.³⁷ I expect to observe three possible ‘reactions’, in respect of the historical intellectual conditions, the mechanism of incorporating new ideas and the outcome of the changes. There are then three comparative analyses:

(1) In the comparative analysis of the historical intellectual contexts, the philosophical material from Kant takes the lead. It offers some vital conceptions for me to understand the circumstances of the revival of Confucianism amid a new intellectual landscaped transformed by Neo-Daoism and Buddhism, its motivation of the transition to “the formless”, and its demand for a methodological shift.

(2) In the comparative analysis of the actual ‘process’ of Kant’s coining reflective judgment and Neo-Confucian reinvention of investigation of things, the Neo-Confucian hermeneutics employed by Zhu Xi and his predecessors (like the two Master Chengs) in their remodelling of Confucianism provides me some conceptual devices (and also case study) for interpreting the mechanism of Kant’s systematization of his critical philosophy via the writing of a third *Critique*.

(3) By comparing the outcome of the two philosophical events, I will suggest that reflective judgment and investigation of things, share a common theoretical orientation. Due to these two philosophical methods, a moral teleology is identified in each thinking tradition. Kant’s relevant arguments help me to draw out the comparable philosophical elements in Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism. The commensurability and incommensurability between the two versions of philosophical teleology are explicated during the course.

In addition, this comparative study sheds light on current Kantian study in a particular way (to which Chinese Kant scholars can contribute) namely by extending the explanatory power and application of Kantian philosophy into a different cultural context and tradition, and to work out a possible convergence between Chinese and Western thinking for a potential “world philosophy”. Correspondingly, my reading of Kant is largely from a strong comparative standpoint and motivation, which defines my understanding of the conceptions that I am going to abstract from my study of him.

³⁷ Namely, 1) Kant’s writing of the third *Critique* and the coining of reflective judgment by a conceptual clarification of the third higher cognitive faculty (the power of judgment), and 2) Zhu Xi’s vital development of the doctrine of investigation of things (*gewu*) in his influential creative commentary on the Confucian classic *Great Learning* (the *Daxue Zhangju*).

To conclude this part, in this project my position is sympathetic with Kant's when he states in the preface of one essay that: “the considerations which I am about to offer only constitute modest beginnings, which is what generally happens when an attempt is made to open up new perspectives. But perhaps they may give rise to some important consequences” (2:169).³⁸ In Chapter Two, I will present my methodological reflection on comparative philosophy, which places some emphasis on 1) plural solutions to common issues via meaningful comparata, and 2) tentatively viewing comparative philosophy as a philosophical experiment. My current work is a philosophical experiment not only because it brings a new combination of comparata so far unseen, nor because during the “reaction” in analysis each comparatus is given something new by the other and sheds light on a possible integration of human thinking, but also because it opens up future clarification, re-interpretation, rectification and falsification.

There is a final destination while there are various paths; there is an ultimate oneness
while there are hundreds of perspectives.

---*The Book of Changes*³⁹

38 It is one of Kant early essays on natural philosophy, named “Attempt to introduce the concept of negative magnitude into philosophy”.

39 My translation of “天下同归而殊涂，一致而百虑” (Zhouyi Zhengyi, p. 358).

Chapter Two Methodological Reflections: On the Methods and Aims of Comparative Philosophy

2.1 Comparative Philosophy as Intercultural Philosophy

More than half a century ago Charles A. Moore, the founder and editor of *Philosophy East and West* foresaw in its first issue a new stage in the development of philosophy “characterized by trans-cultural co-operation and world perspective” (1951, pp.67-70). Although Moore’s enthusiastic vision of “a synthesis between Eastern and Western philosophy” was questioned by other leading philosophers regarding its validity and possibility,¹ “the important area of East-West Philosophy” and the comparative approach have been recognized by an increasing number of philosophers worldwide. Convinced by the mutual complementarity and significant enrichment of research by this emerging sub-discipline, Masson-Oursel and McCarthy² held the strong opinion that “true philosophy is comparative philosophy” (1951, p.6). From the point of view of the individual participants, Devaraja (1967, p.57) believes “one great benefit” is the potential emancipation from the uncritical assumptions lying behind one’s “cultural tradition”, an increased awareness of alternatives and the development of one’s critical thinking. Similarly, Robert L. Rein’L (1953, p.339) argues for comparative philosophy to be understood as a means of achieving “intellectual tolerance” – “the moral life of reason”, which might be desirable for any “reasonable beings”.

Besides debate on the pros and cons, constructive reflection on the methodology has been a major concern and contributed to further establishment of this sub-discipline of philosophy. With an awareness of the superficial idealization of comparative philosophy as a “new salvation from the East” for the west “to heal the vital illness of Western man”, Kwee Swan

¹ In the same journal, John Dewey (p.3) questions the validity of the dichotomy that “there is such thing as a ‘West’ and ‘East’ that have to be synthesized”. Dewey adapts William James’ notion “that there are no ‘cultural block universes’”, which could help us to rethink the “East and West” cultural division and keep open the idea of exploring the “specific philosophical relationships” between West and East. George Santayana (p.5) claims that the synthesis between Eastern and Western Philosophy “could only be reached by blurring or emptying both systems in what was clear and distinct in their results”.

² They (p.8) argue that “Comparative philosophy can furnish to each nation or people resources that others conceived, the knowledge of which can be humanizing”.

Liat (1951, p.12)³ advocates that the goal of the comparative approach is indeed “towards a universal philosophy” – necessarily “a philosophy of life” in his terms – wherein priority has to be given to a “conscious, methodic evaluation” before “a true meeting” of West and East “through comparative philosophy” is even possible. He therefore emphasizes that “comparative philosophy is a multiple and integral approach to the common issues of philosophy”.

The methodological discussion continued with Laurence Rosán’s (1952, pp.56-65) questioning of the validity of the “West–East comparison” as a necessary agenda of comparative philosophy and his rethinking of the postulate of the association between geographical/cultural relevance and philosophical relevance. He argues that “a mere geographical or even linguistic separation” or “the contrast of cultures” is not sufficient for the comparative study of philosophy. The distinctiveness or uniqueness of a philosophical tradition is “not because of any inherent linguistic, racial, or geographical characteristics”. Rosán believes that “the key to comparative philosophy” lies in “the contrast of basic philosophical attitudes or types of philosophy”. Therefore, “West-East comparison” manifests a methodological misguidance and might be after all a fruitless task. According to him, comparative philosophy is to be steered toward identification and systematic classification of the heterogeneous, basic, universal and perennial doctrines of philosophy – such as “Naturalism”, “Moralism” and “Idealism” – and thus in a sense to a typology of philosophies.

Moore (1952, pp.76-78) rejects Rosán’s proposal, which he believes aims at a synthesis based on “a monistic concept of method” and “interpret[s] a diversity of similar systems as constituting ‘expressions’ of a single consistent system” at the cost of each similar system’s uniqueness. Moore argues that the idea of comparative study itself suggests a diversity in methods as well as the so-called “trans-cultural co-operation and world perspective”. For a sufficient methodological evaluation, the “crucial task” is that pluralistic methods must be conceived “in the progressive investigation of the multiplicity of problems which inevitably arise in the study of comparative philosophy”, rather than “a key of universal applicability” suggested by Rosán’s article. Moore also argues that the East-West or West-East comparison

³ “such a methodic evaluation-and in a certain sense a re-evaluation-of the complete philosophical heritage of both East and West is the way of comparative philosophy.” “The way to a real understanding is a long and hard one, surpassing by far the capacities of any single investigator.”

does not imply any “easy and shortsighted dichotomization” which assumes East and West “at opposite poles in every respect philosophically”. It seems Moore approved the association between geographical/cultural relevance and philosophical relevance – though with a rather prudent attitude. Rosán (1962, p.242) later comes to a more moderate opinion to approve the cultural relevance in comparative philosophy. He argues that the name “East and West comparison”, with all the misleading geographical suggestion, “is truly a cultural rather than a geographical approach to comparative philosophy” addressed to the “undoubted variety of cultural traditions”, which indeed under certain circumstance can be “a more effective contender in the arena of conflicting theories”.

The methodological reflection on comparative philosophy has intertwined with the troublesome notion of “culture” from the very beginning of this new sub-discipline. Although cultural differences might not necessarily constitute the sufficient conditions of a need for comparative philosophy, they offer researchers a field with immense workable resources and a ready-made typological framework easy to adapt. This explains the fact that since the 1950s, although the research status of comparative philosophy has advanced in many regards and related studies have been so productive that contemporary researchers cannot come to an easy consensus on the subject matters of their comparison, nevertheless in contrast the methodological development has fallen far behind. The cultural approach to comparative philosophy has somehow become the default method due to its pragmatic and utilitarian advantages.

Ralph Weber’s (2013, pp.593-602) study of the recent works on “(meta-)methodology in comparative philosophy” shows that this trend has persisted well into contemporary studies and enhances its influence in the community – “all [authors] seem to rely to some degree on the presumption that comparative philosophy is best understood as ‘intercultural philosophy’”.⁴ Weber argues however that this “contemporary dominance of cultures in comparative philosophy”, namely, the “rely[ing] on cultures as philosophically relevant pre-comparative tertium” has been an “unwarranted assumption” and causing problems concerning “reification” and “the effect of inclusionary exclusion”.⁵ He therefore calls for a

⁴ Weber’s use of the term “intercultural” and Moore’s preference “trans-cultural” are not essentially different. Both refer to interaction among multiple cultures. Another synonym is “cross-culture”. Therefore, in my argument I am using the terms interchangeably.

⁵ It can be understood as a kind of “double-edged sword”. Weber(2013, p.601) thinks “the same factors that allow

“(self-)critical engagement with comparative philosophy” with the help of his “analytical tool” of comparison, which consists of five variables that are “distinguished in standard conceptualizations”, viz., “the comparer, the comparata, the pre-comparative tertium, the tertium comparationis, the result of the comparison”.⁶

Among the five variables, Weber (2014, pp.151-169) states that “focus on the tertium comparationis and the ‘pre-comparative’ tertium precisely offers a means to evaluate comparisons”, and hence provides a criterion of “meaningful” comparison “in the rationalistic way”. He calls attention to the common neglect of a critical examination and a transparent specification of the so-called “‘pre-comparative’ tertium”. He argues that in contemporary comparative philosophy, “culture” has been long served as a widely prevailing “‘pre-comparative’ tertium” and “cultures are the carriers of relevant philosophical difference (or sameness)”. He believes the burden to justify this default method lies on those who pursue comparative philosophy as “intercultural philosophy”. In brief, Weber’s work sheds new light on the recurrent methodological predicament of comparative philosophy (its intertwining with the problematic notion of “culture”). His effort in evaluating meaningful comparison in standard conceptualization is rather enlightening. Finally, his work indicates the true ecology of contemporary comparative philosophy – a sub-discipline of philosophy *de facto* to a large degree established as “intercultural philosophy”.

2.2 Response to Weber’s Criticism

Following the above sketch of the methodological predicament of current comparative philosophy – a *de facto* established sub-discipline of philosophy which largely functions as “intercultural” or “trans-cultural philosophy” – I now outline a few points that demonstrate my own reflections on how to approach, understand and resolve this difficult problem (or perhaps to eliminate the problem entirely).

1. “Comparative philosophy”⁷ in a proper sense, whether as the comparative study of

scholars of these cultures to claim a niche for themselves within philosophy can be and are used by others to (dis)qualify that area of scholarship as being about something other than philosophy proper”.

⁶ Weber (2014, p.162) defines “the tertium comparationis as the respect in which determined comparata are compared” and “the ‘pre-comparative’ tertium” as “which is at work in the setting up of the comparison”.

⁷ I use “comparative philosophy” (with quotation marks) and comparative philosophy (without quotation marks) in

philosophies or the philosophy of comparison, is not congruent with intercultural philosophy. Comparison in general is a basic function/apparatus of critical thinking which characterizes philosophy. Thus in this sense, no one who is responsibly engaged in the history of philosophy is not a comparative philosopher. As Graham Parkes insightfully puts it: “ ‘East-West’ comparative philosophy is in principle no different from ‘comparative’ philosophizing within a single tradition” (1987, p. 2). Therefore, I further argue that “comparative philosophy” in a general sense can be viewed as a name for philosophy with a peculiar emphasis on its engaging in making comparisons.⁸ The legitimacy of the current de facto sub-discipline of comparative philosophy is not justified by appealing to an exclusive philosophical method of comparison.⁹ Consequently, as Parkes points out the ultimate “criteria for the success” of “comparative philosophy” or non-comparative philosophy—“those pertaining to a discussion of a single philosopher”—are no different (ibid., pp. 4-5). In fact, Weber’s meta-methodological “analytical tool” of a standard comparison is more generally applicable. Here I would like to employ it for a trial. For instance, a typical syllogism as below can be potentially translated into a comparison in terms of Weber’s “analytical tool” with its five variables in standard conceptualization:

Syllogism: “All human beings must die. Socrates is a human being. Therefore Socrates must die”

- 1) the comparer- someone who states this syllogism
- 2) the comparata: “Socrates”, “Human beings”
- 3) the “pre-comparative” tertium: optionally, creatures (in contrast to the idea of “Creator”)
- 4) the tertium comparationis: mortality
- 5) the result of the comparison: Socrates must die like all other human being.

There may be various ways of “distorting” Weber’s “analytical tool” of comparison.¹⁰ But

different senses. The former, properly understood, is a name of philosophy with a peculiar emphasis on its engaging in making comparison. The latter is the sub-discipline of philosophy de facto, which to a large extent functions as “intercultural” or “trans-cultural” philosophy.

⁸ It’s like when we call a person A in different circumstances with distinct specific emphasis: B=Lecturer, C=Wife, D=Customer, E=Cyclist, etc.

⁹ Comparative study between British Empiricism and German Rationalism has been a traditional and longstanding theme in western philosophy but not classified as “comparative philosophy”. East-West comparison such as between ancient Chinese and Greek political thought is typical “comparative philosophy” while contemporary Chinese and Greek political thought might not be qualified as “comparative (political) philosophy”. This is a good example of how comparative philosophy is not called so due to its philosophical methodology of comparison/doing comparison.

¹⁰ For instance, we can translate the logical form “Either A or B. Not A. Then B” into a standard comparison in terms of Weber’s “analytical tool” with its five variables: The comparer - who states the argument; the comparata - A, B; the pre-comparative tertium - alternative possibility; the tertium comparationis - actuality; the result of the comparison - the alternative option B is actual Here are two concrete cases. “Tomato is either green or red. Tomato is not green. Then

the above trial is not textually ungrounded. Weber (2014, pp.155-156) does recognize that there are “many different ways of conceptualizing the tertium comparationis” or “conceiving commonality”, as “the tertium comparationis may be related to comparata as a whole is to its parts, a substances to its accidents, an idea to its instances, or a generic concept to its subsumed concepts, and so on”. Hence, the above cited syllogism can be well understood as a comparison between the connotations of two concepts, or in Weber’s terms a comparison with its “tertium comparationis... related to comparata as... a generic concept to its subsumed concepts”. The acceptance of Weber’s “many different ways of conceptualizing the tertium comparationis” – the crucial factor of his “analytical tool” of comparison – thus might lead to many non-typical comparative studies. Weber’s meta-methodological analytical tool has undermined the current dominant yet “unwarranted” cultural approach of comparative philosophy, but its potentially unbridled use might eventually cancel out the very idea of “comparison” as well, and finally result in eliminating the justification of the very need of an analytical tool for such a peculiar sub-discipline as comparative philosophy. After all, the general applicability of the “analytical tool” of a standard comparison designed by Weber shows that “comparison” is the least strange tool of philosophizing routinely used by philosophers (as long as they still use syllogism). It is hard to establish any philosophical theory without making a “comparison”.

Here I want to draw attention to two more characteristics of Weber’s five variables: the plurality of “the comparata” and a possible implication of “the pre-comparative tertium”: A. The term “comparata” seems to suggest the plurality of things being compared. For example, Weber’s own conceiving of “comparata” in his various examples often gives such an impression.¹¹ However, in some comparison there might not be multiple things as “comparata”. One needs to keep in mind that Weber’s “at least two relata (comparata)” (Weber 2013 p.595) can be unified in the same thing.¹² B. The terms “the pre-comparative tertium”

Tomato is red.” The comparer – who states the argument; the comparata – two situations, green or red, B; the pre-comparative tertium – type of fruit; the tertium comparationis – colour; the result of the comparison – red is the colour of the Tomato. “Either I have died since yesterday, or Dinosaurs are still alive. Dinosaurs are not still alive. Then I have died since yesterday.” The comparer – who states the argument; the comparata – two hypotheses; the pre-comparative tertium – hypotheses; the tertium comparationis – the actuality of the hypotheses; the result of the comparison – The hypothesis “I have died since yesterday” is actual.

¹¹ “Comparata: Kant, Mou”, (Weber, 2013, p.600) “Mengzi and the Xunzi as two comparata”, “In most comparisons (say, between two horses, two texts, twenty authors, or three different cultures)” (Weber 2014 p.163)

¹² For example, in the study of the process of radioactive decay of a nucleus, comparison is constantly made between different phases of the same thing. Again, a comparison can be made in the process of the negation of, or in a state of the

and “tertium” both incline to the meaning of “commonality”. Particularly the notion “the pre-comparative tertium” as the determination of the comparata seems always come out as a certain “commonality” in Weber’s usage. A meaningful and valuable comparison often rests not in the “commonality” but rather in the difference of the “comparata”. Although Weber’s analytical tool of comparison does not prevent a comparison from seeking for the valuable difference, I think still that neutralizing the potential implicative inclination of the terms from the very beginning is not merely a trivial task when it comes to coining any new conceptual tools.

2. By analogy to scientific research, I argue from a pragmatic perspective that inter-cultural comparison should be viewed as data analysis to achieve better explanatory power¹³. Comparative philosophy as de facto “inter-cultural philosophy” is meaningful and also necessary. It sufficiently justifies its historical legitimacy by functioning as a trans-cultural communication or conversation in the age of globalization. My methodological reflection on comparative philosophy is not based on a reductionist perspective by questioning what are the elements that make a standard comparison, nor on a Whig historical point of review to challenge the validity of this de facto sub-discipline functioning as inter-cultural philosophy and its “unwarranted” cultural approach.¹⁴ As argued in point one, comparison is a basic function of philosophizing. Thus, in a sense, no philosopher is not doing “comparative” philosophy. The establishment of comparative philosophy (as indeed a de facto “inter-cultural philosophy”) can be better understood from the angles below:

A. Intercultural comparison first of all enriches the data pool of philosophers. For centuries, many philosophers have been striving to transform philosophy into a more

non-presence of a single comparatus. Moreover, in some comparisons referring to introspective experience such as certain mental statuses and consciousness, the comparison consists in the action of realization/awareness where the lines between the compared is subtle and hardly chronologically clear cut. A vivid example can be drawn from the proposition, “I think therefore I am”. It illustrates a mental state in which I realize my very existence in a doubt. The “comparata” lie in the same action of doubting – the moment of doubting is the moment of realizing. The realization constitutes a comparison, despite the fact that the compared are hardly two things, but rather represent awareness of the same mental status from different angles, i.e., not two mental statuses in a clear-cut chronological order. The comparison here concerns our subjective perspectives rather than the objective thing or things.

¹³ Here it can be helpful to use a “classical” argument offered by Moses Mendelssohn on “knowledge of truth”. Mendelssohn ([1785] 2011, pp. 11-15) agrees that philosophers often make universal claims by means of “incomplete induction”, but thinks the universality can be understood as “doubt-free certainty”, which is based on the increasing “convincing power of the probability” rather than on indubitable rational knowledge from “complete induction”. Universal agreement of many people allows the inference of a common ground. To draw a parallel, inter-cultural comparison is a practical and efficient way of reaching agreement among different people and increases “convincing power”.

¹⁴ The benefits of these kinds of questions are limited. It is easy to sink into a regression and become tangled with endless arguments for its self-legitimacy.

science-like discipline. A better scientific explanation often needs more empirical data while better sociological research often demands more statistical samples. To draw a parallel here, the ambition of transforming philosophy into a more science-like discipline must not only lie in the creation of an artificial and accurate philosophical language nor in the imitation of a certain scientific method (experiment/observation/verification/falsification) – both of which have been well developed by the analytical tradition – but must also lie in a thorough analysis of the enormous existing philosophical material, or by analogy “philosophical data”,¹⁵ from different spatiotemporal origins. The latter is the destiny of comparative philosophy, which has hitherto been functioning to a large degree as a *de facto* inter-/trans-cultural study of philosophy. It is not so much due to an innovation of its philosophical method as to the need for a collective effort in carrying out a sufficient analysis of the enormous philosophical material or “philosophical data” from different spatiotemporal origins. “Culture” offers such a workable frame in terms of different spatiotemporal origins. There is no need to assert the problematic postulate that the culturally comparable is related to the philosophically comparable. One can still assume that there might be a causal relation between culture and philosophy. But culture here offers merely a framework for starting the processing of the enormous “data”. Graham Parkes’s methodological reflection on comparative philosophy allows another perspective for defending the use of “culture” as a “‘pre-comparative’ *tertium* against Weber’s accusation of it being a suspicious “unwarranted assumption” and a trouble-maker that need to be criticized (or perhaps even purged) with the help of his “analytical tool” of comparison. Following the argument that comparative philosophy is not essentially distinguished by an exclusive philosophical method of making comparisons, which is a general characteristic of the critical thinking, for Parkes, the ultimate criteria for success in so-called comparative philosophy or non-comparative philosophy alike lies in one question:

¹⁵ Here I use the analogy “philosophical data” to emphasize another theoretical destiny of my methodological reflection, namely, focusing on philosophical material besides eliminating the problem of comparative philosophy that is intertwined with “culture”; the reason I place emphasis on philosophical material or “philosophical data” from different spatio-temporal origins is to call for a shift in current comparative philosophy from the typological style (as seen in Rosan’s proposal of the main themes of comparative philosophy - “Naturalism”, “Moralism”, and “Idealism”), which is essentially problem-oriented. This is not to say that emphasis on philosophical material, or “philosophical data”, does not allow “philosophical questions/questioning”, but merely that before we assume there is a certain common problem that lies in different “philosophical data” and use this assumption to define the choice/selection of the “philosophical data”, we need, to some extent, to be more “innocent”/indifferent. We compare two groups of “philosophical data”, because they are not yet processed, and during the course of the processing, we might identify similar patterns or similar problems. It is like a scientific experiment: we set up certain conditions and observe the phenomenon, although it is true that scientific research has to have a certain pre-research assumptions/questions, and the final finding could overthrow it.

“does the study enhance our understanding of the philosopher's thought, of the problems engaged by it—and of ourselves and the world?” (1987, pp. 4-5). Thus, insofar as (1) “comparative philosophy being generally more enlightening between unconnected philosophies”(ibid., p.1)¹⁶, and (2) different cultures usually do not fail to provide, and often excel in offering “unconnected philosophies”, or “cases where there is relatively little influence, or where the thinkers are in different but overlapping disciplines...[therefore,] a thorough comparison of the similarities and divergences between the two conceptions can serve to hone our understanding of both philosophical psychologies” (ibid., p. 3), then, using culture as a “‘pre-comparative’ *tertium*” in comparative philosophy naturally comes to prominence.

Comparative philosophy as a thorough analysis of philosophical material will prevent ignorance in the name of being methodologically correct. However, this prudent attitude of comparative philosophy does not mean to advocate the equal importance of each material or origin. Rather, it only calls for equality insofar as each source of philosophical “data” deserves to be analysed, and it is necessary to process as much “data” as possible. It is not at odds with the effort of seeking “universality”, either.¹⁷ The emphasis on the otherness or the different traditions, origins, or sources of philosophical material or philosophical “data” by analogy is deemed as a preparation and condition of achieving a better explanatory power. Moreover, data analysis is also compatible with both interpretative (hermeneutical) or creative reading. Competing analyses and rival engagements of the same group of “data” are expected. There is no single “method” of processing the “data”. How to properly conduct the analysis is a crucial issue in further methodological reflections, but not the current paper’s task.

B. “Comparative philosophy” as a trans-cultural communication or conversation is necessary in the age of globalization. The historical fact that the cultural approach is the dominant methodology of comparative philosophy is not a mere coincidence. The map of cultural diversity is a dynamical image. Given the progress of globalization, the boundaries between cultures become more and more obscure and subtle. There is no longer “The Central

¹⁶He again emphasizes, “this last contention, and my initial claim” is “that comparative philosophy is more fruitful between unconnected philosophies” (Parkes, 1987, p.2).

¹⁷ I understand universality as inter-subjective communicability, instead of certain absolute quality. [add Georg’s argument on universality here].

Kingdom”中国¹⁸ on earth which had defended its clear boundary with a material or a cultural “Great Wall”. It is futile to do so; not just because we now know the fact that our earth is a globe and any point of the surface of a globe can be treated as a centre which negates the idea of “the centre”, nor because modern wars are no more characterized by cold weapons and horses. Besides, no country will be an intact zone and there will be no “inclusionary exclusion” (since everyone is included) in the process of globalization, and when the whole world faces such ubiquitous crises such as climate change.

At present, Kwee’s proposal from the 1950s of “a world philosophy”, necessarily “a philosophy of life”, is more possible insofar as the modern life of human beings converges into similar paths and is shaped by common challenges in our age. The ideal of a world philosophy, if it is going to be meaningful and persuasive to all people, must be a philosophy of the world. The philosophy of the world is possible only insofar as it is generated via a thorough analysis of the enormous pools of philosophical material from different spatiotemporal origins. This makes a “world philosophy” an on-going dynamical project of thinking open to changes rather than a static body of doctrines. Weber (2013, p.594) notices that “comparative studies in general emerged in the 19th century in a world marked by colonialism” and “comparative philosophy as an academic endeavour is also and in many regards an outcome of colonialism”. Here I suggest considering colonialism as a prelude (despite its unpleasantness) which inaugurated the ongoing process of globalization (in many regards not pleasant either) and to understand “colonialism” in a general context of trans-cultural communication.

Comparative philosophy as intercultural philosophy is still fulfilling its historical role in processing philosophical material from different spatiotemporal origins. It depends on “culture” for a workable framework to initiate the process. Comparative philosophy as intercultural philosophy might assume a symmetry between culture and philosophy but need not assert any causal connection between them, even if it could turn out after all, when a full grasp of the philosophical “data” from various different spatiotemporal origins has been reached, that there is indeed such a connection. It is imaginable that comparative philosophy as intercultural philosophy will be gone if the cultural diversity is too weak, or when a common world

¹⁸ The meaning of the Chinese character of 中国 or China

philosophy comes onto the scene.¹⁹ But before that happens, there is still a long way to go.

2.3 Chinese-Western Comparative Philosophy and Philosophy in China

Ironically, a typical institutionalized western philosopher can still claim to know nothing about Chinese philosophy even as a modest gesture, while a Chinese counterpart would suffer a serious damage in her/his qualification for claiming to know nothing about western philosophy. Chinese–Western comparison, as a common species of the current comparative philosophy as intercultural philosophy, has its own special methodological predicament – I call it the role predicament, which I will explain in below.

Roger Ames and David Hall (1987, p.313) in their breakthrough work *Thinking Through Confucius* (1987) point out an interesting phenomenon in the context of a then fresh proposal of “third-wave Confucianism” by Tu Wei-ming: “This is a clear irony in the fact that the recent renewed interest in Confucius is so little a Chinese and so much a Western concern”. According to them, this Chinese-Western comparative study is almost a western-based scenario with little participation from China²⁰ – “Those who are advocates of Confucianism [in China] seem to have little or no interest in Western philosophy and frequently regard Confucianism as a bulwark serving to protect Chinese culture from unwanted foreign influences”. One of the principal concerns in their icebreaking effort “has been to provide the basis for comparative philosophical discussion of the Confucian sensibility, with regard to both a selection of classical Western thinkers and certain contemporary Western philosophers as well”. I assume that not merely the Western study of Confucianism, but still other schools might also meet a similar situation.

Ames and Hall’s observation in the late 1980s is certainly true from their standpoint. But the lack of participation from Chinese philosophers in a Western-proposed Chinese-Western comparison such as “third-wave Confucianism” does not at all justify the lack of

¹⁹ To draw a comparison: there was indeed a symmetry between culture in general and economy in ancient Greece and China. However, now it is hard to establish a “comparative Economics” as a sub-discipline by adopting the cultural framework in the world when most current economic systems are capitalist in orientation. Even though comparisons between different economies are constantly made, it is not under a cultural framework. Comparison between the Anglo-American Economy and the East Asian Economy does not sound as appealing to economists as to philosophers.

²⁰ “Interpreters of Confucius such as Herbert Fingarette, Tu Wei-ming, and the authors of this work are based in American universities. Most important, neither in the People’s Republic nor in the Republic of China is there widespread evidence of the desire to engage the Anglo-European philosophic scene by appeal to the Confucian sensibility.”

Chinese-Western comparative philosophy in China. Here lies what I call the role predicament of comparative philosophy (particularly Chinese-Western comparison) in China. “Philosophy” as a discipline imported from the west, from a Chinese perspective, has always embedded an “innate” West-East (particularly, Western-Chinese) comparative dimension. In a sense, philosophy as a discipline in China has largely functioned since its genesis, even without self-awareness or self-assertion, as “comparative” philosophy, insofar as it deals with “data analysis” from intercultural sources.

This “innate” Western-Chinese comparative dimension has had a remarkable impact on the birth and development of a narrative of “Chinese philosophy” carried out by scholars like Feng Youlan and Hu Shi since the 1930s, and also on the New Confucianism movement in the 1940s that aimed to “understand Western Culture ...digest, transform, utilize and reform it for the sake of forging new Confucian thinking and new national culture.” (He, 1947, pp.3-4)²¹ The on-going continuous introduction of Western philosophical texts and research via translation at a massive scale for more than a century not only matches up the terminologies between Chinese and western languages or reconstruct massive new locutions and categories in the former, but also has completely shaken the entrenched assumption of tradition and significantly shaped Chinese contemporary thinking and social reality. The whole scenario resembles the early transmission of Buddhism in the Wei-jin period (220-420) via the scholarship of “matching the meaning or concepts” (*geyi* 格义), but in many aspects surpasses it (for example, in its scale and in its wide and deep influence). In this on-going “localization” of western philosophy via translation lies essentially the inevitable perspective of West-Chinese comparison.²² The current “world picture” of China now is a hybrid of the West and the previous Chinese, either in the name of modernization or in that of the “Chinese Dream”.

This “innate” Western-Chinese comparative dimension is more convincing when viewed

²¹ He Lin writes in his essay “On the New Development of Confucianism”(1941), “If we can understand the Western Culture, then naturally we can digest, transform, utilize and reform it for the sake of forging new Confucian thinking and new national culture. The New development of Confucianism, cannot be based on a rejection of the Western culture, but based on a fully grasp of the Western culture.”(My translation)

²² Chungying Cheng (2002, p.354) describes this process: “They learned western philosophy and the method of analysis and used these to reconstruct the Chinese philosophical tradition. Since the beginning of twentieth century, Western philosophy was absorbed in China faster than Chinese philosophy was studied in the West...These Chinese philosopher tried to catch up with the current trends in Western philosophy ... The western philosophy works that were studied in modern China transformed the language of Chinese philosophy and helped to reveal the insights of traditional Chinese philosophy.”

from an individual's standpoint. For a contemporary Chinese philosopher, it is almost impossible in reality to refuse the Chinese-Western comparison or to separate the two major sources of thinking in their work. Besides the reason I have argued, i.e., the innate comparative dimension in the establishment of philosophy as a discipline in China, there is another decisive factor to do with philosophical education. A typical Chinese philosophy department consists of at least two main branches: Western Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy. Correspondingly, the modules for philosophy students are often equally divided.²³

Thus, it is not a surprise when one finds in Chungying Cheng's introduction of the prominent contemporary Chinese philosophers (2002, pp.349-363) that an expert in Western philosophy often comes back to draw inspirations from Chinese thought, and an established scholar in Chinese philosophy constantly refers to Western philosophers.²⁴ Again, it is not unusual to find that philosophers in Chinese universities can be, for instance, professors of Wittgensteinian philosophy who also write academic monographs on the Daoist *Zhuangzi*.²⁵

This places Chinese-Western comparative philosophy or intercultural philosophy in a role predicament. There is no need to especially stress "Chinese-Western comparative" or establish as a sub-discipline "intercultural philosophy", since these notions are in a sense redundant. It is not unfair to say that philosophy in China might be closer to the destiny of comparative philosophy as I proposed above (Section 2.2).

To conclude this section, "comparative philosophy" in a general sense is a name for philosophy with a peculiar emphasis on its engaging in making comparisons, which is not simply congruent with intercultural philosophy. However, as a discipline, its ultimate goal is a thorough analysis of the philosophical material from various spatiotemporal origins, with an incorporation of the collective effort of participants from different corners of the world. Then "culture" has been offering a pragmatic framework for starting the processing of the enormous "data". Inspired by the methodological debates of the 1950s,²⁶ I want to emphasize two priorities in the task of comparative philosophy: 1) to identify common problems, or the

²³ There used to be a satirical saying that philosophy equates to three characters: "中西马" (Zhong-xi-ma), which literally reads "Chinese-Western-Horse", but it refers to the typical tripartite philosophy modules: Chinese Philosophy, Western Philosophy and Marxism.

²⁴ See Chungying Cheng's comment on Ye Xiushan's research.

²⁵ Refer to the works of Professor Han Linhe of Peking University.

²⁶ In particular Moore's insightful idea of comparative philosophy as a progressive/dynamical investigation of the multiplicity of philosophical problems with pluralistic methods, and Kwee's understanding of comparative philosophy as "a multiple and integral approach to the common issues of philosophy".

commensurability of different philosophical issues; and 2) to seek for pluralistic solutions, or the possibility of the diversity of solutions. Therefore, my understanding of a meaningful and valuable comparative study of philosophy has the following characteristics:

a. Meaningful “comparata” which help to identify the common issues – e.g., the basic problems of humanity, or the fundamental questions of philosophical pursuit, etc. however, without a need to generate a paradigm of comparison which must meet certain standards.

b. Capacity to offer possible various solutions or approaches to the common issues. A negation of a commonality sometimes is more profound than the confirmation of a commonality. The incommensurability of different solutions is more insightful than its universality. In this possible different solution, the different way of thinking or the different philosophical method/approach is of the most importance.

c. Regarded as a philosophical experiment. If we understand comparative philosophy as a thorough analysis of data from different spatiotemporal origins, then each case study or each comparison can be deemed as a philosophical experiment. One might embark on comparative philosophy projects with the purpose of seeking diverse solutions or approaches to a certain common philosophical issue, but such quests are challenged when the philosophical issue presumed to be shared by the different cultural intellectual traditions might well turn out to be an intellectual chimera or a simple constructed “truth” via translation — the question becomes, what if the proposed philosophical problem is not even conceptualized in the other tradition? The idea of “a comparative philosophical experiment” is immune to the above mentioned challenge. It creates a “test tube” and adds into the different thinking materials with certain unverified affinity so that trans-spatiotemporal intellectual reaction or conversation can be observed in a determined context or framework. Not all philosophical experiments will generate a “Copernican revolution” in philosophy,²⁷ as did Kant’s *Critique*, but even an experiment that results in a dead end is also meaningful insofar as it advances the research by negating a certain possibility.

²⁷ This metaphor is common, but not accurate. In the preface to the second edition of the *CPR*, Kant himself only refers to his critical philosophy, a philosophical “experiment in metaphysics”, as in the same kind of historical situation as that of Copernicus’ revolution in science (*CPR*, Bxvi-Bxvii). However, Kant indeed had already been deemed as “a man who has reformed philosophy and thereby reformed all other sciences as well” by some of his contemporaries (*Correspondence*, 11:15).

Chapter Three Kant's Reflective Judgment in Its Intellectual Context

The *CJ*, as the last beam of Kant's transcendental philosophical edifice, faces a serious charge: it encompasses too wide a range of distinct subject matters, which hardly share anything in common according to contemporary classification (1.2.3). The fact that the various seemingly distinct topics are united and surveyed by Kant under a single concept, namely, reflective judgment, while enlarging the explanatory power of Kant's transcendental philosophy seems to offer only a superficial coherence. This generates the need for a further explanation of its systematic coherence, which Kant never doubts but fails to spell out in the *CJ*.

In order to respond to such a challenge, I approach from a particular intellectual-historical angle. It is not my intention to provide a thorough investigation of the reception of Kant's critical philosophy, or less still a sketch of the social context of its authorship. Rather, I offer a few lines of focus which define the historical-intellectual concerns of Kant's era, and the crucial circumstances of the authorship of the *CJ*. First, I depict a number of features of a broader intellectual picture of late eighteenth-century Europe, and particularly Germany, which set the key tone of Kant's philosophy. Second, I analyse three intellectual controversies in which Kant was directly embroiled between 1784 and 1789, before and during his writing of the *CJ*. This shows the possibility of the expansion of the explanatory power of Kant's philosophical system via reflective judgment. This reflects a transition of Kant's philosophical orientation, from an epistemic to a more metaphysical concern.

3.1. The Late Eighteenth Century: Echo and Resonance

The eighteenth century marks a new departure in human intellectual history. The triumph of the Scientific Revolution, the reinforcement of the Enlightenment, and the boost of Romanticism by *Sturm und Drang* all came together at the end of the century. While

Kant's transcendental philosophy might be regarded as the innovative intellectual enterprise of an individual, the problems that it confronted and the historical background where it is embedded are not private but public. This publicness makes Kant's work representative.

3.1.1. The Scientific Revolution and Natural Philosophy

With rapid advances in natural philosophy, the eighteenth century had seen the so-called Scientific Revolution achieve its "consolidation" after more than one century of flourishing (see Henry, 2008, p. 1). During this long historical process, natural philosophy, once entirely contemplative and qualitative within the Aristotelian scholastic tradition, became "increasingly pragmatic and quantitative" and eventually "was completely transformed" into a new way of knowing (ibid., p. 10). Just two years before Kant's birth, a Dutch Newtonian natural philosopher named Willem Jacob's Gravesande summarized the "method of philosophizing" in his book *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy*:

In the physics then we are to discover the laws of nature by the phenomena, then by induction prove them to be general laws; all the rest is to be handled mathematically. Whoever will seriously examine, what foundation this method physics is built upon, will easily discover this to be the only true one, and that all hypotheses are to be laid aside. ([1726] 2002, p. 182)

Jacob 's Gravesande is an important figure in helping to establish the foundations for teaching Newtonian mechanics through experimental demonstrations and promoting Newtonian ideas in the European Continent. Although he is not as brilliant a scientist as Newton, one can recognize from his widely accepted summarization of the "method of philosophizing" the "common sense" shared by the scientific community at that time. "To discover the laws of nature by phenomena", to prove them by induction and for "all the rest [...] to be handled mathematically" – these are the core criteria advocated during the still on-going Scientific Revolution. John Henry identifies the twofold methodology for scholarship brought about by the scientific revolution: "the use of mathematics to understand the working of the natural world", and "the new emphasis upon observation and experience for discovering the truth" (Henry, 2008, p. 17). For a typical eighteenth-century scholar immersed in the intellectual life of the time, the world is to be examined and interpreted by empirical observation and rationally mathematized into universal laws. Kant,

whose early writings show a strong interest in natural philosophy, was no exception. Furthermore, his training in natural philosophy and his deep impression on the “transformation of the way of thinking” accomplished by the Scientific Revolution would soon inspire him to call for an “analogous” transformation of philosophy “by way of an experiment”; these ideas initiated the whole project of critical philosophy (*CPR*, Bxvi).

Both philosophical method and content were largely shaped by this new trend. Galileo (1564-1642) made such an assertion in *The Assayer*:

Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and to read the alphabet in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one wanders about in a dark labyrinth. ([1623] 1957, pp. 237-238)

This enthusiasm for mathematics continued to grow. Descartes (1596-1650) claimed that all natural phenomena could be explained by mathematical demonstration with undoubted certainty and translated into different quantities according to the laws of geometry and motion (Garber, 2001, pp. 225-226). As Henry (2008, p. 10) points out, “by doing things the way mathematicians do, Newton developed a different natural philosophy”. His classic *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687), is the summation of this methodology:

even the title can be seen as a clarion call, alerting contemporary educated readers to the fact that the author is demonstrating that, contrary to usual expectations about the separate standing of natural philosophy and mathematics, natural philosophy is based on mathematical principles. (ibid.)

Luck Hodgkin (2005, p. 133, p. 252), on the role that mathematics plays in accounts of the scientific revolution, remarks that it is “a language whose use transforms science, not as an object of study in itself,” the outcome of “which saw the behaviour of the physical world as ordered by mathematical laws”.

From Galileo to Newton, one can hardly neglect this enthusiasm in mathematizing the world. Now the “new philosophers”, as Leibniz (1646-1716) called them in his *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), equipped with mathematical and experimental tools had gained

unprecedented confidence and were ready to explain the world in purely mechanical terms¹ and “mathematical laws”, and to release the intellectual milieu from its orbit around religion and Aristotelian scholastic dogmatism.

Kant would have had no idea of the phrase “Scientific Revolution”, which was invented by later historians and he would not have had our contemporary distinction between philosophy and science either. There is no doubt, however, that he had experienced the sea change in the intellectual world, which was previously dominated by scholasticism and religion. Now intellectual history was more and more steered by “the new philosophers” towards the flourishing and assertive natural philosophy. Kant observes:

The *Scholastics*, who illustrated Aristotle and drove his subtleties into infinity, came into prominence in the eleventh and twelfth century. This muck was swept away by the Reformation, and here there were *Eclectics*... the improvement of philosophy in our time came about because a greater study of nature came into prominence, and because mathematics and natural science had been connected. The order in the thinking which arose thereby also spread over the other parts of philosophy... At the present time, natural philosophy (which proceeds along the guiding thread of nature) is in the most flourishing state. (*LM*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790s”, 28:539-540)

Kant also noticed that the “other parts of philosophy”, such as “moral philosophy” and “metaphysics”, had long fallen behind,² but believed that “our [his] age is the age of critique, and one must see what will become of these critical attempts” (*ibid.*, 28:540). In any case, Kant’s predecessors in the realm of speculative philosophy could not be indifferent to the change either. They participated in it and adapted to its methodology – hoping to pave the way for a new era of speculative philosophy as well. Take Christian Wolff (1679-1754) for example, whose rich reflection on the conception of a single universal philosophical method is often considered as having been inspired by the mathematical method. He recommends that the best way of learning to philosophize is via the study of mathematics.³ Kant’s early writings show his enthusiastic participation in this

¹ Henry points out that “the most influential, and in many ways the most impressive, version of the mechanical philosophy ... was the comprehensive system of philosophy developed by the French mathematician, Rene Descartes, which defined matter solely in terms of extension.” (Henry, 2008, p. 72)

² “In moral philosophy we have come no further than the ancients. As for metaphysics: it appears as though we have become perplexed in the investigation of truth; and one finds a kind of indifferentism, where one makes it into an honor to speak deprecatingly of metaphysical ponderings, although metaphysics is philosophy proper. (*LM*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790s”, 28:540)

³ See Courtney D. Fugate’s comment on Wolff’s philosophical method in the introduction of his translation of

new intellectual trend, since he, too, attached great importance to mathematics. Because mathematics “grounds its cognition only on the construction of concepts, by means of the presentation of the object in an a priori intuition” (*MFNS*, 4:469), Kant declares that a pure doctrine of nature is only possible by means of mathematics, and “a doctrine of nature will contain only as much proper science as there is mathematics capable of application there” (*ibid.*, 4:470). Furthermore, one can easily see the long-lasting influence of mathematics on Kant’s general intellectual development, most especially in its inspiration of transcendental philosophy.⁴ Kant’s reflection on “universal arithmetic (algebra)” or the “universal doctrine of magnitude” of pure mathematics plays a significant role in his conceptual construction of synthetic a priori cognitions,⁵ and his distinction between analytic judgment and synthetic judgment constitutes one of the core doctrines in critical philosophy. Most importantly, the apodeictic and universal application demonstrated by the mathematics of the time profoundly influenced Kant’s philosophical orientation; seeking necessity and a priori principles is the major task for Kant’s critical philosophy.⁶

3.1.2. The Enlightenment and the Use of Reason

The Scientific Revolution boosted confidence and belief in human intelligence and

Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics* (Fugate, 2013, p. 16).

⁴ Research on mathematics’ influence on Kant’s critical philosophy focuses on the *CPR*; see Emily Cason’s (1999, pp. 629-652) “Kant on Method of Mathematics”, which compares Kant’s mathematical method in pre-critical and critical periods, and analyses its relations to critical philosophy, particularly Kant’s “critical doctrine of intuition”; also see Lisa Schabel’s *Mathematics in Kant’s critical Philosophy: Reflections on Mathematical Practice*, which analyzes Kant’s thinking on mathematics, such as Kant’s notion of the construction of a concept in the context of the mathematical practices in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly that illustrated by Euclid’s and Wolff’s work. For research on Kant’s mathematical ideas in his other works, such as in the *CJ*, see Fugate (2014, pp. 759-788): “With a Philosophical Eye-the role of mathematical beauty in Kant’s intellectual development”. Fugate explicates Kant’s concept of “mathematical purposiveness” and reveals the specific importance of this idea in the unfolding of Kant’s critical writing.

⁵ “But that there really are synthetic a priori judgments one can see from a multitude of examples. The whole of mathematics proves this; arithmetic and the whole of geometry contain almost only synthetic a priori judgment. It is asked, whether there are also synthetic a priori judgments in philosophy.” (*LM*, 28:545) In his letter to Johann Schultz (November 25, 1788), Kant explains whether “universal arithmetic” concerns “synthetic a priori cognitions.” (*Correspondences*, 10:555) For more, see in the *CPR* the arguments for mathematical axioms as synthetic a priori principles: “axioms, however, are to be synthetic a priori propositions” (*CPR*, A164=B205), and “2. On axioms. There are synthetic a priori principles insofar as such principles are directly certain...Now, since philosophy is merely the rational cognition according to concepts, there will be no principle to be found in it that deserves the name of axiom. Mathematics, on the other hand, is capable of having axioms, because by means of constructing concepts in the intuition of the object it can connect the object’s predicates a priori and directly - e.g., the axiom that three points always lie in one plane. On the other hand, a synthetic principle can never be directly certain merely from concepts - e.g., the proposition that every thing that occurs has its causes. There I must look around for a third something, viz., the condition of time determination in an experience.” (*CPR*, A732-A733/B760-B761)

⁶ Here I did not address the significant influence of Humean Scepticism on Kant, which is less relevant to my present goals, but has been very often mentioned and continuously researched on, especially in Anglo-American Kantian study.

experience. The world picture was about to be reconstructed, as the Enlightenment synchronized in different places in Europe. Finding “no greater event in the history of the human race than the emergence of this system of ideas”, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) describes this spreading intellectual current in an enthusiastic manner:

From the collaboration of philosophers and natural scientists in all civilized countries, mathematical natural science arose in the course of the seventeenth century, with its philosophical foundation and its application to all spheres of life. Knowledge of the lawful system of reality was now erected on universally valid foundations. This collaboration of researchers and the steady progress of their work was the important new fact that effected a revolution of all thought. Voltaire said of the emerging eighteenth century: ‘Never was communication among philosophers more universal... A republic of letters was gradually established in Europe, despite the wars and despite the different religions.... The academies formed this republic.... Genuine scholars in every field formed the bonds of the great society of minds, which spread everywhere, but which everywhere was independent. This communication still continues, and it is one of the consolations for the ills that ambition and politics are spreading throughout the world’. ([1901] 1996, pp. 339-340)

Dilthey lists the leading ideas of the Enlightenment as follows: the autonomy of reason, the confidence in human knowledge, the belief in progress and solidarity of human intellectual culture and human mastery over nature. “These ideas imbued mankind with a new feeling of life” (ibid.).⁷ Religious teaching and scholastic philosophy are constantly challenged as representatives of the old system of ideas in opposition to the new life.

Against the general intellectual background of “the new epoch”, and despite the European synchrony of this “general change in intellectual climate” as argued above, the German Enlightenment has its uniqueness. According to Lewis B. Beck, the German Enlightenment was not only significantly delayed until the middle of the eighteenth century, but also “arose at a time of religious revival”. Moreover, German Enlightenment thinking was not an immediate response to the “upsurge of the new science”; it was “a philosophical movement against Protestant scholasticism, was pervaded with religious concern and sought to maintain religious attitudes and values.” This apparent religious orientation of the German Enlightenment distinguishes it from its counterparts in France and Great Britain – “‘The battle between the ancient and the moderns,’ which was a conflict settled in the

7 In another of Dilthey's works, he concludes as such, “Die Grundzüge der Aufklärung sind überall dieselben : die Autonomie der Vernunft, die Solidarität der intellektuellen Kultur, die Yuversicht ihres unaufhaltsamen Vorwärtsschreitens und die Aristokratie des Geistes.” (Dilthey, 1992, p. 131)

seventeenth century in the lands to the west, had to be fought in Germany in the eighteenth” (Beck, 1969, pp. 244-245).

In the German battlefield for the Enlightenment, Kant is one of the leading fighters. In his 1784 Essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment”, Kant expresses his ideas of Enlightenment.⁸ He acknowledges that Enlightenment is still an ongoing process with a long way to go before it accomplishes its goal.⁹ The goal is to release mankind from its self-incurred immaturity and bring it to an enlightened age where the human is free to use his [or her] own reason in all matters.¹⁰ For Kant, the Enlightenment faces restrictions imposed by the so-called “guardians of the people”; one such restriction being that the guardians in spiritual matters hindered the “progress of humanity” (*Enlightenment*, 8: 39) most by impeding “people’s freedom of spirit” (*ibid.*, 8:41). Thus, the vital task of the Enlightenment is to get rid of “spiritual despotism” (*ibid.*, 8:40) while the primary target is the dogmatic ideology of religion (and its conspiracy in philosophy). In this short essay, Kant does not hesitate to claim that he has “put the main point of enlightenment, of people's emergence from their self-incurred minority, chiefly in matter of religion... because that minority [religious immaturity], being the most harmful, is also the most disgraceful of all” (*ibid.*, 8:41). The weapon of the Enlightenment and its final goal in fact unite in the same intellectual freedom: to use one’s own reason¹¹ and to think for or by oneself in all matters. In a footnote to Kant’s 1786 essay, “Orientation in Thinking”, he reinforces and summarizes his idea of Enlightenment: “Thinking for oneself means seeking the supreme touchstone of truth in oneself (i.e. in one's own reason); and the maxim of always thinking for oneself is enlightenment” (*Orientation in thinking*, 8:146).

⁸ The essay was published in December of 1784 in *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. Kuehn regards that “the essay represents a response to a question by John Friedrich Zöller (1748-1805)”, which originally targeted the issues concerning the religious aspects of marriage (Kuehn, 2001, p. 290). I think the essay’s concern is more general. It is Kant’s gesture of defending the Enlightenment against the *Schwärmerei*.

⁹ “If it is now asked whether we at present live in an *enlightened* age, the answer is: No, but we do live in an *age of enlightenment*. As matters now stand, a good deal more is required for people on the whole to be in the position, or even able to be put into the position, of using their own understanding confidently and well in religious matters, without another's guidance.” (*Enlightenment*, 8:40)

¹⁰ “The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among human beings.” (*ibid.*, 8:37)

¹¹ In the *Enlightenment*, the concepts of understanding and reason are used interchangeably by Kant; e.g., “use one’s own understanding (Verstand)” and “make use of one’s reason (Vernunft)”. His point is not to identify which exact faculties of the human mind contribute to the progress of enlightenment and intellectual freedom, but rather to place a general emphasis on the using of one’s own cognitive powers.

The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment constitute the pervasive mood and the macro-context of the world of Kant's thinking. The late eighteenth century finally saw the different intellectual springs flow together – science, religion and metaphysics. This is one of the most dynamic episodes in German intellectual history, which lays down the background for Kant's critical philosophy.

3.2. 1784 to 1788: Leitmotif and Interludes

Kant's philosophy confronted different challenges that appeared like interludes during his critical period. Despite the distinct positions and various focuses of his rivals, their concerns often squared over a central issue: the transcendental ideas. This challenge concerns the possibility of transcendental philosophy after the first *Critique*, on the one hand, to safely steer towards the supersensible while keeping its consistency and systematicity, and on the other hand, to successfully mediate among the three major intellectual domains of the time: science, religion, and metaphysics. This raised a direct need for a new *Critique* (or *Critiques*), or to use Kant's terminology, more “clarification” of the established system. The leitmotif of the late-critical period may well be summarized as the metaphysical pursuit of a proper method of ascending to the supersensible.

3.2.1. The Fanatics and Religion (1784-1786) [*Schwärmer und Schwärmerei*]

In contradiction to the ongoing process of enlightening an age and the promotion of the value of human reason, pro-Enlightenment philosophers were often alarmed by attacks from the anti-Enlightenment camp. On March 15, 1784, a student of Kant's, Friedrich V. L. Plessing (1749-1808), reported, not without panic, his observation on the anti-Enlightenment camp's new trend. According to Plessing, despotism, fanaticism, and superstition were again forging great restrictions on freedom of thought. Even worse, with the more powerful religious organizations of the Jesuits, “the enemies of reason and human happiness”, and the widespread societies of Protestants who condemn Enlightenment as “atheism and the work of devil”, the combat against Enlightenment had put its potential

fruits into dire peril, which resulted in the fear that “all men of integrity who love humanity are trembling”. Plessing also stressed that it was not only “in this locality [Berlin] where sound reason is completely contraband”, but also that “it seems that despotism, fanaticism, and superstition are trying to conquer all of Europe”. Moreover, in Plessing’s eyes, the advanced age of Frederick the Great, the famous patron of the Enlightenment in Prussia, also predicted the uncertainty of the future (*Correspondence*, 10:371-10:372).

It is clear why in his 1784 essay “Enlightenment” Kant spared no efforts to portray matters of religion as the focal point of Enlightenment, and regarded the intellectual freedom from “spiritual despotism” as a primary concern. The essay, rather than a claim of victory, is better understood as a gesture of defence of the Enlightenment. Further, the anti-Enlightenment campaign by the institutionalized religious groups was assisted by some well-organized philosophers’ camps. In 1785, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819), the “Philosopher of Faith”, published his work *On the Doctrine of Spinoza: in Letters to Moses Mendelssohn*; which inaugurates the well-known Pantheism Controversy (*Der Pantheismusstreit*) in late eighteenth century German intellectual history. Toshimasa Yasukata (2002, p. 128) points out,

the most important thing to observe is that Jacobi used Spinozism as a springboard for his ‘philosophy of faith’ (*Glaubensphilosophie*). His criticism of Spinozism as a thoroughgoing rationalism served as the fulcrum from which his *salto mortale* was to be converted into his fideistic philosophy.

The other side of this controversy, represented by Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), an influential figure of the German Enlightenment, radically criticized the position of his opponent as philosophical fanaticism, and declared that “philosophy has its fanatics (*Schwärmer*) who are just as inclined to persecute and proselytize as are the fanatics of positive religion” (*Correspondence*, 10:414).¹² In the summer of 1785, Mendelssohn published the book *Morning Hours: Lectures on God's Existence*, “as the latest salvo in a war of texts with Jacobi” as well as “the fruit of his attempt to introduce his son early enough to ‘rational knowledge of God’ ” ([1785] 2011, pp. vii-viii).

Mendelssohn’s combat against “philosophical fanaticism” soon gained Kant’s

¹² From Mendelssohn to Kant, Oct. 16, 1785

attention.¹³ Although due to his disapproval of both sides Kant tried to play down the significance of the controversy by claiming it “is nothing serious... and is hardly worthy of a serious refutation” (*Correspondence*, 10:442), he did sense alarm from the “affection of inspired fanaticism trying to make a name for itself” (*ibid.*); if not from Mendelssohn’s newly rationalist proof of the existence of God in the *Morning Hours* – a work deemed by Kant “the final legacy of a dogmatizing metaphysics”(10:429), suffering from substantial methodological flaws.¹⁴

Kant was urged “to speak out against this truly dangerous philosophical fanaticism” in a letter by Johann Erich Biester (June 11, 1786), in the expectation that Kant would favour Mendelssohn’s side (*ibid.*, 10:455).¹⁵ Kant’s 1786 essay “What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking”, is considered as a response to the controversy. Although Kant might still disagree with both sides, he could not ignore the issue that both sides concentrated on. As Beiser (1993, p. 47) argues, the “hidden inner core” of the controversy is “the problem of the authority of reason”, masked with “the biographical issue of Lessing’s Spinozism” and “the exegetical question of the proper interpretation of Spinoza”. Jacobi “shook the *Aufklärung* [Enlightenment to] its very foundations,” namely, the faith in reason, and had cast doubt upon its “fundamental postulate of the harmony between reason and faith” (p. 46).

One may notice a conspicuous interest in topics that overlapped with theology in Kant’s writings since 1787. Beneath the seeming orientation toward religion of his philosophical development, scholars often identify a transition to moral philosophy in Kant’s later critical period. In Judaeo-Christian narratives, morality and religion are intertwined and have

¹³ From John Erich Biester, November 8, 1785: “Please don’t forget to write something about philosophical fanaticism as you once mentioned you would in connection with Jakobi’s letter to Moses Mendelssohn. Truly a strange letter! It was supposed to deal with philosophy and ends up with words from Lavater’s angelpure mouth prescribing faith!” (10:417).

¹⁴ Kant thinks there are two major methodological defects in the *Morning Hours*: 1) reducing the genuine philosophical disputes, such as “the old dispute over freedom and natural necessity in determinations of the will” into mere linguistic issues, namely, the ambiguity of words (*Some Remarks*, 8:152); and 2) avoiding questions from pure reason by offering a mere semblance of lawfulness, “in short, to silence the questioner” (8:153).

¹⁵ In a letter from Meyer, a book merchant in Berlin, dated September 5, 1788, Kant was asked to write a book to combat against fanaticism and defend free speech. Meyer said he urged “a respected scholar of great standing to write a clarification of the limits of freedom of the press and the beneficial consequences of that freedom even from a political point of view, and including a discussion of the power of the sovereign in religious matters you [Kant] would make another great contribution to the cause of enlightenment... Fanatics of every kind would be less able to support their stand by appeal to your philosophical system, claiming as they do that since our reason has limits we must finally have recourse to blind faith. I am sure that many of them really imagine that you secretly hold this view”.

developed a symbiotic relationship. Religion holds the judicial power of moral issues and authority over moral values. However, religious doctrines as indispensable conditions of the realization of morality had been facing an increasing challenge in the eighteenth century. This symbiotic relationship broke down when the foundation of morality was transferred from the theological voluntarist notion of divine command to a metaphysical ground of human reason thanks to the Enlightenment. Religious beliefs were no longer sufficient and necessary to enable men to obey moral conduct, but were, on the contrary, irrelevant. As Lessing ([1780], 2005, p. 236) put it: “the development of revealed [religious] truths into truths of reason is absolutely necessary if they are to be of any help to the human race”. All the religious doctrines might have been first given as revealed truth, however, only reason secures them legitimacy (ibid.). The ideas of God, immortality of soul, etc., need to be finally transformed into “the purely rational truth” revealed by reason itself (ibid., p. 234). Lessing also granted that speculations on religious issues “are unquestionably the most fitting exercises of all for the human understanding” (ibid., p. 236).

Kant's reflection on rational religion went even further than Lessing's. He had to “annul knowledge in order to make room for faith” (*CPR*, Bxxx) in the first *Critique*, by drawing a peace line between the sensible and the supersensible that reason is forbidden to transgress. Transcendental philosophy to some extent, unlike in Mendelssohn, secured the rationality of faith by expelling it from the realm of knowledge. But the pantheism controversy, which now fermented in the German intellectual community, threatening the harmony between reason and faith, also eroded the Kantian ceasefire line. Both sides were asserting religious truth in the ways despised by Kant.¹⁶ At first glance, it seems that the Kantian solution, the solution offered by transcendental philosophy, might be where hope lay. However,

¹⁶ Kant reminds his followers that arguments concerning religion from fanatics, dogmatic metaphysicians, and skeptics are all incorrect and dangerous to the sound use of reason. In a letter to Johann Bering (April 7, 1786), Kant writes, “May you continue, dearest sir, with your youthful strength and lovely talent, to correct the claims of speculative reason that seek to overstep its bounds and to combat the fanaticism that is always aroused by those claims; continue your work but without damaging the soul enlivening theoretical and practical uses of reason and without providing a cushion to lazy skepticism. Recognizing clearly reason's powers and at the same time the limits of its use makes one secure, stouthearted and decisive; it is a good and useful thing. By contrast, it leads to undervaluing of reason and thus to laziness or fanaticism to be incessantly deceived by sweet hopes and by constantly renewed and just as constantly failed attempts to achieve something that lies beyond our powers.” (*Correspondence*, 10:441-442)

suspending the issues was far from appealing.¹⁷ The question of how to restore order among reason, faith, and morality forced transcendental philosophy to evolve in order to be able to cope with certain issues of theology and metaphysics in a more positive way; such as, for example, the existence of God – “the most important of all proposition[s] of pure reason” (*Some Remarks*, 8:151). The pantheism controversy enforced Kant's recognition of the indispensable natural propensity of reason:

For in the end one has to arrive at the same proposition [regarding the existence of God], no matter by what way, since reason can never satisfy itself completely without the latter. However, here an important scruple regarding the way which one takes comes to the force (*ibid.*).¹⁸

The proper way is evidently not to enlarge the speculative use of pure reason “to insights beyond the boundaries of the sensible [the supersensible]”, which either leaves unrestricted reason “open for all kinds of enthusiasm [or fanaticism, *Schwärmerei*], or leads to logical error (*ibid.*).¹⁹ “By contrast, if, with respect to the supersensible, dogmatism has its wings clipped through strict critique, then the belief in question can be secured by a practically well-founded and theoretically irrefutable presupposition” (*ibid.*, 8:151-2). This idea of securing the supersensible by “a practically well-founded and theoretically irrefutable presupposition” later gave birth to another “strict critique”, namely the *CPrR*, in which morality finds its solid ground on practical reason and also gives an account of matters of faith by rendering them into certain “subjective necessity”, or “subjective truth[s]”,²⁰ belonging to the realm of the supersensible. In a sense, the *CPrR* is the first vital step in the systematic development of critical philosophy in order to meet its metaphysical pursuit of a proper method of ascending to the supersensible – the leitmotif of

¹⁷ In fact, Kant's philosophy was forbidden in public lectures in Marburg in 1786 due to the suspicion of encouraging religious skepticism. However, the injunction was removed in 1787.

¹⁸ Kant's short essay “Some Remarks on Ludwig H. Jakob's Examination of Mendelssohn's Morning Hours”, appeared in Jakob's (1759-1827) book *Examination of Mendelssohn's Morning Hours* in October, 1786. English translation by Günter Zöller, in: *Anthropology, History, and Education* (The Cambridge Edition of The Work of Immanuel Kant). Cambridge University Press, 2007

¹⁹ Kant alludes to Spinozism and Mendelssohn's rationalist theistic metaphysics, which either negates or confirms the same proposition in the same name of reason.

²⁰ Kant agrees to reduce certain cardinal values of religion into mere subjective necessity. In his letter to Johann Gottlieb Fichte, (February 2, 1792), he discusses religious beliefs such as revelation. “It follows necessarily that a religion may contain no article of faith other than one that exists for pure reason as well. I think that this proposition is completely innocent and denies neither the subjective necessity of a revelation nor the fact of miracles.” (*Correspondence*, 11:321) “That the revelation of such proposition was only intended, as an accommodation to our weakness, to provide a visible cloak for them and that this revelation can have merely subjective truth, is not acknowledged by the censor. He demands that they be taken as objective truths.” (*ibid.* 11:322)

Kant's late-critical period. Hence, the transition to morality is not an accurate overall account of the change in Kant's transcendental philosophy during this period, particularly after the second *Critique*. The transition to the "supersensible ideas", or "transcendental concepts",²¹ was nevertheless not completed with the *CPrR*, which in fact caused a pressing issue (see below section "The Split Reason") in Kant's philosophical system that forced further methodological development. In the third *Critique*, with the new conceptual tool, reflective judgment, and its a priori principle of purposiveness, Kant would come back again to deal with the supersensible ideas concerning faith.²²

3.2.2. The Wolffians and Metaphysics (1786-1788) [Dogmatismus]

Ever since the publication of the first *Critique*, Kantian Philosophy had become a looming threat to the Wolffians, who were, in Kant's eyes, the defenders of the collapsing and anachronistic speculative philosophy, and also the misusers of the Enlightenment's powerful weapon, reason. The Wolffians believed that Kant's critical philosophy inevitably ended in skepticism. The false restrictions it imposed on reason forbade the possibility of objective reality and limited all knowledge to appearance, and thus lead Kant's philosophy into a solipsistic trap. Moreover, behind the polemics on philosophy lay a deeper political concern for the Wolffians, for whom, "the choice between Kantianism and Wolffianism was a choice between revolution and reaction". As Beiser writes, "The Wolffians were convinced that Kant's critique of [rationalistic] metaphysics would lead to skepticism and atheism, which would ultimately result in the complete collapse of social order" and force Germany to "follow the bloody path of France" (1993, p. 198).²³

The *Philosophisches Magazin* (1788-1792), founded in 1788 by Johann August Eberhard (1739-1809), a central figure in the Wolffians' anti-Kantian "club", was expected

²¹Kant often uses the terms "transcendental concepts" and "transcendental ideas" interchangeably. "The spirituality of the human soul belongs to the transcendent concepts, i.e., we can attain no cognition of it, because we can give no objective reality to this concept, i.e., no corresponding object in any possible experience." (*LM*, 28:755) But "by an idea", Kant already means "a necessary concept of reason for which no congruent object can be given in the senses" (*CPR*, A327/B383).

²² "Faith (as habitus, not as actus) is reason's moral way of thinking in assenting to what is not accessible to theoretical cognition." (*CJ*, 5:471)

²³ Beiser might allude to the French Revolution (1789-1799) which started in 1789. Although the competition between Wolffians and Kantians dates back much earlier, nevertheless the French revolution fueled the rivalry due to the deeper political concern, as pointed out by Beiser.

to turn the tables. It was devoted entirely to the defence of Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy and served as an organ for countering Kant's influence. It launched a series of well-organized attacks on Kant's philosophy and its proponents, especially targeting the pro-Kantian *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung*. The Wolffians disputed with Kant on many issues,²⁴ but converging on two main points: the righteous use of reason, and a justifiable hypothesis of the supersensible. The two points are mutually dependent. The Wolffians gave a more positive account of reason in order to avoid the alleged Kantian solipsism. They "advocated a rational knowledge of the supersensible world" and claimed "the possibility of knowledge of things-in-themselves" (Beiser, 1993, p. 194, p. 220); whereas Kant insisted that the speculative use of our reason cannot extend beyond possible experience and enter into the domain of the incognizable "thing-in-itself".

The dispute eventually resulted in the famous Kant-Eberhard controversy. Kant had been aware of Eberhard's criticisms since as early as 1786 via his correspondence with friends. In February 1789 he was informed by Jacobi of some details of Eberhard's criticism in the first volume of the *Philosophisches Magazin*, focusing on Kant's ideas such as "sensibility" and "noumena" (Allison, 1973, pp. 10-11). But Kant only had access to the first three issues of the *Philosophisches Magazin* in May 1789,²⁵ when he was occupied with "producing the last part of the Critique, namely, that of judgment".²⁶ Thus, it is reasonable to think that at the key moment of completing his transcendental philosophical enterprise, Kant bore in mind the accusations from the Wolffians, in particular, those from Eberhard. We have good reason to assume that the time of conceiving and writing the *CJ* and that of "On a Discovery" partly overlapped. According to Allison, Kant was preparing a short essay against Eberhard since late September 1789, which soon "turned out to be *On*

²⁴ Beiser has summarized 11 themes (see: pp. 194-197).

²⁵ In a letter to Karl Leonhard Reinhold (May 12, 1789), Kant remarks, "I couldn't send you my judgment of Eberhard's new attack earlier, since our shop did not even have all three of the first issues of his magazine, and I could find them only in the public library... That Herr Eberhard, along with a number of people, has not understood me is the least you can say (for that might be partly my fault). But I shall show you in my following remarks that he actually sets out to misunderstand me, and even to make me incomprehensible" (*Correspondence*, 11:33).

²⁶ Kant used the name "Critique of judgment" in a letter to Karl Leonhard Reinhold, May 12, 1789 – "I am eager to hear of your theory of the faculty of representation, which should appear at the same book fair as my Critique of Judgment (a part of which is the "Critique of Taste") next Michaelmas" (*ibid.*, 11:39). Kant reported that he was "producing the last part of the Critique, namely, that of judgment, which should appear soon" in a letter to Marcus Herz, May 26, 1789 (*ibid.*, 11:49). In March 1790 Kant was found negotiating the publication of the *CJ* in a letter to Johann Gottfried Carl Christian Kiesewetter (*ibid.*, 11:143).

a Discovery" (Allison, 1973, p. 12).

In the essay, published in 1790 (at the same time as the *CJ*), Kant restated the essential ideas of his transcendental philosophy that were rejected by Eberhard. Kant's counter-arguments involved a few central topics such as: the prerequisite for human cognition and its objective reality; the validity of Kantian synthetic judgment a priori; the limitation of reason's principles (sufficient reason, contradiction); the efficacy of mathematical proof; the hypothesis of the simple being; etc., most of which are nevertheless restatements of Kant's epistemic ideas offered in the first *Critique*. But beneath the epistemic dispute lies a deeper metaphysical problem, namely the question as to what the proper method of ascending to "the supersensible" is – a perennial theme which has not been thoroughly eliminated by Kant's first *Critique*. Both Kantian transcendental philosophy and Leibnizian-Wollfian rationalist metaphysics have the hypothesis of "the supersensible" – the leibnizian "simple thing" (monad) or the Kantian "thing in itself" – whereas they have assigned them quite different theoretical functions.

Kant points out that Eberhard's account of "the simple thing" suffers from a fundamental logical error that non-sensible parts constitute a sensible whole.²⁷ Kant believes that behind error is a deliberate falsification of the concept and also an intentional manipulation of the ambiguity of language. According to Kant, Eberhard's usage of the concept of the "non-sensible" shifts between two meanings, whenever it suits his argument (*On a Discovery*, 8:201).²⁸ It can be either: 1) "no longer perceptible to the senses" (8:210),

27 For Kant's argument, see the following citations. "The second error concerns such an obvious contradiction that Mr. Eberhard must necessarily have noticed it... in order to make it imperceptible: namely, that the whole of an empirical intuition lies inside the sphere of sensibility, but the simple elements of the same intuition lies completely outside it" (*On a Discovery*, 8:203); "he insists that the composite of these elements must be a sensible being, but its parts objects of understanding rather than objects of the senses" (ibid., 8:203); "He thus had to compose the sensory intuition out of parts that are not sensible, which is an obvious contradiction" (8:204); "If no simple part of an object of the sense is sensible, then this latter as a whole cannot be sensed either, and conversely, that if something is an object of the senses and of sensation, all of its simple parts would have to be so as well, even though clarity of representation may be lacking in them" (8:205); "But the fact that there is no image of a simple part, even though it is itself a part of an image, that is of a sensory intuition, cannot raise it into the sphere of the super-sensible. Simple being raised above the bounds of the sensible must indeed (as the *Critique* shows) be thought, and to their concept no corresponding image, that is, no intuition at all can be given." (8:205)

28 "At times it is said to be that in the sensory representation which is no longer consciously apprehended, but whose existence is still recognized by the understanding, such as that the small particles of bodies, or even of the determinations of our faculty of representation, which cannot be represented clearly in isolation. At other times, however, the nonsensible is said to be the unimageable, of which non image is possible, and which cannot be represented in any sensory form" (8:201). "A nonsensible part here means a part of an empirical intuition of whose representation one is not conscious. Mr. Eberhard will not say this straight out." (8:205)

viz., too small a part of a sensory representation or empirical intuition for the subject to be conscious of; or 2) supersensible, beyond our human senses. Eberhard's favourite synonym of the "non-sensible", namely, "unimageable" (*unbildlich*), as Kant sees it is more or less a strategy of blurring the two meanings (8:204). Based on this ambiguity of the "non-sensible", Eberhard has established arguments for "the simple thing" and furthermore the possibility of its knowledge. Kant tends to treat Eberhard's "simple thing" as a counterpart of the "thing in itself" in his transcendental philosophy. Therefore, for Kant, the non-sensible is identical to the supersensible, which is not a matter of the degree of consciousness or of the sharpness of one's senses. Kant indicates that "when Mr. Eberhard is elevated above the sphere of sensibility, he continues to use the expression 'non-sensible', rather than 'super-sensible'... [And] this happens with full forethought" (8:218). This is so that Eberhard can take advantage of the usage of the non-sensible when "it indicates a mere deficiency (e.g. in the consciousness of something in the representation of an object of the senses)" (8:218). By contrast, the "supersensible" exclusively means something that cannot be an object of the senses at all. It is beyond pure human intuition, beyond space and time. Thus, no corresponding intuition can be given and no positive knowledge or cognitions whatsoever can be associated with it (8:207).²⁹ Kant's response to Eberhard in "On a Discovery" seems like an apologetic extension of his first *Critique*. But it also indicates the long-lingering problem shared by the intellectual community, the problem of the supersensible. I think Kant may have actually entered into the fray a little before the writing of "On a Discovery".³⁰ The *CJ* has been marked by this controversy insofar as the coining of the conceptual tool of reflective judgment for the sake of a certain proper metaphysical inquiry. Arguably, the *CJ* is a hidden response addressed to the Wolffians before the official "war proclamation".

²⁹ "But these objective grounds, namely, the things-in-themselves, are not to be sought in space and time, but, rather, in what the *Critique* calls their extra or super-sensible substrate (noumenon)."

³⁰ "Kant had good reason to break his earlier resolve not to engage in polemics. Now that the third *Kritik* was virtually complete, he also had the time and energy to enter the fray." (Beiser, 1993, p. 218)

3.2.3. Herder vs. Kant: Organic force (1785) [Pseudo-Naturalist]

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), a talented former student of Kant, rose to prominence as one of the representative critics of the Enlightenment in this period. In 1784, he began the publication of a major, influential work, *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*) – with volume one published in 1784, volume two in 1785, volume three in 1787, volume four in 1791. Kant was invited to write a review on the work, but only managed to do so for the first two volumes.³¹ The *Reviews* inaugurated the Kant-Herder controversy.

One of the central points of controversy is Herder's hypothesis of "organic force", a transcendental idea in a naturalist disguise. Here I reconstruct a few aspects of this idea as reflected in Kant's *Reviews*: 1) Matter contains innate "organic force". Given the right circumstances, the living organism forms. For example, Herder had an account that when "light, warmth and unrefined air and water" worked on granite, silica transformed into lime, "in which the first living things of the sea were formed" (8:47); 2) Organic force is pervasive and the "organic principle" is universal. The same organic force works from rocks ascending finally to human beings (8:49).³² However, Herder guarantees the conventional and popular belief of human uniqueness also by appealing to the advanced organization of human shape, particularly its "erect posture", thanks to the formative organic force. He claims that the "Human being is a compendium of the world" (8:50). Herder believes in "an eternal progression of organic creation, which is placed in every living creature... an organic force, in plants as much as in animals" (8:48); 3) For Herder, organic force is invisible but can manifest itself in the form of an organ, since "force and organ are to be sure most inwardly combined, but are not precisely one and the same" – "force cannot perish" but organs do (8:50); 4) Most importantly, based on the hypothesis of

³¹ Kant's first review of Herder's *Ideas* (Vol. 1), appeared in Jan 1785; his second review of Herder's *Ideas* (Vol. 2) in Nov. 1785. English translation "Review of J.G. Herder's Idea for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity, Part 1 and Part 2(1785)", by Allen W. Wood, *Anthropology, History, and Education* (The Cambridge Edition of The Works Of Immanuel Kant), Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 121

³² Kant quotes Herder : "From rock to crystals, from these to metals, from these to the creation of plants, from there to the animal, finally to the human being, we saw the form of organization ascend, with it also the force and drives of the creature become more manifold and finally unite themselves all into the shape of the human being, insofar as this shape could encompass them-"(8:49)

this invisible organic force, the issues concerning the human soul are settled. The human soul is just a higher and refined form of the organic forces. Herder believes, “our soul is originally one with all forces of matter, of stimulus, of movement, of life, and only works at a higher stage, in a more fully formed, more refined organization”(8:50), and, “The animal soul is the sum of all the effective forces in one organization” (8:48). The immortality of the “human soul”, therefore, is justified by the imperishable organic force. In addition, because of the “eternal progression of organic creation”, the human soul will necessarily evolve into an even more perfect form.

The hypothesis of the invisible organic force helps Herder, in a manner which might be favoured by the materialist (as Kant alluded to), to cope with some central metaphysical issues: the human soul and its immortality, the system of nature, the first causes and the origin of life, etc.³³ Kant's criticism of Herder targets both his central ideas and his methodology of philosophizing.

Kant implied that Herder's work is achieved “through hints” rather than determinate concepts, and “by means of a force of imagination given wings whether through metaphysics or through feelings” rather than through reason (8:55). The hypothesis of “organic force” and related issues such as the human soul rely on argument “deprived of all experience” (8:54). Kant accuses Herder's effort of being essentially dogmatic metaphysics, “however much our writer denies it because that is what the fashion wills” (8:54). Kant writes:

but there one demands to know whether also the individual in the human being will survive his destruction here on earth, which might be inferred from moral or, if one will, metaphysical grounds, but never from any analogy with that visible generation..... we have reservations about ascribing to him, yet what is one to think in general about the hypothesis of invisible forces, effecting organization, hence about the endeavour to want to explain what one does not comprehend from what one comprehends even less? (8:53-4)

Some inevitable inferences from Herder's hypothesis of “organic force” probably

³³ "With the eighth book a new course of thought begins, which proceeds until the conclusion of this part and contains the origin of the formation of the human beings as a rational and moral creature, hence the beginning of all culture; according to the author's mind, this is not to be sought in the human species' own faculty, but rather entirely outside it, in a teaching and instruction by other natures; starting from there, all progress in culture is supposed to be nothing but a further communication and contingent proliferation of an original tradition; it is to the latter and not to himself that the human being has to ascribe all his approximation to wisdom"(8:63).

agitated Kant the most. For example, that human reason is not innate but “a natural effect” of the erect posture due to a new organization of the organic forces. In other words, human beings obtain reason “through the erect posture” (8:48). For Kant, it is unreasonable that Herder rests the possibility of reason, freedom, and humanity on such an empirical fact as “erect shape” (8:49). Ultimately, the critical mistake of Herder is his method of philosophizing by analogy – using phenomenal cases to count for what Kant thinks belongs to the noumenal, or using analogies from the natural world to explain the intellectual world.³⁴ Human reason meets its *horror vacui* (horror of a vacuum) when it transcends possible experience to demand cognitions of the supersensible. Kant summarizes Herder's inference by analogy and also comments on Herder's defender:³⁵

While avoiding all metaphysical investigation, the spiritual nature of the human soul, its persistence, and progression in perfection are to be proven from the analogy to natural formations of matter, mainly in its organization. On behalf of this, spiritual forces... and a certain invisible realm of creation, are assumed, which is to contain the animating force that organizes everything, and indeed in such a way that the schema of the perfection of this organization is supposed to be the human being. (8:52)

The rational use of experience also has its boundaries. It can teach us, to be sure, that something is so-and-so, but never that it could not at all be otherwise; neither can any analogy fill this immeasurable gap between the contingent and the necessary. (8:57)

Kant's harsh criticism neither changed Herder's philosophical path nor reduced the work's popularity, but the impact of the controversy on Kant's own critical philosophy was profound. The excessive “rational use of experience” and the strategic argument “by analogy” is as misleading as Eberhard's abuse of reason. An urgency to find a proper method of ascending to certain unavoidable supersensible ideas becomes necessary for Kant, the alleged “great *metaphysicus*... in Königsberg, Prussia”.³⁶ It is interesting to notice in the third *Critique* how closely related the argument from analogy and the power of

³⁴ “The reviewer must admit that he does not understand this inference from the analogy of nature, even if he were to concede that continuous gradation of its creatures, together with the rule governing it, namely the approximation to the human being.” (8:53). “What would have to be proven here, on the contrary, is that nature makes animals, even after their decomposition or combustion, ascend from their ashes into a specific more perfect organization, so that by analogy one could infer this also about the human being who is transformed here into ashes” (8:53).

³⁵ Karl Leonhard Reinhold (who later became a follower of Kant) wrote a review to defend Herder's position against Kant's criticism in 1785. The second quotation of Kant below is directly against Reinhold's defence which nevertheless shares the Herder's position.

³⁶ In Herder's letter to Hamann (February 14, 1785), he strongly rejects Kant's “mean-spirited”, “malicious and infantile” criticism and ridicules Kant as “the great *metaphysicus* ... in Königsberg, Prussia”. Regarding Kant's critical method, Herder remarks, “I leave the metaphysical-critical throne of judgment to Mr. Apollo on which he puffs himself up, because for me it is full of haze and prattling clouds.” (Kuehn, 2001, pp. 295-296)

judgment is. The *CJ* will echo the Kant-Herder controversy in various respects.³⁷

3.3 Transition to Supersensible: When Critical Philosophy Met Metaphysics

The above three major disputes in which Kant was involved from 1784 to 1789, despite their different subject matter, all point to the same category: the supersensible. Robert E. Butts thinks that “the problem of the status of the supersensible is Kant's central problem throughout his philosophical career”, and he also regards Kant's critical philosophy “clearly as a research programme designed to reposition the ontology of that which transcends ordinary human experience by means of a thorough revision of our legitimate epistemological and methodological expectations” (1984, p. 5).³⁸ It is my contention that at least the issue of finding a proper method of ascending to the supersensible in a more positive manner than the first *Critique* poses a crucial challenge for Kant in the late critical period. This would profoundly define the path of Kant's transcendental philosophical enterprise. In the following section, I clarify the relation between Kant's critical philosophy and metaphysics in light of his idea of “the supersensible”. This will help in understanding the fundamental theoretical task in Kant's late critical period, and especially that of the third *Critique* and reflective judgment. Moreover, the analysis of Kantian metaphysics provides us an efficient conceptual tool (or a useful conceptual apparatus) for investigating and interpreting the compared Chinese philosophical material.

3.3.1 Kant as Anti- or Pro-metaphysics

Regarded as a watershed in the history of modern thought, Kant's transcendental

³⁷ It seems obvious that some major topics of the *CJ*, such as the human soul, organism, and teleology, overlapped with Herder's *Ideas*. In addition, the philosophical method accused of Herder by Kant, namely, analogy, is also employed by Kant – though, of course, not in the same manner. Where reason meets its “horror vaccui” is rightly where the reflective judgment starts to play a role/get on stage. The use of “analogy” is deprived of reason but somehow legally attributed to the power of reflective judgment by Kant. I would like to believe that Kant's *CJ* is not only aimed at bridging his previous two *Critiques*, but also might be a reconciliation with his former favourite student and the philosophical trend which he represented.

³⁸ Butts argues (1984, p. 5), “the famous *Critique of Pure Reason* delimits the domain of the theoretically knowable to that which we can receive through sensation. The *Critique of Practical Reason* construes the supersensible God, freedom, and immortality as presupposition of rational control of action. The *Critique of Judgment* demotes the biggest and best supersensible of all--God as *ens realissimum*--to the status of a mere idea providing motivation for seeking system in our sciences.”

philosophy is often referred to as a “Copernican revolution” in philosophy, largely because of its impact on the foundation of traditional speculative philosophy, particularly metaphysics. Kant had gained a reputation as “the all-quashing Kant” among his contemporaries,³⁹ and was certainly no friend to practitioners and advocates of so-called dogmatic metaphysics.⁴⁰ The anti-metaphysical outlook and the ethical emphasis in Kant's critical philosophy often lead to an overlooking of Kant's constructive effort on metaphysics. In addition, some important contemporary English Kantian study under certain analytical influence often tends to de-metaphysicalize Kant's philosophy⁴¹. Kant by no means considered himself as a destroyer of this core doctrine of philosophy, in his terms the “philosophy proper”⁴², even “true philosophy”:

In our times natural philosophy is flourishing to the highest degree... As for what concerns metaphysics, after we have gone through all the parts we hesitate, and because of the great difficulties one finds among us a kind of indifferentism toward this study. *Status anceps* [a condition of uncertainty]. This is the age of critique for this study, and the time is near when its building will be torn down and a wholly new one will be built on the ruins of the old. In other respects, only metaphysics is true philosophy, and in it lie the real sources from which the understanding derives its use of reason. (*Logic*, “Vienna Logic, 1780s”, 804)

He also by no means considered his *Critique* as a deposition to metaphysics:

Critique of Pure Reason... was indeed prompted by that Humean skepticism but yet went much further and encompassed the entire realm of pure theoretical reason in its synthetic use and hence also the realm of what is called metaphysics as such. (*CPrR*, 5:53)

During his career, Kant had continually given lectures on metaphysics, a doctrine that he regarded as “the spirit of philosophy... [and] the greatest culture of the human

³⁹ Moses Mendelssohn's [1785] words; see *Morning Hours: Lectures on God's Existence*, translated by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Corey Dyck (Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg: London New York, 2011), “Preliminary Report”, p.xix.

⁴⁰ See Kant's comment on Mendelssohn's book *Morning Hours*: “One can regard this final legacy of a dogmatizing metaphysics at the same time as its most perfect accomplishment” (*Correspondences*, 10:429). Also, for Kant's criticism of dogmatic metaphysics, see “On the Discovery” (1790) or “Progress in Metaphysics” (1793). More discussion on this point in Chapter Two.

⁴¹ For example, in his study on Kant's view on causality in critical philosophy, Eric Watkins summarizes and criticizes the so-called “analytical model” of interpretation of Kant's arguments in the “Analogies” as based “merely on conceptual analysis”, as represented by Peter Strawson. Watkin argues that “it is clear that Kant's arguments must extend beyond mere conceptual analysis”, because “the Analogies are arguing that something ontological or metaphysical is required as a condition to ground something epistemological, and that the one can thus be said to make the other possible...rather than thinking of the claims of the Analogies as either purely analytical/conceptual or purely epistemological, we can argue that the Analogies combine epistemological and metaphysical aspects. More specifically, the idea is that Kant is claiming that knowledge of objective temporal relations requires substantive ontological principles” (Watkins, 2005, pp. 197-200).

⁴² “As for metaphysics: it appears as though we have become perplexed in the investigation of truth; and one finds a kind of indifferentism, where one makes it into an honor to speak deprecatingly of metaphysical ponderings, although metaphysics is philosophy proper.” (*LM*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790s”, 28:540)

understanding" (*LM*, "Metaphysik Mrongovius 1782-1783", 29:940). Kant's thinking in metaphysics not only gives a necessary background to help in understanding the concurrent development of his critical philosophy, but also offers a vital motivation for it. Underlying the Kantian revolution in philosophy is the idea of "help[ing] to bring about new creativity in an ancient science [viz. metaphysics] that has fallen on hard times and much misunderstanding of late" (*Correspondence*, 10:441). "A reform [of metaphysics] must be undertaken, if the principles of metaphysics are to be made firm" (*ibid.*, 11:54). For Kant, "the tasks of pure reason... constitute the essential part of the goals of metaphysics" (*ibid.*, 11:54). Kant's critical philosophy is far from the terminator of philosophical metaphysics but is instead a pioneer in saving it from a crisis through a crucial operation, in a word, to help in transforming the obsolete rationalist dogmatism into a proper transcendental metaphysics "by way of an experiment" (*CPR*, Bxvi).

During his critical period, Kant's focus on the ongoing project of transcendental philosophy synchronized with his plans of writing on metaphysics (as part of pure philosophy). The Kantian metaphysics would be twofold: a metaphysics of nature and a metaphysics of morals (*Groundwork*, 4:388). It is reported that Kant was working on a *Metaphysics of Morals* as early as the beginning of 1782 (Kuehn, 2001, p. 277). But nevertheless, "intending to publish someday a metaphysics of morals", he issued the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* in 1785 for the time being. He expected this book to serve as a temporal substitute for a *Critique of Pure Practical Reason*, which he regarded as a proper foundation of the *Metaphysics of Morals* (*Groundwork*, 4:391). Evidence shows he might also have been articulating a metaphysics of nature in the same period. In Christian Schuetz's letter to Kant (July 10, 1784), he claims to be "dying of curiosity about and eagerness for your [Kant's] Metaphysics of Nature" (*Correspondence*, 10:393). In 1785, Kant replied to Schuetz about this potential work (the "Metaphysics of Nature that I have promised to do"), and explained that this is not the *Metaphysical Foundation of Natural Sciences* (completed in 1785 and published in 1786), which is regarded as a "mere application of it [*Metaphysics of Nature*]", only offering "some concrete examples" (*ibid.*, 10:406). To answer Johann Bering's inquiry on April 7, 1786

about how soon his “Metaphysics” will appear, Kant replies that he feels “it will be another two years” and he hopes the publication of “a new highly revised edition of [his] Critique [of Pure Reason]” to “take its place temporarily” (ibid., 10:441). Kant further explains that because of the modification made in the second edition of the *CPR* (published in 1787), “almost any insightful person would be able to construct a system of metaphysics in conformity with my theory, I am therefore putting off my own composition of such a system [of metaphysics] for a while longer, in order to gain time for my system of practical philosophy [*Critique of Practical Reason*]” (ibid., 10:441). From this claim on, a significant shift in Kant’s philosophical enterprise may be identified. In September 1787, Kant still stated that he had “never written a metaphysics” (ibid., 10:494). In May 1789, facing the Wolffians’ accusation of his empty promise of “a future metaphysical system”, Kant answered that “the materials [for the construction of a future metaphysical system] are completely, without any exception, to be found in the *Critique*” (ibid., 11:40). It seems that although metaphysics was still treated as a project parallel to his critical philosophy, the necessity of an independent work on “a system of metaphysics” alongside Kant’s writing on critical philosophy is to some extent diminished over the course of time.

Critical philosophy and metaphysics, according to Kant’s distinction, both belong to the same category: pure philosophy. They both treat the real or material part of philosophy rather than the forms of thought as logic does, and both deal with the pure concepts and a priori principles instead of the diverse concepts and empirical principles that are pursued by the special branches of philosophy, such as physics.⁴³ Most importantly, the two share the

⁴³ The relevant ideas of Kant are stable and can be seen in Kant’s works in different periods. “Physics is the philosophy of nature insofar as it depends on principles from experience; but metaphysics is the philosophy of nature insofar as it depends on a priori principles” (*LM*, “Metaphysik Mrongovius, 1782-1783”, 29:540-541).

“All philosophy insofar as it is based on grounds of experience can be called empirical; but insofar as it sets forth its teachings simply from a priori principles it can be called pure philosophy. When the latter is merely formal it is called logic; but if it is limited to determinate objects of the understanding it is called metaphysics. In this way there arise the idea of a twofold metaphysics. A metaphysics of nature and a metaphysics of morals. Physics will therefore have its empirical part but it will also have a rational part; so too will ethics, though here the empirical part might be given the special name practical anthropology, while the rational part might properly be called morals.” (*Groundwork*, 4:388)

“Pure rational cognition from mere concepts is called pure philosophy or metaphysics.” (*MFNS*, 4:469)

“Metaphysics is to contain synthetic a priori cognitions... And hence metaphysics consists, at least in terms of its purpose, of nothing but synthetic a priori propositions.” (*CPR*, B18)

“Metaphysics belongs to the material part of philosophy, or rather contain that with itself... is separated the merely formal part of philosophy, or the laws of thinking expounded in logic... Metaphysics is thus generally <generaliter> the system of pure philosophy... Its objects are the material part of philosophy, namely physics and ethics, i.e. the laws of nature and of freedom, Therefore it is divided into a. metaphysics of nature ...b. Metaphysics of moral” (*LM*, “Metaphysik

same general object: synthetic a priori judgments. The justification of its possibility forms an essential part of critical philosophy, while Kant also believes that “metaphysics properly has to do with synthetic propositions a priori, and these alone constitute its aim” (*Prolegomena*, 4:274). However, the two do play different roles in Kant’s whole philosophical enterprise. Critical philosophy 1) focuses on the examination of the cognitive faculties that make all “rational cognitions”, hence philosophy, possible; and 2) explores the a priori principles of each faculty in order to lay down the basis for a system of metaphysics, which is thus more doctrinal.⁴⁴ The critical pursuit of philosophy is often regarded by Kant as the foundation and preparation for a systematic metaphysics.⁴⁵ Therefore, the doctrinal system of metaphysics is more like a normative condensation of the extensive critical investigation, or a natural “consequence that flows from that”.⁴⁶

Now, the two projects, when rightly understood, were fundamentally one and the same. It is possible that “a system of metaphysics” can well be incorporated into or implied by the system of critical philosophy. From this perspective, one makes better sense of Kant’s words regarding the remaining part of his critical philosophy (the third *Critique*) in a letter to Marcus Herz, December 24, 1787, after his *CPrR* had been published:

I have got myself involved with philosophical work of a rather demanding and extensive sort for a man of my age. But I am making excellent progress, especially as regards the remaining part that I am now working on. It cheers me up and strengthens me to see this and I have high hope of putting metaphysical issues onto such a secure path as to bring my project to completion. (*Correspondence*, 10:512)

In a sense, the *CJ*, a completion of the whole system of transcendental philosophy as a critique of the third cognitive power, is deemed to bring an answer to the left-unsettled metaphysical issues as well. Therefore, the critical treatment of philosophy and the task of

K3, 1794-95”, 29:945)

⁴⁴ Mentioned in a few places, e.g., 1) “I shall now turn at once to the Critique of Taste, with which I shall have finished my critical work, so that I can proceed to the dogmatic part” (*Correspondence*, 10:494) – dogmatic here is “dogmatisch”, which can be rendered into “doctrinal”; and 2) *CJ*’s introduction.

⁴⁵ Critical philosophy is a preparation for transcendental metaphysics, as shown above in my sketch of Kant’s plan of writing on metaphysics. See, for example: “Only if the demonstration is conducted by a route whereon a mature critique has safely pointed in advance to the possibility of cognition a priori and its universal conditions, can the metaphysician clear himself of the charge of dogmatism, which, failing that, is still always blind in all demonstrations, and the critique’s canon for this kind of assessment is contained in the general solution of the problem: how is a synthetic cognition possible a priori” (*On a Discovery*, 8:227).

⁴⁶ “Transcendental philosophy is the result of critique, for if I can represent the extent and the sources in a connection then the connected representation of the a priori principles is transcendental philosophy, and if I take all the consequences that flow from that, then that is metaphysics” (*LM*, “Metaphysik Mrongovius, 1782-1783”, 29:789).

saving metaphysics finally converge over the course of time – as long as the completion of critical philosophy is reached, the metaphysics is only a matter of the organization of the doctrines hitherto established. Kant describes his current work to Marcus Herz in a letter on May 26, 1789:

... I who in my 66th year am still burdened with the extensive work of completing my plan (partly in producing the last part of the Critique, namely, that of judgment, which should appear soon, and partly in working out a system of metaphysics, of nature as well as of morals, in conformity with those critical demands). (ibid., 11:49)

In 1790, after the publication of the *CJ*, although Kant restates a desire for the "reconstruction of metaphysics in a coherent system",⁴⁷ he seems to have abandoned the goal, perhaps due to his reaching an advanced age, which he often lamented, or perhaps because there was no substantial need for it any more.

3.3.2. Metaphysics and the Supersensible

a. Metaphysics as the investigation of the Supersensible

It is not easy to clearly define what metaphysics is – even within the German philosophical tradition. The scope of metaphysics and its relations to other traditional branches of philosophy is never set in stone. Riccardo Pozzo identifies at least two trends in the treatment of metaphysics among leading German philosophers in respect of the distinction between logic and metaphysics. By contrast with Melanchthon, Leibniz, and Hegel, who from different approaches assume that logic and metaphysics are identical (either conditionally or unconditionally), Kant, like Scheibler (1598-1653), distinguishes the different domains of the two disciplines (Pozzo, 2004, pp. 64-70). Kant's understanding of the relations of "metaphysics", "critical philosophy", "pure philosophy" and logics has already been clarified in the above section.

In order to gain a direct idea of metaphysics in Kant's time, one nevertheless has to go back to Baumgarten (1714-1764). He is, arguably, the most influential German philosopher

⁴⁷ "At the same time permit me to explain that the efforts at criticism I have heretofore made are in no way meant (as they might appear to be) to attack the Leibniz-Wolfian philosophy (for I find the latter neglected in recent times). My aim is rather to pursue the same track according to a rigorous procedure and, by means of it, to reach the same goal, but only via a detour that, it appears to me, those great men seem to have regarded as superfluous: the union of theoretical and practical philosophy. This intention of mine will be clearer when, if I live long enough, I complete the reconstruction of metaphysics in a coherent system." (*Correspondence*, 11:186)

between Wolff and Kant. Baumgarten's influential book on metaphysics, the *Metaphysica* (1739), was widely used as a textbook and "a model of philosophical instruction" by Kant and his contemporary philosophers.⁴⁸ It offers us a glimpse of the paradigm of metaphysics in Kant's time. It has a fourfold structure, divided into: ontology, cosmology, psychology, and natural theology.⁴⁹ Even though Kant disagrees with Baumgarten on many points, his own account of metaphysics was still largely influenced by the latter's. On the one hand, Kant inherited and later modified the fourfold structure that defines the four main metaphysical topics in his lectures on metaphysics. On the other, Baumgarten's metaphysics, chiefly representative of the dogmatic tradition of metaphysics, is a resource for Kant's critical reformation of this doctrine.

Moreover, from the perspective of metaphysics, one can find the overlap between critical philosophy and metaphysics in the subject matter. As argued above, Kant's plan of writing on metaphysics seems finally to have been incorporated into or at least covered by the system of his critical philosophy. To be sure, if one compares Kant's narratives on ontology in the *Lectures on Metaphysics* in the 1780s and early 1790s with the *CPR*, one finds no shortage of common topics, such as the possibility of synthetic a priori judgment and the ground of the possibility of all experience (28:545, 28:550, 29:788); the four modes of judgments and twelve categories or pure concepts (*ibid.*, 28:547, 29:801-802, 29:985-987); etc. This is not mere coincidence but a substantial proof of the convergence. For Kant, transcendental philosophy in a narrow sense (i.e., the essential part of critical philosophy of pure reason) is "customarily" called ontology – meaning "the general doctrine of beings" or "doctrine of essence", which deals with the core question of transcendental or critical philosophy: how are (synthetic) a priori cognitions/judgments

⁴⁸ "Kant makes it clear that he regarded the *Metaphysica* as the most perfect textbook of traditional metaphysics and as the chief source of the views of many of the metaphysicians of his generation. This is in part due to the fact that the *Metaphysica* provided by far the richest, clearest, and most systematic attempt at constructing a complete metaphysical system of the kind envisioned by Leibniz and Wolff. In addition to this, the development of many key arguments and concepts in Kant's own pre-critical and critical philosophy are documented in Kant's handwritten comments on Baumgarten's text and in many respects cannot be understood apart from it. Naturally, this is even more the case with the transcripts of Kant's lectures, many of which have been available in English for some time. Finally, Moese Mendelssohn, Thomas Abbt, George Friedrich Meier, Johann Gottfried von Herder, Johann August Eberhard, and Salomon Mainmon are only a few of the other philosophers for whom Baumgarten's compendium served as a model of philosophical instruction." (*Metaphysica*, pp. 3-4).

⁴⁹ "To metaphysics belongs ontology, cosmology, psychology, and natural theology." (Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, Prolegomena to Metaphysics, Section 2)

possible.⁵⁰ It is clear now why, in accord with Kuno Fischer's account, the unsolvable problem left behind after the first two *Critiques* can be further classified into three: the cosmological, the psychological, and the theological (Fischer, 1888, pp. 63-66).

According to Kant, "the word metaphysics means a science which goes beyond the boundaries of nature" (ibid., 28:540). Insofar as nature is the sum total of sensible appearance, metaphysics is then devoted to the supersensible. Although, as argued above, Kantian metaphysics is not fundamentally distinguishable from critical philosophy in subject matter and they finally came into convergence in the development of Kant's philosophical enterprise, Kant still emphasises the special role of metaphysics in coping with supersensible things, such as God and Immortality, in his early critical period:

The positive use of metaphysics is thus the attainment of a knowledge of God and of the hope of a future life. The negative [use] to guard us from errors. (LM, "Metaphysik Mrongovius 1782-1783", 29:937)

...Its [metaphysics] main use is thus to purify our cognition from errors and to guard it from them. The main ends of all metaphysics are the cognition of God and the hope of a future life. (ibid., 29:938)

In his post-critical period, in order to emphasize the peculiar role of metaphysics within pure philosophy, Kant developed the idea of "metaphysics proper". In the early 1790s, after the publication of the last *Critique*, he modified his philosophical enterprise:

Philosophy proper can be classified into transcendental philosophy and metaphysics proper. Transcendental philosophy contains in it the elements of our pure a priori cognition. It properly has no a priori objects, but rather objects of experience...If metaphysics is made into a doctrine, i.e. applied to object that cannot at all be objects of experience (are mere intelligibles <intelligibilia>), then this is metaphysics proper. This is the science which contains the rules of the supersensible. This supersensible is what drove human beings to metaphysics, without which hope for the cognition of the supersensible

⁵⁰ This judgment is a synthesis of the following citations: "The general problem of transcendental philosophy [is]: how are synthetic judgments possible a priori" (CJ, 5:289). "But the question arises: how are **the a priori cognitions possible**? The science that answers this question is called critique of pure reason [an essential part of critical philosophy]. Transcendental philosophy is the system of all our pure a priori cognitions; customarily it is called ontology" (LM, "Metaphysik L2, 1790-91", 28:541). "Ontology is the first part that actually belongs to metaphysics. The word itself comes from the Greek, and just means the science of beings, or properly according to the sense of the words, the general doctrine of being... The first and most important question in ontology is: how are a priori cognitions possible? This question must be solved first, for the whole of ontology is based on the solution of this question" (LM, "Metaphysik Dohna, 1792-93", 28:542). "Transcendental philosophy is ontology-doctrine of essence, not doctrine of things" (ibid., 28:679). "Now ontology or transcendental philosophy should also be treated according to the standard of the premised classification of the categories" (LM, "Metaphysik Vigilantius (K3)", 29:988). Although the terms "transcendental philosophy" and "critical philosophy" respectively have particular connotations, Kant's usage of them on many occasions is nevertheless interchangeable. It is fair to say that transcendental philosophy and critical philosophy are names used by Kant to address the same philosophical enterprise from different angles.

human beings would not have undertaken the difficult speculation of metaphysics. (*LM*, "Metaphysik K2, 1790s", 28:774)

Kant here clearly uses "transcendental philosophy" in a "customarily" narrow sense to mean ontology – "the general doctrine of beings", or "doctrine of essence" – and he further divides "metaphysics proper" into "three parts": "the dogmatic psychology"⁵¹, "the metaphysical cosmology"⁵² and "the metaphysical theology". "Metaphysics proper" confronts the so-called "transcendent ideas"⁵³ since it forces a human being to ascend to the supersensible, the human "bounds over his place of residence, to which he otherwise could restrain himself" (*ibid.*, 28:774-5).

b. Supernatural vs. Supersensible

In order to explicate Kant's concept of "the supersensible", it is necessary to clarify Kant's idea of nature and the distinction between the supernatural and the supersensible.

Kant distinguishes two senses of the notion "nature" in various writings: materially, as the sum total of all objects of possible experience;⁵⁴ formally, as the first inner principle of the determinations of the existence of an object.⁵⁵ In the first sense, "nature as such [is] considered as law-governedness of appearances in space and time" (*CPR*, B165), "the whole of all appearances, that is, the sensible world, excluding all non-sensible objects".⁵⁶ In the second sense, nature is "the coherence of a thing's determination according to an internal principle of causality" (*ibid.*, B446n). The first meaning of nature indicates

⁵¹ "A metaphysical-dogmatic psychology, pneumatology, doctrine of spirits" (*Metaphysik Dohna*, 1792-93, 28:679)

⁵² "a metaphysical-dogmatic cosmology would mean an intelligible world ... noumenon" (*ibid.*)

⁵³ "Concepts are immanent when corresponding objects can be given to them, transcendent when this is no longer feasible – all concepts of metaphysics are beyond bounds." (*ibid.*)

⁵⁴ "Nature, taken adjectivally (formally), signifies the coherence of a thing's determination according to an internal principle of causality. By nature taken substantively (materially), on the other hand, we mean the sum of appearance insofar as, by virtue of an internal principle of causality, they are in thoroughgoing coherence. In the first meaning we speak of the nature of fluid matter, fire, etc., and we then use the word adjectivally. On the other hand, when we talk about things of nature, then we have in mind a subsisting whole." (*CPR*, B446n) "Nature considered materialiter is the sum total of all objects of experience." (*Prolegomena*, 4:295) "We are here, however, concerned not with things in themselves (the properties of which we leave undetermined), but only with things as objects of a possible experience, and the sum total of such objects [the objects of a possible experience] is properly what we here call nature" (*ibid.*, 4:296), "nature as the whole object of all possible experience." (*ibid.*, 4:297)

For Kant, the material sense of nature is also twofold: extended nature and thinking nature. "In this meaning, therefore, a twofold doctrine of nature is possible, the doctrine of body and the doctrine of the soul, where the first considers extended nature, the second thinking nature." (*MFNS*, 4:467)

⁵⁵ The formal meaning of nature, according to Kant, is "...the first inner principle of all that belongs to the existence of a thing." Thus, "each of which [different things] must contain its own peculiar inner principle of the determinations belonging to its existence." (*ibid.*)

⁵⁶ "Nature, in this meaning, is therefore understood as the whole of all appearances, that is, the sensible world, excluding all non-sensible objects." (*ibid.*)

something sensible, while what the second indicates is not necessarily sensible but intellectual. Kant again, in the *CPrR* (5:43), distinguishes between “a sensible nature” and “a suprasensible nature”, or in other terms, “the archetypal nature (*natura archetypa*)” and “the ectypal nature (*natura ectypa*)”⁵⁷. But Kant stresses that the respective laws/principles of each do not impair one another. Moreover, he points out the co-presence of the two natures in rational beings as well as the dominance of the law of the supersensible nature, namely, the moral law, which is cognized “merely in reason” and associated with the idea of “the highest good”.

This double sense of “nature” has a few important implications for the unfolding of Kant's transcendental philosophy: 1) “Natural” does not necessarily mean sensible. 2) The notion of nature, either the sensible “law-governedness of appearances in space and time”⁵⁸ or the non-sensible “first inner principle”, contains the meaning of lawfulness, “since the word nature already carries with it the concept of laws” (*MFNS*, 4:468), and, further, “this necessity of laws is inseparably attached to the concept of nature” (*ibid.*, 4:469); “nature in the most general meaning is the existence of things under laws” (*CPrR*, 5:43). 3) Neither notion of Nature equates to the “things in themselves”,⁵⁹ which Kant claims are incognizable; 4) Given the two senses of Nature, the investigation of nature bifurcates – either metaphysics (ontology and teleology) or physics:

Now the concept of nature (which pertains merely to theoretical cognition) is either metaphysical and completely a priori; or it is physical, i.e., a posteriori and of necessity conceivable only [as arising] through determinate experience. The metaphysical concept of nature (which does not presuppose any determinate experience) is therefore ontological. (*CJ*, 5:457)

Elsewhere I have shown that in metaphysics reason on the theoretical path of nature [physics] (with respect to the cognition of God) is not able to achieve its entire intention as wished, and that therefore only the teleological path remains for it--yet in such a way that it is not the natural ends, which rest only on arguments from experience, but an end that is given and determined a priori through pure practical reason (in the idea of the highest good) that may

⁵⁷ “The former nature could be called the archetypal nature (*natura archetypa*), which we cognize merely in reason, where the latter--because it contains the possible effect of the idea of the former nature as determining basis of the will--could be called the ectypal nature (*natura ectypa*).” (5:43)

⁵⁸ “Nature as such considered as law-governedness of appearances in space and time.” (*CPR*, B165)

⁵⁹ “Nature is the existence of things, insofar as that existence is determined according to universal laws. If nature meant the existence of things in themselves, we would never be able to cognize it, either a priori or a posteriori.” (*Prolegomena*, 4:294)

supplement the shortcoming of the deficient theory. In a small essay on the human races I have attempted to prove a similar warrant, indeed a need to start from a teleological principle where theory abandons us. (*TP*, 8:157)

Clearly, Kant's "supersensible" is not supernatural. The two are differentiated from other by their sense of lawfulness. Something supernatural is that which is "impossible according to natural laws"; for example, "a miracle is a supernatural event in the world", because we do not cognize its laws of it, rather than that we do not cognize its cause. Hence, "magnetic power is no miracle, for we cognize its law (but not the cause)." Moreover, the religious idea of creation is no miracle in Kant's sense either, "for it was no event in the world". Briefly, the supernatural is something lawless rather than causeless (all citations in list: *LM*, "Metaphysik Dohna, 1792-1793", 28:667). In contrast, the supersensible might not be governed by the natural law of the world of appearance, but it is not lawless. The supersensible is natural insofar as it also has a non-sensible inner principle of determination of its existence, even if this non-sensible inner principle is not cognizable by our understanding in the form of knowledge. If the old religious doctrine and its basis of morality rest on belief in the supernatural (e.g., God as a supernatural being; the immortality of human soul as a supernatural phenomenon; miracles as supernatural events), then Kant's transition was to consign both morality and religion to "the supersensible". The supernatural notions offered by religion, such as God (a supernatural being), for Kant, must be transformed into supersensible ideas, while those supersensible ideas such as Wolffians' "the simple thing" should not be equated to the "thing in itself". Finally, a crucial challenge confronted by transcendental philosophy after the first *Critique* is the question of how to cope with the supersensible in a secure manner and to pursue its "inner principle" or "laws of a certain order of whatever sort".⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Later in *The End of All Things*, he explains: "Nature (formaliter means what follows necessarily according to laws of a certain order of whatever sort, hence also the moral order (hence) not always the physical order. Opposed to it is the **non-natural, which can be either supernatural or contranatural**. (AA 8:33n; emphasis added)

Chapter Four Transformation of the Tradition and the Rise of Confucianism

Zhu Xi's intellectual achievement in twelfth century Neo-Confucianism is considered as an unparalleled peak. However, this peak is not without a ground. Neo-Confucianism, in a broad sense, as one of the most profound bodies of Chinese thinking, is the culmination of a long-lasting and widespread intellectual movement – the revival of Confucianism. This Confucian rejuvenation began in the Tang dynasty, developed in the Song and Ming dynasties, and finally consolidated in the Qing dynasty.¹ Just as Kant's philosophy was indebted to the general intellectual trend shaped by the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, the emergence of Neo-Confucianism came from the sea change caused by the philosophical discourses of Neo-Daoism and Buddhism since the third century.

4.1 *You* and *Wu*: Neo-Daoism and Metaphysical Cosmology

4.1.1 Syncretic Spirit and Hermeneutic Method

Neo-Daoism or so-called *Xuanxue* is “the dominant intellectual current or focal development... from third to sixth century C.E” (Alan Chan, 2014), conventionally called *Weijin Xuanxue* 魏晋玄学 (*Xuanxue* of the Wei and Jin dynasties²). *Xuan* 玄, is the name of one black colour. It connotes the meaning *you* 幽 (abstruse and profound) and *yuan* 远 (distant).³ Therefore *Xuanxue* can be literally translated as “the study of the abstruse and

1 Chen Lai points out that, strictly speaking, Neo-Confucianism, or Study of Principle (*Lixue*) in the general sense, continued in the Qing dynasty. However, the majority of the prominent Neo-Confucian scholars are adherents of the former Ming dynasty. Those scholars, such as Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, and Lu Shiyi 陆世仪, from various different standpoints critically reflected on and summarized *Lixue* - an intellectual movement since the eleventh century. There is no creative development by the Neo-Confucian scholars after the Kangxi period (1662-1722). Therefore, Neo-Confucianism in a general sense, is conventionally called *Songming Lixue*, that is, Study of Principle of the Song and Ming dynasties (Chen, 2011, p. 18).

² Roughly, from the third to the fifth Century.

³ According to *Shuowen jiezi*, *Xuan* means “distant, abstruse and profound, [it] symbolizes abstruseness and profundity, while [the character] incorporates the character ‘ru 入’ (in) on top, [It is the name of] the black colour that contains a little red”. (My translation of “幽远也。象幽，而入覆之也。黑而有赤色者为玄”。) (Duan, p. 1981, p. 159). For the sake of convenience, in the following content, my own translation will be marked as MT. My translation and summarization will be

the distant”. The aim of this section is to survey the general position and philosophical method of this intellectual current.

Neo-Daoist scholarship concentrates on the study of three books which are called “*sanxüe* 三玄”⁴ (“the three abstruse [books]”), namely, *Laozi* 老子 (or *Daodejing* 道德经), *Zhuangzi* 庄子, and *Zhouyi* 周易 (also called *Yi-jing*, *Yi*, the *Book of Changes*). It is worth noticing that among the first two are Daoist texts, and the last one is usually considered as a Confucian classic. Thus, this bibliographical preference alone may demonstrate why Neo-Daoism is often deemed as the first great synthesis of different schools of thinking in the history of Chinese philosophy, particularly a confluence between Daoism and Confucianism. Leading Neo-Daoist thinkers like Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) are said to be “devoted to discoursing on [both] Confucianism and Daoism”.⁵ The prevailing understanding concerning the relation between these two schools is illustrated by the subtle saying “*jiang-wu-tong?*” 将无同 (“not without similarity?”) from a famous anecdote of “*sanyuchuan*”⁶ (“three words officer”) in Liu Yiqing’s 刘义庆 (403-444) *Shishuo Xinyu* 世说新语 (*A New Account of the Tales of the World*). Yang Lihua 杨立华, in his study of another great Neo-Daoist Guo Xiang’s 郭象 (252-312) commentary on the *Zhuangzi* shows that from Guo’s point of view, Zhuangzi and Confucius are absolutely in concert, and in fact what Zhuangzi wants to express does not differ from Confucius’ thought at all. This positioning of Zhuangzi and Confucius in concert informs most of all the passages concerning Confucius in Guo’s book *Zhuangzi zhu* 庄子注 (*Commentary of the Zhuangzi*) and is also found in Guo’s *Lunyu tilüe* 论语体略 (*The Outline of the Analects*) (Yang, 2010, pp. 64-65).⁷

This Neo-Daoist synthesis of Daoism and Confucianism largely rests on a positive

marked as MTS.

⁴ The concept of “*sanxüe*” appears in book *Yanshi Jiaxün*, “洎子梁世, 兹风复阐, 庄, 老, 周易, 总谓三玄”(Tan, 2007, p. 116).

⁵ “Wang Bi is devoted to discoursing on Confucianism and Daoism, [he is] literary and eloquent. He has commentaries on both the *Yi* (*Book of Changes*) and *Laozi*.” My translation of “弼好论儒道, 辞才逸辩, 注易及老子” from the biographical account of Wang Bi in the *Sanguo-zhi* 三国志 or *The Records of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguozhi*, Vol. 28).

⁶ See Yu Jiaxi’s 余嘉锡 *Shishuo Xinyu Jianshu*, (Yu, 1983, pp. 173-174)

⁷ MTS, “在郭象看来, 庄子的思想与孔子是完全一致的...郭象认为, 庄子所要表达的东西其实与孔子的思想并无二致...此种庄孔同一的态度, 几乎贯穿于 *庄子注* 所有涉及孔子的段落当中. 事实上, 郭象这种庄孔同一的立场, 不仅仅体现在其 *庄子注* 中, 在其 *论语体略* 中亦有充分的体现.” (Yang, 2010, pp. 64-65)

hermeneutic method – a reinterpretation of the Confucian texts so as to assimilate Confucian doctrines to Daoist thinking. Yang notices in Guo Xiang's *Zhuangzi zhu* there are “distorted interpretations”⁸ due to the presumption of “Zhuangzi and Confucius in concert” (Yang, 2010, p. 68).⁹ Behind these obvious “distorted interpretations” lies a fundamental challenge confronted by Neo-Daoist commentators like Guo Xiang: the construction of the consistency and internal unity of an ancient text such as the *Zhuangzi* which is embedded with obvious contradictions due to its miscellaneous sources (and non-singular authors). Yang points out an excellent methodological “invention” by Guo Xiang in order to cope with this challenge, namely, *jiyan chuyi* “寄言出意” (excess meaning beyond the denotation)¹⁰ – “an art of releasing the potential of a text” that is rooted in the peculiarity of the Chinese language and the long Chinese tradition of hermeneutics. Feng Youlan also gives evidence about this Neo-Daoist positive hermeneutic methodology, showing how the status of Confucius, despite still being regarded by leading Neo Daoist thinkers as “the greatest of all the sages”, was changed as their interpretation of the meaning of “sage” was replaced by a Daoist understanding (Feng, pp. 169-173).¹¹ Correspondingly, Confucian texts were given new meaning in the Daoist spirit¹² – for instance, the notion of *kong* 空 in the Analects (where Confucius comments on Yan Hui's

⁸ I translate “曲解” or “曲为解释” into “distorted interpretation”. See Yang's argument - “而既然他认为庄子和孔子在思想上是完全一致的，所以，不能不曲为解释。” (Yang, 2010, p. 68) “虽然从细节上看，郭象的注释的确有曲解之嫌，但如果我们从整体看，就会发现此类解释往往又能最终被收摄到《庄子》一书的可能的义理内蕴当中。” (ibid., p. 78)

⁹ MTS, “通过上面对《论语》体略的分析，我们可以清楚地看到，在郭象的眼中，庄子的思想与孔子并无本质的区别。换言之，在他看来，庄子与孔子一样，都是超越了具体学派立场的，专注于社会人生之本质的真正的哲学家。” (ibid., p. 70)

¹⁰ MTS, “郭象无疑是以孔子为至德之圣人的典型。因此，他必须对庄子中多歧的孔子形象，特别是那些有负面意味的孔子形象，作必要的疏解。在这方面，‘寄言出意’成了最方便的解释方法……以‘寄言出意’来疏解文本的内在冲突，从而为文本构建起内在的统一性，可以说是郭象的一大发明。当然，这一发明也不是凭空而来的，而是根植于汉语经典解释的固有传统。文本表面与其中深蕴的义理之间的复杂关系，是汉语的经典注释者很早以来就有深切体会的这种关系大致可以分为三种类型：其一，文本无法传达至深的义理……其二，文本可能产生原本没有的歧义，所以，不能执著于文本的表面，而要关注作者的立言宗旨……其三，文本的表面暗藏着作者不愿明言的深意……郭象对‘寄言出意’式写作方式的强调，在上述三种传统的模式外另出新义，是对理解文本表面与义理内涵之间的复杂关系的重要补充。当我们面对一种以‘寄言出意’的方式写成的文本时，必须时时留意作者的真实用意，因此要从该文本的整体出发，而不能执泥于某些个别的段落中偶然出现的判断。” (Yang, 2010, p. 76) Again, “庄子作为一个文本的整体所蕴涵的种种内在的分歧，并不都能以‘寄言出意’来疏通和解释。更多文本和义理上的冲突，需要用一种卓越的释放文本潜能的技艺来阐释，方能消弥其中的歧异。” (ibid., p. 77)

¹¹ He concludes, “Wang bi, Guo Xiang, and the other Neo-Daoists, thought they acknowledged Confucius to be the greatest sage, nonetheless interpreted the meaning of ‘sage’ in a Daoist rather than Confucius way.” (Feng, 1953, p. 173)

¹² For example, “they accepted from Confucianism the theory that Confucius is the one great sage, but at the same time used Daoist philosophy to reinterpret the saying of Confucius”. (ibid., p. 173)

virtuous character of being indifferent to material affluence¹³) is “interpreted in terms of Zhuangzi’s ‘fasting of the mind’ and ‘sitting in forgetfulness’” (ibid., pp. 174). Cheng Shude’s 程树德 *Lunyu jishi* 论语集释 documents this transformation of *kong*: ever since He Yan interpreted the Confucian *kong* (deficiency, scarcity or lack in this context) as inner vacuity (*xūzhong* 虚中), subsequent commentators, such as Gu Huan 顾欢 (c.425-c.488) and Taishi Shuming 太史叔明 (474-546) further associated it with the Daoist ideas of no desire (*wuyu* 无欲), emptiness (*wu* 无), sitting in forgetfulness (*zuowang* 坐忘), etc. (Cheng, 1990, pp. 780-781). It is worth noticing that both the syncretic spirit and the hermeneutic methodology in philosophical pursuit have been well inherited by the later Neo-Confucians. As I show in the Chapter Seven(7.3.3), the creativity of Zhu Xi’s commentary on investigation of things is to be appreciated in context of this long Chinese hermeneutic tradition, which to some extent serves as a creative method of philosophizing.

4.1.2. Beyond the Horizon of Human Domain and Heaven

Under this strong tendency of synthesizing Daoism and Confucianism on a Daoist substratum, and thanks to the hermeneutic methodology which assimilates Confucian doctrines into Daoist thinking, Neo-Daoism had significantly transformed the soil of Chinese thinking for its successors. The aim of this section is to identify the nature of this transformation. First of all, the widely accepted translation of *Xuanxue* into Neo-Daoism might demonstrate that the essence of this intellectual current is in accordance with the Daoist tradition. However, the definition of this Daoist continuity usually tends to divide contemporary scholarship.

Feng Youlan attributes the continuity to a core of “naturalism”. He argues that the view of Neo-Daoism as “a revival of Daoism” is hardly surprising, because “Daoism, more than other early schools, had stressed naturalism”. In addition, with naturalism as “a prominent

¹³ See the *Analects*, “Chapter *Xianjin*”: “The Master said: ‘isn’t it true that Hui is close to reach the perfect virtue. [He is] often in deficient [in materials]’” (MT: “子曰: ‘回也其庶乎, 屡空!’”) Another recording from the *Analects* is more detailed: “the Master said, ‘Indeed, so virtuous is Hui! [He lives] with merely a bamboo bowl of rice, a single gourd cup of drink, and in a crude abode. Others could not survive the depression [if they live in such a circumstance], while he does not change his contentment. Indeed so virtuous is Hui!’” (MT: “子曰: ‘贤哉回也! 一簞食, 一瓢饮, 在陋巷。人不堪其忧, 回也不改其乐。贤哉回也!’”)

ingredient”, the “Old Text” school in the previous phase of Chinese intellectual history (prevailing in the Eastern Han dynasty) had already well nurtured this trend of thinking (Feng, 1953, p. 168).¹⁴ Tang Yongtong in his influential monograph *Weijin xuanxue lungao* 魏晋玄学论稿 (*Treatise on the Neo-Daoism of the Wei and Jin Dynasties*) holds a rather different opinion. In comparing the two paradigms of “discourses on the distant and the abstruse”, he argues that the Neo-Daoism¹⁵ of the Wei and Jin dynasties fundamentally differs from its counterpart in the previous Han dynasty. Neo-Daoism (*Xuanxue*) is not limited to the cosmological discourse on physics and the function of the universe, but goes further to inquire into the original basis of “heaven and earth” and the myriad things. Therefore, it departs from the “cosmology or cosmogony” and enters into the “ontology or theory of being”. Tang thinks that although both ways of “discourses on the distant and the abstruse” can be regarded as originally stemming from the *Laozi*, the Han dynasty approach emphasizes the natural laws of the changes of “heaven and earth” and relies on natural phenomena and numerological divination, and it investigates the *Tian-dao* (heavenly way) so as to regulate the human world. Neo-Daoist thought nevertheless values the controversies about the profundity and ultimacy of *you-wu* 有无 (being-nonbeing, or presence-nonpresence), and is characterized by its conceptualization of the distant, abstruse and supersensible¹⁶ *Da-dao* (great way). Consequently, it does not concentrate on concrete things and therefore abolishes the theories of *Yin-yang*, *Wu-xing* (five agents) and numerology that feature in the Han Dynasty approach (Tang, 2005, pp. 38-39).¹⁷

When Franklin Perkins describes the predominant cosmology in the Han dynasty, he

¹⁴ “The next development was a revival of Daoism. This is hardly surprising, for Daoism, more than other early schools, had stressed naturalism, and such naturalism was a prominent ingredient in the Old Text school.”

¹⁵ Tang’s definition of *Xuanxue* is quite different from Feng Youlan’s insofar as it includes relevant Buddhist thought as part of it. For instance, Tang classifies *Xuanxue* into four schools, the fourth of which is represented by a Buddhist monk Shen Zhao 僧肇 (384-414). Although Shen Zhao was a great synthesizer of the Chinese version of Madhyamaka, namely, *Dachengkongzong* 大乘空宗, and various schools of *Xuanxue*, he is normally referred to as the representative of Chinese Buddhism in the Wei and Jin dynasties.

¹⁶ My translation of Tang’s word “*wuzheng* 无朕”, literally, “without sign”.

¹⁷ MTS: “然谈玄者,东汉与魏晋,固有根本之不同…魏晋玄学则不然。已不复拘拘于宇宙运行之外用,进而论天地万物之本体。汉代寓天道于物理。魏晋黜天道而究本体,以寡御众,而归之玄极…于是脱离汉代宇宙之论 (cosmology or cosmogony) 而留恋于存存本本之真 (ontology or theory of being) …汉代偏重天地运行之物理,魏晋贵谈有无之玄致。二者虽均尝托始于老子,然前者常不免依物象数理之消息盈虚,言天道,合人事;后者建言大道之玄远无朕,而不执著于实物,凡阴阳五行以及象数之谈,遂均废置不用。因乃进于纯玄学之讨论。汉代思想与魏晋清言之别,要在斯矣。”

argues that it is “known as ‘correlative cosmology’... as a metaphysical theory, its core elements are various schema for sorting phenomena into kinds (*lei* 类) and a theory of causality based on stimulus and response (*ganying* 感应).” Perkins points out a few theoretical achievements of this “metaphysical theory”: 1) the categorization in terms of the *Yin-yang* and *Wu-xing* theories, the peculiar conception of causality labelled as “*ganying*” (stimulus and response), based on which there is an essential assumption of “correlations”. Therefore, “social and political hierarchies are given a metaphysical basis”, insofar as “phenomena can be influenced through their correlates” in this correlative cosmology so that “human culture is seen as mirroring structures at the foundation of the natural world” in terms of “human phenomena [that] are theorized as natural”. (Perkins, 2015, SEP)¹⁸

From Tang’s argument, one can infer that it is in fact not the naturalist cosmological dimension but the other aspect of Daoism that contributes to the rise of Neo-Daoism, namely, the metaphysical pursuit (he calls it “ontology”). Precisely, the correlative cosmology of the Han dynasty, which offers a more abstract picture of the natural world and derives from this conception a strong anthropomorphic function, indeed has explicit metaphysical implications, but I call for a reconsideration of categorizing this correlative cosmology of the Han dynasty as “a metaphysical theory” per se, as Franklin Perkins suggests. In the comparative analysis in Chapter Five, I will come back to this issue and demonstrate how Kant’s conceptions of metaphysics help clarify this dispute.

Neo-Daoists thought that their study was to explore the “horizon of the Human domain and Heaven” (“*tianren zhi ji* 天人之际”¹⁹), which was to abandon the Han dynasty theories of *Yin-yang*, *Wu-xing*, and numerology. It was instead to seek for the original basis of “heaven and earth” and the myriad things instead of the observation of the changes of “heaven and earth”, or the concrete things which were emphasized by their Han dynasty predecessors. As Tang points out, “the core theme [of all the four Neo-Daoist schools] is about the clarification of *you* and *wu*, the intrinsic and the extrinsic” (Tang, 2005, p. 39).²⁰

¹⁸ SEP: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (online). The link is given in bibliography.

¹⁹ This phrase is from the *Shishuo Xinyu*. See Yu Jiaxi’s edition, (Yu, 1983, p. 165). “何平叔注老子始成，诣王辅嗣；见王注精奇，乃神伏。曰若斯人，可与论天人之际矣！因以所注为道，德二论。”

²⁰ MT: “其中心问题，在辨本末有无之理。然名流竞起，新义叠出”。

Perkins also indicates the core Neo-Daoist “metaphysical issue” of “how to understand *dao* as ultimate ground, particularly how to interpret descriptions of *dao* as no-being (*wu* 無) and how to understand the relations between *dao* and the concrete world we experience” (Perkins, 2015, SEP).

The dominant Neo-Daoist metaphysical quest can be condensed into one notion, “*wu*”. As Wang Bo (2011, pp. 94-107) argues, *wu*, as a philosophical idea first found in the *Laozi*, is not simply void or non-being. It is formless or hidden being; it is able to manifest or appear as *xiang* (phenomena).²¹ The establishment of “*wu*” – “the nameless” (cannot be conceptualized in a normal positive sense) and “the formless” (cannot be sensed) – as a fundamental metaphysical (and also political) principle happened in the Wei and Jin dynasties.²² Hans-Georg Moeller’s translation of *wu* as non-presence rather than non-being rightly captures the characteristic of this Chinese philosophical notion.²³ But for the sake of convenience, I shall retain the traditional translation.

4.2. Enlightenment from Within: Chinese Buddhism and Metaphysical Psychology

Buddhism has maintained an influential presence in Chinese thinking since its introduction to China in the first century A.D., but this influence varies in its nature and degree in different historical periods. As Tang puts it:

Buddhism in the Han dynasty was only viewed as one of the ninety-six arts of occultism. Its popularity at that time was due to the fact that its nature was understood as close to occultism. In the Wei and Jin dynasties, Buddhism was transmitted by relying on [the prevalence of] *Xuanxue* or Neo-Daoism. Despite its nontrivial influence on *Xuanxue*, its own existence was

²¹ MTS: “无的发现是老子对中国哲学传统的一大贡献。从老子对有无的论述来看,无显然不是“不存在”或者纯粹的‘虚无’”,它仍然是存在的一部分,不过是不可见的那部分。无乃是无形的或隐藏的存在,有不过是有形的或可见的存在,无和有的区分是存在内部的区分,不是存在和非存在的区分...老子从没有把无理解成虚无,‘视之不见’,‘听之不闻’,‘搏之不得’’,状其无形而已。但此无形仍然是存在,其存在的形态为‘象’...但是无的真正确立还要等到魏晋时代,在这个时代,‘无’以及与之相关的‘有’成为辩论的核心话题。贵无,崇有之论相继而起,并且牵涉到自然与名教...无的原则在此得到了前所未有的确立...换言之,有形有名的有限事物之间是“有际”的,因此无法成为彼此的根据。能够成为万物之本的一定是超越了有限事物的无形无名者...有总是因其具有某种特定的规定性,使之无法成为具有另外规定性存在的根据...王弼...与老子并无二致,以无为本的目的并非是毁灭世界,而是成就万有。从这个意义上说,王弼深得老子之心。他成为老子最伟大的注释者是当之无愧的。”

²² MT “以无形无名宗并不仅仅是形上学的原则,同时也是政治哲学的原则”

²³ See Moeller’s works such as *The Philosophy of Daodejing and Daoism Explained*.

nevertheless largely dependent on *Xuanxue*. To some extent, it was then only in subordination to *Xuanxue*. The Emperors of the Han dynasty believed in Buddhism due to their interest in occultism – Emperor Huang was an example. Literati in the Jin dynasty and the Southern dynasties started to believe in Buddhism due to their appreciation of *Xuanxue*. In the Sui and Tang dynasties, however, Buddhism was able to continue its transmission by its own means without the help of advocacy by the Emperors or the literati. Meanwhile, the Buddhist ecclesiastical organization had also formed its own system. The authority of Buddhism was centralized in the monks in the temple, who became the center of the common people's belief. (Tang, 1999, pp. 328-329)²⁴

In the conventional articulation of Chinese intellectual history, after the Neo-Daoist prominence that characterized the Wei and Jin dynasties comes the prominence of Buddhism during the Sui and Tang dynasties. Since the sixth century, “the doctrinal differences in strands of Chinese Buddhism began to take shape, establishing Chinese Buddhist doctrine as both separate from Indian Buddhism, and distinct from Confucianism and Daoism” (Lai, 2008, p. 235). It is worth noting that Buddhism in China and Chinese Buddhism are not the same. As Lü Cheng makes clear, Chinese Buddhism is not simply a transplant of Indian Buddhism. Rather, it is more like a grafting, so that the root of Chinese Buddhism is grounded in the soil of the Chinese thinking rather than in the Indian.²⁵ For example, the three major schools of Chinese Buddhism, *Tiantai* 天台, *Huayan* 华严 and *Chan* 禅宗, share the common characteristic that “their understanding of Buddhism fundamentally differs from the Indian version” (Lü, 1979, p. 4).²⁶ However, Chinese Buddhism (rather than Buddhism in China) is no less a complex body of thinking than Neo-Confucianism, and in various aspects even surpasses the latter, such as in the history and scale of its transmission.

²⁴ MT: “汉代看佛学不过是九十六种道术之一,佛学在当时所以能够流行,正因为它的性质近于道术,到了魏晋,佛学则倚傍着玄学传播流行,虽则它给玄学不少的影响,可是它在当时能够存在是靠着玄学,它只不过是玄学的附庸。汉朝的皇帝因信道术而信佛教,恒帝便是如此。晋及南朝的人则因欣赏玄学才信仰佛教。迨至隋唐,佛教已不必借皇帝和士大夫的提倡,便能继续流行。佛教的组织,自己成为一个体系。佛教的势力集中于寺院里的和尚,和尚此时成为一般人信仰的中心。”

²⁵ He cites the case of Xuanzang, a famous Buddhist monk, scholar and translator, whose important conception of “一真法界” is thoroughly Chinese, rather than Indian. He argues that although Xuanzang studied in India and transmitted the Buddhist texts he brought back to China, he actually did not reduce the difference between Chinese Buddhism and Indian Buddhism (Lü, 1979, p. 4). Feng has a different opinion. Feng thinks “his [Xuanzang's] writings, consequently, are more Indian than Chinese in spirit, and provide an interesting contrast with the more purely Chinese reaction to Buddhism” (Feng, 1953, p. 299).

²⁶ MTS: “我们不能把中国佛学看成是印度佛学的单纯‘移植’,恰当地说,乃是‘嫁接’...中国佛学的根子在中国而不在印度...我们讲中国佛学,主要讲与印度佛学距离较大的几家学说。这个可以天台,贤首,禅宗三家为代表。这三家的共同特点,就是他们所理解的佛学与印度的根本不同。”

This current study of Chinese Buddhism aims to identify the idiosyncrasy of the Chinese Buddhist contribution to the transformation of Chinese thought before and during the rise of Neo-Confucianism (particularly in ways that contrast with the Neo-Daoist approach). As Lai points out, “philosophically, it [Buddhism] introduced elements as yet not considered by the Chinese thinkers, including especially the concept of mind, ideas of space and time, psychological phenomena and conscious self-awareness” (Lai, 2008, p. 243). In the following section, I exemplify sophisticated Buddhist discourse on the human heart-mind and consciousness by highlighting the thinking of the *Weishizong* 唯识宗 (Consciousness-Only School) of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) in his famous *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯识论 (*Discourse on the Perfection of Consciousness-only*).²⁷

One of the central notions of the *Weishizong* (School of Consciousness Only) is “*shi*” 识, usually translated into “consciousness”. Feng Youlan thinks “it is something somewhat akin to what in Western philosophy is called mind, as opposed to matter” (Feng, 1953, p. 300). According to Xuanzhang’s *Cheng weishilun*, *shi* comprises eight kinds of mental activities, or specific and concrete *shi*, which are again categorized into three groups that are called *san nengbian* 三能变 or three evolving agents: *yishu* 异熟, *siliang* 思量, *liaobiejingshi* 了别境识.

Yishu, or maturing consciousness, the most important of the eight kinds, is the *ben shi* 本识, or the intrinsic consciousness, because it generates the other two evolving agents which are *zhuan shi* 转识, or transformable consciousnesses. *Yishu* is the eighth consciousness with the name *ālaya vijñāna* in Sanskrit (which means storehouse consciousness). *Ālaya* consciousness “is in perpetual revolution”, “rolls onward like a torrent” (Feng, 1953, p. 312), and persists through the endless cycle of life and death until enlightenment or nirvana. It is from this that the Buddhists derive the theory of reincarnation. *Ālaya* consciousness is also *yiqizhongshi* 一切种识, or the consciousness that contains all the seeds. These so-called seeds are of two kinds: the tainted, and the taintless.

27 As Liu points out, although “the thought of the Chinese Consciousness-Only School originated in the teaching of Vasubandhu, on whose works Xuanzang wrote his commentary”, but the book *Cheng weishilun* “represents XuanZang’s view rather than that of Vasubandhu”, because “this book is not simply a translation of Vasubandhu’s verses, but a selective understanding of the Consciousness-Only thought, and in Xuanzang’s translation he sometimes uses Chinese words with slightly different connotations to subtly supplement the original theory” (Liu, 2006, pp. 220-221).

They are the germs of all things that seem to exist within or outside the consciousness (Han, 1998, pp. 10-11). Philosophically, *ālaya* consciousness copes with a similar category of issues that is dealt with by the idea of the immortality of the soul in Western metaphysics, or in Kant's terms, metaphysical psychology. Moreover, the notion of *ālaya* consciousness is also of ontological importance. As Feng points out, the universality (universal perception) of natural phenomena such as mountains and rivers is also caused by *ālaya* consciousness.²⁸ Or as Liu puts it, "it is through the transformations of multiple storehouse consciousnesses that the whole world becomes existent... the world is the combined creation of all storehouse consciousness of all sentient beings" (Liu, 2006, pp. 222-223). The two *zhuan shi*, or transformable consciousnesses, are: 1) *siliang*, or intellection, also called the seventh or *manas* consciousness, and 2) *liaobiejiingshi*, or discriminative consciousness. The discriminative consciousness consists of six kinds, which are respectively associated with the five senses (*yan* 眼 *er* 耳 *bi* 鼻 *she* 舌 *shen* 身, viz., sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) and the sixth consciousness, *yi* (意), or sense-coordinative consciousness (functionally comparable to apperception in Kant's terminology). Each of the first five consciousnesses is dependent on several conditions (Han, 1998, p. 12).

By analyzing the functions and interrelations of each type of consciousness and the peculiarity of complicated human mental phenomena, the Consciousness-Only School tries to demonstrate that nothing exists apart from consciousness and everything is "mere ideation" (Feng, 1953, pp. 318-319). In other words, "from time immemorial there has only been consciousness....Nothing can exist independently of the mind" (Liu, 2006, pp. 222-223). Therefore, all things are "manifestations falsely evolved by the mind and its attributes under the inducement of numerous conditioning factors" and "have no inner reality in themselves". Consequently, the belief in "the subjective existence of an ego or *atman* (*wo* 我)" and the belief in "the objective existence of external things or *dharmas* (*fa*

²⁸ "This tells us that such objects as mountain, rivers, etc., are evolved out of the 'universal' (*gong xiang* 共相) seeds which belong to all *ālaya* consciousness in common... In other words, the mountains, rivers, etc., of the world evolve out of the "universal" seeds which are contained in all the maturing consciousness alike of all those beings who now live or will at some future time be reborn in the world of which these mountains and rivers are a part." (Feng, 1953, p. 308)

法)” are erroneous and equally unreal, or “empty”, due to our “lack of understanding” and ignorance. Both beliefs ought to be dissolved in order to achieve the ultimate and genuine awakening (Feng, 1953, p. 300, p. 325, pp. 329-330). Consciousness-Only School was merely one of many influential Chinese Buddhist schools transmitted in the early period of the Tang dynasties. The later Buddhists, such as those from the schools of Tiantai and Chan, not only helped make Buddhist thinking more widespread but also continued to strengthen the Buddhist quest for the “heart-mind”, which indeed raised the Chinese thought about metaphysical psychology to a whole new level.

4.3 Confronting the Meta-ethical Challenge: Neo-Confucian Methodological Demand

4.3.1 A Confucian Metaphysical Crisis

The Neo-Daoist and Buddhist quests – the Neo-Daoist doctrine *dao* as *wu*, and the Buddhist in its thinking on *kong* (emptiness) – and their respective ontological ideas about the ultimate reality of the world not only re-oriented Chinese thought to the realm of *xingershang* (that beyond the form), but also raised serious challenges to classical ethics-centric Confucianism.²⁹ Traditional Confucian values, such as its normative ethics and its practice of moral cultivation, when confronted by those subversive metaphysical reflections, were rendered groundless. For instance, if the external world and the internal self, as Buddhism asserts, are merely dream-like delusions³⁰ derived from the evolution of our consciousness, then Confucian moral obligation differentiated according to the various (external) social relations to oneself and the Confucian doctrines of moral self-cultivation are meaningless. Again, if the whole world ultimately comes from *wu*, and the great *Dao* is identical to *wu*, as the Neo-Daoists demonstrate,³¹ then the Confucian idea of moral

²⁹ As Joel J. Kupperman points out, “ethics is, in Confucius’s view, central to everything that matters including effective government” (Kupperman, 2001, p. 60).

³⁰ See the Chinese translation of *Diamond Sutra*, “All *dharma*s are like dreams, illusions, bubbles or shadows, [unreal as such]; They are like dew and lightning flash, [transient as such].” (MT: “一切有为法, 如梦幻泡影, 如露亦如电, 应作如是观.”).

³¹ Such as Wang Bi’s thinking on *wu* as that all things depend on, “夫无者, 诚万物之所资.. 圣人体无, 无又不可以训,

governance and its proposal of social order and political structure, which are all apparently *you* (presence or being), would be merely superficial, if not false, and thus detached from the real truth. Furthermore, these Daoist and Buddhist metaphysical doctrines were not merely theoretical reflections but were supported by their respective sophisticated introspective philosophical methods, such as Daoism's "fasting the mind" and Buddhism's meditation, and also by their well-organized religious bodies and widely-spreading practices. Besides undermining Confucian normative ethics and moral practice, both Daoism's and Buddhism's metaphysical complexities also posed an epistemic challenge to ethics-centric Confucianism – even if one assumes that the Confucian values and virtues are based on moral facts, from where are people capable of knowing them? The theory of *Siduan* ("four beginnings") and human nature in the *Mencius* traditionally served as an argument concerning this issue, which interprets the moral authority or source from a moral psychological perspective. However, this preliminary argument lost its strength when Buddhism lifted the Chinese "metaphysical psychology" to a whole new level.

For the revival of Confucianism, the first and most important challenge is the construction of a solid "metaphysical foundation" of morals, or a meta-ethical theory, which is also necessarily equipped with a proper methodology. By the beginning of the Song dynasty there was already a remarkable synthesis of the major schools of Chinese thinking; and the Neo-Confucians came onto the stage when the intermingling of ideas were about to be organized and unified "into one great system".³² Most of the major Neo-Confucians thinkers were like Cheng Yi 程颐,³³ who is reported as having "drifted among the various schools of thought and went in and out Daoism and Buddhism for almost ten years" and "finally... returned to the six Confucian classics and only found it

故言必及有" (*Shishuo* pp. 166-167). Again, Wang Bi in his *Zhouyi Lueli* (*Outline of the System Used in the Book of Changes*) argues, "the general thesis that all multiplicity must be ruled by oneness, and all activity controlled by quiescence." "It is the silent and supreme nonbeing (*wu* 无) that is their origin." (Feng, 1953, p. 180,) Similarly, Guo Xiang in his commentary on the *Zhuangzi* has the major contention that "nonbeing is the basis of all things..." (ibid., p. 170).

³² "From the present chapter it may be seen that by the beginning of the Sung dynasty, i.e., by around the year 1000, the major existing schools of thought had all reached roughly comparable stages of development, in the course of which a considerable intermingling of ideas had occurred. All that was lacking was the series of great men who were presently to appear, and were to organize and unify all that had gone before into one great system." (Feng, 1953, p. 433)

³³ 1033-1107, one of the five Masters of Neo-Confucianism in Northern Song Dynasty.

[the way] then”.³⁴ Zhu Xi, as one among the prominent Neo-Confucian thinkers, is no exception. Zhu Xi’s intellectual connection with those two “heterodox traditions” is far more complicated than his Neo-Confucian label would suggest.

4.3.2 Zhu Xi’s Study on Daoism and Buddhism and the Confucian Metaphysical Quest

As recorded in *Zhuzi Yülei* (*Thematic Discourses of Master Zhu*), Zhu Xi confessed that he had indulged in Buddhism in his teenage years when he was around 15 or 16 and even applied Buddhist ideas in the civil service examination when he was 19. It is only after meeting his teacher Li Tong 李侗 (1093-1163) that he returned to the study of the Confucian classics (Vol. 17, *Yülei*, pp. 3437-3438). He “read the sages’ books again and again. Day after day, [he] gradually found the meaningfulness of the sages’ words; while looking back to the Buddhist teaching, [he found that it appeared] gradually to have many flaws and mistakes.”³⁵ In Chan’s study on Zhu Xi’s contact with Buddhist monks and his knowledge of Buddhism, there are at least two insightful points. 1) Despite being one of the most vigorous critics of Daoism and Buddhism from the Neo-Confucian camp whose “attack on Buddhism was more comprehensive than that of his predecessors”, Zhu Xi was actually “socially amiable toward Buddhist priests” (Chan, 1989, p. 508, p. 520) and he had various Buddhist acquaintances, including the famous Chan Buddhist master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163). Chan argues that Zhu Xi met Dahui probably in Meizhou in 1156. “Zhu Xi had read Dahui’s *Yü-lu* with care and remembered it well” and “also knew about Dahui’s associates”. Chan also accepts the relative influence of Daihui on Zhu Xi’s thinking, despite his belief that some scholars like Tokiwa Daijo might go too far to assert that Zhu Xi’s “idea of moral principles [*li*] and the unity of humanity [*ren*] and righteousness [*yi*] was inspired by Dahui” (ibid., pp. 513-515). 2) Chan summarizes 61

³⁴ See the “*Mingdao Xiansheng Xingzhuang*” (or “The Bibliography of Master Mingdao”) written by Cheng Hao. MT: “自十五六时...未知其要，泛濫於諸家，出入於老、釋者幾十年，返求諸六經而後得之。明於庶物，察於人倫。知盡性至命，必本於孝悌；窮神知化，由通於禮樂。辨異端似是之非，開百代未明之惑，秦，漢而下，未有臻斯理也。” (*Ercheng Ji*, “Wenji”, Vol. 11, p. 630)

³⁵ MT: “某遂將那禪來杈倚閣起...且將聖人書來讀。讀來讀去，一日復一日，覺得聖賢言語漸漸有味。却回頭看釋氏之說，漸漸破綻罅漏百出。” (*Zhuzi Quanshu*, “Yülei”, pp. 3437-3438)

Buddhist sayings quoted by Zhu Xi and argues that “the sum total of scriptures and sayings that Zhu Xi cited shows that he was quite familiar with Buddhist literatures” (ibid., p. 526).³⁶ Zhu Xi perhaps had even greater knowledge of Daoism, and his philosophical criticism of Daoism was less fierce than his criticism of Buddhism. He even annotated a popular but extremely abstruse Daoist classic *Yinfujing* 阴符经, (a.k.a., *Huangdi yinfujing* 黄帝阴符经 *The Yellow Emperor's Hidden Talisman*), which he praised, saying it “cannot be composed by someone without a profound understanding of the *dao*”. (Vol. 13, *Yinfujing*, p. 507)³⁷ Chan points out that Zhu Xi to some extent “was also complimentary to Laozi and Zhuangzi” (Chan, 1989, p. 486). Moreover, Zhu Xi positively utilized Daoist ideas, such as in his explanation of *shengsheng* 生生 (generation) – a concept that originated in the *Book of Changes* and became “a basic concept of Neo-Confucianism” – in virtue of the thinking of the *Laozi* (ibid., p. 497), or in his constant quotations of the *Zhuangzi* in conversation (ibid., pp. 498-450). For Zhu Xi, although the Daoists wrongly separate *dao* and *de* (virtue), they indeed “had some insight into the substance of *Dao*” (ibid., p. 499, p. 487). Zhu Xi also studied the religious practice of Daoism since it to some extent embodied Daoist philosophical ideas – for instance, he even edited and commented on the book for Daoist Alchemy *Zhouyi santongqi* 周易参同契 (*The Seal of the Unity of the Three*).

Therefore, on the one hand, Zhu Xi rejects core doctrines of Daoist and Buddhist thinking, while on the other hand, these Daoist and Buddhist ideas serve as a vital source of his own reflection on the Confucian tradition and his remodeling of Confucianism. Against the Daoist and Buddhist teaching, Zhu Xi and his Neo-Confucian contemporaries sought to establish a new metaphysical foundation for Neo-Confucianism that is rooted in its own classics. However, there is a fundamental distinction between the Confucian metaphysical quest and those of the Daoists and Buddhists. As Zhu Xi writes,

Will *Dao* be regarded as high, distant, abstruse, and subtle, and therefore cannot be studied?

³⁶ Chan also notices that although Zhu Xi had a certain misunderstanding of Buddhist works, “it is not really surprising, because he merely reflects the general situation of his time... Certainly Zhu Xi read many more [Buddhist books] than his contemporaries” (Chan, 1989, p. 525).

³⁷ MT: “然非深于道者不能作也”, see Zhu Xi's *Yinfujing zhu ying* 阴符经注.

To the contrary, *Dao* is so called precisely because it is the natural principle (*li*) of everyday life, like the road that ought to be traveled by millions of people within the four seas and on the nine continents, and [it is] different from the Daoist and Buddhist alleged *Dao* which is empty, void, still and dead, and of no use to the people. Will *Dao* be regarded as pedantic, distant, coarse and broad, and therefore not necessary for study? To the contrary, *Dao* is [pervasive] under heaven: [it is] between [the daily social relations like] the ruler and the subject, or the father and the son; [it is] within the moments of [one's] waking and sleeping, action and rest. All of these have specific proper principles, which are not to be abolished if for a second. (Vol. 21, *Wenji*, p. 1690)³⁸

If the revival of Confucianism from the new soil that had been cultivated by Neo-Daoism and Buddhism entails a transition to a metaphysical quest into the realm “beyond the form”, then the ultimate purpose of this metaphysical quest is to relocate the formless *Dao* back into daily life – the realm into which Confucians are dedicated, and moreover, to reconnect it with morality. Zhu Xi argues:

Dao is the principle that in the past and at the present all depend[ed] on, such as the benevolence of the father, the filial piety of the child, the human-heartedness of the ruler, and the loyalty of the subject, are all the salient principle. Virtue (*de*) is the embodiment of the *dao* in oneself, so that the ruler must be human-hearted, the subject must be loyal so on and so forth...Laozi says: “Virtue appears when the *dao* is lost”. He is ignorant and separates them [*dao* and virtue] into two things and again regards the *dao* as something empty and void. We Confucians think there is only one thing [namely, virtue and the *dao* are one]. Since time immemorial there is only one thing. When it is not defined in terms of the human beings, it is the *dao*, while, the virtue, then is the fully embodiment of the *dao* in oneself. Laozi says, “virtue appears when the *dao* is lost; human-heartedness appears when the virtue is lost; Righteousness appears when human-heartedness is lost.” However, if human-heartedness and righteousness are lost, there won't be any principle; what is the *dao* then? (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, 397-398)³⁹

This peculiar Confucian metaphysical quest therefore demands a unique philosophical method which is rather distinct from the introspective philosophical methods such as the Daoist “fasting the mind” and Buddhist meditation. The latter in Zhu Xi's opinion only leads to “the Daoist and Buddhist alleged *Dao* which is empty, void, still and dead, and of no use to the people”, and in contrast, Confucian *Dao* is within the daily life and social

³⁸ From Zhu Xi's letter to Zhou Yigong 周益公, MT: “以道为高远玄妙而不可学邪, 则道之得名, 正以人生日用当然之理, 犹四海九州百千万人当行之路而, 非若佛老之所谓道者, 空虚寂灭而无用于人也。以道为迂远疏阔而不必学邪, 则道之在天下, 君臣父子之间, 起居动息之际, 皆有一定之明法, 不可顷刻而暂废。”

³⁹ MT: “道者, 古今共由之理, 如父之慈, 子之孝, 君仁, 臣忠, 是一个公共底道理。德, 便是得此道于身, 则为君必仁, 为臣必忠之类...老子说: ‘失道而后德’ 他都不识, 分做两个物事, 便将道做一个空无底物事看。吾儒说只是一个物事。以其古今公共是这一个, 不著人身上说, 谓之道。德, 即是全得此道于己。他说: ‘失道而后德, 失德而后仁, 失仁而后义’ 若离了仁义, 便是无道理了, 又更如何是道?”

order. Again, a construction of a “metaphysical foundation” of morals or a meta-ethical theory must be rooted in the Confucians’ own tradition, or more precisely, in its own classics. This demand necessitates a positive hermeneutic method similar to the previously mentioned Neo-Daoists’ philosophical method in their assimilation of Confucian doctrines into Daoist thinking. All of these aspects will be realized in Zhu Xi’s critical development of investigation of things – a fundamental philosophical method in Neo-Confucianism.

Chapter Five Comparative Analysis: The Moments of A Methodological Shift

In Chapter Two and Chapter Three, I examined the historical intellectual contexts in which the philosophical materials were generated. I also identified the basic external factors that initially stimulated the process of the evolution of each line of thinking, namely Kant's philosophy in the late critical period and Zhu Xi's Study of Principle (*lixue*) in Neo-Confucianism. In this chapter, instead of looking into comparable concrete philosophical issues, I want to verify whether there are similar factors that contribute to the transitions in thinking, and to identify whether there is a structural similarity between the trajectories of the evolution of thinking, which might indicate a certain inner nexus shared by the two traditions. I argue, in light of Kant's metaphysical pursuit and his transition to the supersensible in the late critical period, the essence of this re-orientation of Chinese philosophy and the transformation of the pre-Neo-Confucian intellectual landscape can be better understood. Consequently, it will help to decipher the philosophical destiny of Neo-Confucianism and to re-evaluate Zhu Xi's achievement.

5.1. First Comparative Finding: Zeitgeist – Critical Syncretic Historical Moment

As is a critical syncretism, Neo-Confucianism resembles Kant's "eclecticism". As Kuehn points out, whether in Kant's effort to "mediate between Newton or Descartes and Leibniz" in his early thinking in natural philosophy (Kuehn, 2001 p. 102), or in his attitude towards the Wollfian rationalism, "Kant advocated eclecticism, saying that 'we will take what is good wherever it comes from'" (ibid, p. 130). As he explains:

'eclectics'... [are] independent thinkers who were subject to no masters, who critically investigated all doctrines, and who accepted only those things that are witness by their own 'experience' and their 'raison'. Most significant German thinkers of Kant's generation wanted to

be 'eclectics' in this sense... Kant was no exception in this regard. (ibid., p. 179)

The rise of Confucianism benefited from an amalgam of critical and eclectic spirit similar to Kant's. The early seventh century on the one hand saw Chinese Buddhism reach its apogee and also witnessed the revival of Confucianism.¹ The revival of Confucianism amid the heyday of Buddhism is not simply a peaceful re-connection with and continuation of Confucian teaching or a resurgent transmission of the *Dao* from the Confucian lineage. Rather, it emerged as a radical response to Buddhism (and Daoism) from the camp of thinkers who identified themselves with the Confucian tradition and acted as the defenders of the Confucian legacy. One such thinker, Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824), characterized by his fierce rejection of Buddhism and Daoism, is often regarded as the first notable protagonist.² In his famous essay *Yuandao* 原道 (*On the Origin of the Way*), Han Yu declares,

What is this *Dao* [that is taught by the early kings]? I would say that the *Dao* I am talking about here is not what is propagated by the Daoists and Buddhists ... [therefore, I think] unless we block the transmission of the teaching of Daoism and Buddhism, the teaching of early kings will never prevail ... secularize their [Buddhists' and Daoists'] followers, burn their texts, inhabit their temples, and enlighten them with the *Dao* of the early kings. Then widowers, widows, orphans, the childless, the disabled and the sick are all taken care of. Isn't this feasible?³ (Han, 1996, p. 2665)

Han Yu's criticism of Buddhism and Daoism is often regarded as a notable sign of the breakthrough from the Confucian camp. It features a strong pragmatic dimension rather than a more profound philosophical engagement as found in his Neo-Confucian successors. In contrast with the social-practical function of the virtue ethics of Confucianism, he targets the amoral aspects of Buddhist and Daoist teachings and their ecclesiastical organizations, to which he ascribes various social problems. Although Han's criticism might well provoke reflection on the excessive religious practices of Buddhism and Daoism, it does not undermine their foundation. The appeal of both Buddhism and Daoism essentially derives from their intrinsic philosophical profundity and sophisticated spiritual concern rather than

¹ According to Feng, the reclamation of the influence of Confucianism started since Buddhism's heyday in the early seventh century through the effort of Confucian scholars like Wang Tong (584-617) of the Sui Dynasty (Feng, 1953, p. 407).

² Feng argues, regarded as "the first real protagonist of later Neo-Confucianism", Han Yu's achievement lies in those aspects: his promotion of a re-interpretation of Confucian classics, his rediscovery of the *Mencius* and the *Great Learning*, his narrative of the orthodox line of transmission of Dao and his criticism of Buddhism. (ibid., pp. 409-412).

³ MT: "斯道也，何道也？曰：斯吾所谓道也，非向所谓佛与老之道也。……不塞不流，不止不行，人其人，火其书，庐其居，明先王之道以道之，鳏寡孤独废疾者有养也：其亦庶乎其可也？"

from a merely favourable objective milieu. They had indeed transformed the Chinese intellectual landscape since the third century, and gradually changed the soil out of which the earlier version of Confucianism had grown, and the environment to which it was adapted. Han Yu's criticisms of Buddhism and Daoism were hardly enough to clear the ground for the resurgence of Confucianism, nor philosophically sophisticated enough to establish anew its authority in a new era of Chinese thinking. Classical Confucianism, represented by Confucius and Mencius, is often regarded as having little to say about certain metaphysical issues while being too devoted to normative ethics. As illustrated by a frequently quoted passage from the *Analects*: "Zigong said: 'the Master's grandeur [his exemplary moral accomplishment] is accessible and knowable, while his discourses on human nature and heavenly *dao* are not accessible and knowable.'"⁴ A motivation for the evolution of Confucianism and the creation of a comparable philosophical (metaphysical) foundation, as a process of self criticism instead of Han Yu's mere rejection of the Daoist and Buddhist philosophical profundity, were inevitably put on the agenda.

Besides this innate critical temperament of the resurgence of Confucianism, the other dominant characteristic of its revival is a strong eclectic disposition.⁵ In his *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Feng Youlan (1953, pp. 407-433) emphasizes the syncretistic spirit of the age and gives a detailed account of the conditions for the revival of Confucianism in its borrowings from Buddhism and Daoism. He points out that "a considerable intermingling of ideas had occurred" during the course of the development of those major schools since the seventh century, and enumerates a few examples: 1) The crucial ideas of Li Ao, another important early protagonist of Neo-Confucianism and contemporary of Han Yu in the Tang dynasty, are evidently influenced by Buddhist teaching;⁶ 2) The "flow of ideas between Buddhism and Confucianism" was also furthered by the other side, i.e., the Buddhist

⁴ MT: "子贡曰，夫子之文章，可得而闻也；夫子之言性与天道，不可得而闻也。" (*Analects*, "Chapter Gongyechang")

⁵ This strong eclectic disposition that characterized the resurgence of Confucianism since the seventh century actually can be traced back to the previous phase of Chinese thinking – Neo-Daoism – as argued in Chapter Four.

⁶ As Feng argues, Li Ao's ideas of self-cultivation as returning to one's original nature, of the constraint of feelings which are evil, his interpretation of the notion of *Cheng* (sincerity) in the *Zhongyong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*) as an absolute kind of quiescence, in all aspects resemble the Tien-tai Buddhist teaching of cessation (*zhi*) and contemplation (*guan*), but are somehow implanted in the Confucian classics such as the "Appendices" of the *Book of Changes*, the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (Feng, 1953, p. 423)

Monks who had expounded the Confucian classics since the tenth century;; 3) Religious Daoism – an amalgam of the pre-Qin Daoist teachings (such as the *Laozi*), the doctrines of the *Yin-yang* school, and certain superstitious values of Confucianism developed in the Han dynasty – added a new stream of thought into the on-going synthesis of Confucianism and Buddhism. Feng therefore argues that by the beginning of the Song dynasty, the enriched major schools of thought and the considerable intermingling of ideas were about to be organized and unified “into one great system”,⁷ only waiting for “the series of great men who were presently to appear” - the Neo-Confucians.

Standing on the watershed of each intellectual tradition, both Kant and Zhu Xi embraced a syncretic and also critical spirit. This intellectual morale determines the grandeur of their philosophical achievement:

The *CJ* illustrates Kant’s endeavour to save metaphysics – the “philosophy proper” – from falling into decline due to its troublesome legacy, and also constitutes his proposal of a proper method of ascending to the supersensible in response to his various rivals’ lingering concerns over certain transcendental ideas. To the third *Critique* is given the eclectic task of combining different domains of thought (science, religion, and philosophy) and reconciling a reason split in the first two *Critiques* by bringing it under a single idea or principle through the unity of the third higher cognitive power: the power of judgment.

Zhu Xi, like his predecessors who “drifted among the various schools of thought and went in and out Daoism and Buddhism for almost ten years” and “finally... returned to the six Confucian classics and only found it [the way] then”(Erchengii, p. 630), on the one hand, severely rejects core doctrines of Daoist and Buddhist thinking, while on the other hand, uses these Daoist and Buddhist ideas as a vital source of his own reflection on the Confucian tradition and his remodeling of Confucianism. Against the Daoist and Buddhist teaching, Zhu Xi and his Neo-Confucian contemporaries sought to establish a new metaphysical foundation for Neo-Confucianism that is rooted in its own classics, which

⁷ “From the present chapter it may be seen that by the beginning of the Song dynasty, i.e., by around the year 1000, the major existing schools of thought had all reached roughly comparable stages of development, in the course of which a considerable intermingling of ideas had occurred. All that was lacking was the series of great men who were presently to appear, and were to organize and unify all that had gone before into one great system.” (ibid, p. 433)

eventually lead to their comprehensive reinvention of various classical Confucian doctrines such as investigation of things.

5.2 Second Comparative Finding: Bridging Kantian Metaphysics and Chinese Study of the Formless

I have so far used the terms “metaphysics” and “metaphysical” in my narrative of the intellectual context of the rise of Confucianism (Chapter Four). By “Chinese metaphysics” I mean the indigenous tradition of studying on the so-called “the formless” or “things beyond form” (*xingershang*), which was enhanced by the profound Neo-Daoist and Buddhist philosophical discourses since third century in different aspects, leaving the rising Confucianism a serious theoretical challenge. In light of Kant’s clarification of “metaphysics”, I will look into the Neo-Daoist contribution to the indigenous tradition of studying on “the formless” or “things beyond form”. As the first great philosophical synthesis of Daoism and Confucianism, Neo-Daoist study on “the formless” or “things beyond form” set the key tone for the successors. This comparison helps to bridge the two “metaphysical” traditions and also to explain the “metaphysical crisis” confronted by the rising Confucianism since the seventh century.

Kant’s clarification of “metaphysics” (3.3) offers a few conceptual apparatuses for us to approach the Chinese counterpart. According to Kant, “the word metaphysics means a science which goes beyond the boundaries of nature” (*ibid.*, 28:540). Insofar as nature is the sum total of sensible appearance, metaphysics then is devoted to the supersensible. In his early critical period, Kant emphasizes metaphysics’ peculiar role in coping with certain supersensible things, particularly God (as the origin and first cause) and immortality (29:937-938). In his post-critical period, although Kant had developed the idea of “metaphysics proper”⁸ (in which the specific theological colour faded out), he still maintained that in its devotion to “the rules of the supersensible”, it applies to “objects that

⁸ Kant uses “transcendental philosophy” in a “customarily” narrow sense to mean ontology – “the general doctrine of beings” or “doctrine of essence”, and “metaphysics proper” therefore contains only “three parts”: the dogmatic psychology, the metaphysical cosmology and the metaphysical theology.

cannot at all be objects of experience”. In a sense, “this supersensible is what drove human beings to metaphysics” (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, “Metaphysik K2, 1790s”, 28:774). Moreover, the task of “metaphysics proper” is to confront so-called “transcendent ideas” since it forces the human being to ascend to “the supersensible”, i.e., to “[bound] over his place of residence, to which he otherwise could restrain himself” (ibid., 28:774-5).

Therefore, in Chinese tradition, the correlative cosmology of the Han Dynasty mentioned in Chapter Four would not qualify as “a metaphysical theory” in Kant’s terms, insofar as its “core elements are various schema for sorting phenomena into kinds (*lei* 类) and a theory of causality based on stimulus and response (*ganying* 感应) – the features considered by Franklin Perkins as a justification of its metaphysical quality. Its *yin-yang* and *wu-xing* theories, the conception of “stimulus and response” and “correlation”, and its analogy between the “human phenomena” and the natural world all would be regarded by Kant as results of investigations within “the boundaries of nature” – the phenomenal world rather than the realm of “the supersensible”.

Furthermore, Tang’s dichotomy between the two paradigms of “discourses on the distant and the abstruse” presented in Chapter Four, namely, the correlative cosmology of the Han dynasty and the *Xuanxue* (Neo-Daoism) of the Wei and Jin dynasties, into “cosmology or cosmogony” vs. “ontology or theory of being” is also not entirely correct according to the Kantian criteria of metaphysics. As previously argued, Kant inherited from Baumgarten the fourfold division of metaphysics into ontology, cosmology, psychology, and natural theology. But he modified this classification to allow the compatibility between his critical project of philosophy and his saving of metaphysics. He regards his “transcendental philosophy” in a “customarily” narrow sense to mean ontology – “the general doctrine of beings”, or “doctrine of essence”, which has been well treated in the first *Critique*; while “metaphysics proper” then contains the remaining “three parts”: the dogmatic psychology, the metaphysical cosmology and the metaphysical theology. Therefore, if there is validity in Tang’s own argument that Neo-Daoism is characterized by its inquiry into the original basis of “heaven and earth” and the myriad things, and that its focuses on *you-wu* and its conceptualization of the distant, abstruse and supersensible

Da-dao (great Dao) are for the sake of the explanation of the origin of the world rather than questioning the objective reality of the myriad beings, then it is perhaps better understood as a metaphysical cosmology rather than an ontology, in Kant's terms.

Kant's thinking on metaphysics is helpful for our current comparison, not only in the sense of offering a feasible and clear criterion for clarifying issues such as the two argued above, but also, perhaps more significantly, in its role of bridging the two traditions of metaphysics. Perkins emphasizes the irreducible difference between Western and Chinese metaphysical traditions. For him, there is a long Chinese tradition of addressing issues "concerned with the ultimate nature of reality – its being, origins, components, ways of changing, and so on", the essential standard for being considered "metaphysical". However, as he insightfully points out, despite this rich tradition, the Chinese connotation of "metaphysics" is not entirely the same. For instance, he argues for the unique identity between "ontology" and "cosmology" in Chinese metaphysics.⁹ Moreover, the fundamental difference in the two traditions of questioning "the ultimate nature of reality" lies in the fact "that European metaphysics has tended to focus on problems of reconciliation (how ontologically distinct things can interact), while Chinese metaphysics has been more concerned with problems of distinction". Perkins warns that "it erodes these differences by presenting Chinese philosophy in European terms... [and] we must strive to avoid distorting it [Chinese metaphysics] to fit into European terms". In Tang's case, there might be such a category "distortion". I think the metaphysical pursuit of Neo-Daoism pertains to metaphysical cosmology rather than ontology due to its strong concern with the original basis of the world instead of the existence of things. However, if Perkins' argument that in Chinese metaphysics "ontology is also cosmology, even biology" is valid, then Tang's distorted usage of the term "ontology" might after all be justified. But his dichotomization between "cosmology or cosmogony" and "ontology or theory of being" is therefore invalid.

⁹ Perkins (2015) argues, "It is sometimes said that Chinese philosophy lacks ontology (and thus metaphysics) because philosophers were never concerned with being as such. It is more accurate to say that Chinese philosophers took dynamic organization as implicit in the very nature of being, rather than positing an external source for motion and order. This means that ontology is also cosmology, even biology."

Perkins's distinction sheds light on the uniqueness of the two traditions in their respective ways of questioning "the ultimate nature of reality". But I want to propose that in Kant's thinking on metaphysics there is a bridge for us to cross over the irreducible difference and find a point of convergence. This proposal is not simply "cutting the feet to fit the shoes"¹⁰ but relies on an intrinsic coherence. Kant defines metaphysics as the investigation of "the supersensible", which "goes beyond the boundaries of nature", the phenomenal world, and forces the human being to bound "over his place of residence, to which he otherwise could restrain himself" (ibid., 28:774-5). In the Chinese tradition a comparable definition of such a kind of investigation dates back to the *Book of Changes*. As it records:

In the heaven there is the *xiang* 象 (phenomena) formed, and on the earth there is the *xing* 形 (form) completed. Then the evolution and transformation manifest.¹¹

That beyond the *xing* (form) is the so-called *Dao* (the way), while that within the form is so-called *qi* 器 (utility).¹²

What manifests is the *xiang* (phenomena); what has formed is the *qi* (utility).¹³

According to the above quotation, *xiang* and *qi* are sensible and phenomenal, comparable to Kant's sensible world or the appearance; while *Dao* is formless (beyond any forms), and is thus comparable to Kant's idea of "the supersensible". This distinction from the *Book of Changes* forms a basic conceptual tool in Chinese philosophy that has remained ever since, and has particularly influenced Neo-Daoist thinking in its endeavour to conceptualize the distant, abstruse and supersensible "great *Dao*".

Kant thinks "the supersensible" forces the human being to "[bound] over his place of residence" to investigate things beyond the boundaries of nature (the phenomenal world). Not coincidentally, Neo-Daoists thought that their study was to explore the "horizon of the Human domain and Heaven" ("*tianren zhi ji* 天人之际").¹⁴ The elements from the two canons of Neo-Daoism (the *Book of Changes* and the *Laozi*), namely, the idea of *Dao* as beyond form, and *wu* as nameless and formless, intermingled in Neo-Daoist metaphysical

¹⁰ A metaphor from the *Huainanzi*, Chapter "Shuolin Xun".

¹¹ MT: "在天成象，在地成形，变化见矣。"

¹² MT: "形而上者谓之道，形而下者谓之器。"

¹³ MT: "见乃谓之象；形乃谓之器。"

¹⁴ This phrase is from the *Shishuo xinyu*. See Yu's edition, "何平叔注老子始成，诣王辅嗣；见王注精奇，乃神伏。曰若斯人，可与论天人之际矣！因以所注为道，德二论" (Yu, 1983, p. 165).

thinking, and formed one of the most influential Neo-Daoist propositions: *dao* is the formless *wu*, which is comparable to Kant's "the supersensible". In the modern Chinese language, the translation of metaphysics into *Xingershang xue* "形而上学" (literally, study of that beyond the form) makes very good sense in terms of the Kantian definition of metaphysics in contrast to the understanding of metaphysics as the study of "the ultimate nature of reality".

To conclude, it is clear to see a decisive re-orientation of Chinese Philosophy to metaphysics in the Neo-Daoist efforts of conceptualization of the "distant and abstruse" great *Dao*, and in its rich discourses on the profundity and ultimacy of being and non-being. To put it in Kant's words, these Neo-Daoist endeavours in the exploration of the "horizon of the human domain and Heaven" are more seeking for "the rules of the supersensible" from without, in the "self-so" (*ziran*). Following this comparative strategy, the philosophical temperament of Chinese Buddhist discourse on "the supersensible" in light of Kant's thinking then is more from within, in the heart-mind, insofar as "it introduced elements as yet not considered by the Chinese thinkers, including especially the concept of mind, ideas of space and time, psychological phenomena and conscious self-awareness" (Lai, 2008, p. 243). It also emphasized consciousness (*shi*) "[which] is something somewhat akin to what in Western philosophy is called mind, as opposed to matter" (Feng, 1953, p. 300). If we can say that Neo-Daoism since the third century stretched the Chinese metaphysical tradition particularly in the direction of "metaphysical cosmology" in Kant's terminology, then it is fair to say that the Chinese Buddhism of the Sui and Tang dynasties, with "the complexity of its psychological and metaphysical doctrines" (Feng, 1953, p. 238), besides its comparably profound ontological and cosmological ideas, particularly dedicated itself to the same ends as what is called "metaphysical psychology" in Kant's terminology.

Classical Confucianism, as represented by Confucius and Mencius is often thought to have little to say about these metaphysical issues expounded by Neo-Daoism and Buddhism— "the Master's grandeur [his exemplary moral accomplishment] is accessible and knowable, while his discourses on the human nature and heavenly *dao* are not

accessible and knowable.”¹⁵ The revival of Confucianism came from a “metaphysical crisis” comparable to the Kantian one. The first and most important task for it is the construction of a solid “metaphysical foundation” of morals, or a meta-ethical theory. A quest into the realm “beyond the form” is inevitable. However, in contrast to the Neo-Daoists and Buddhists, the ultimate purpose of the Confucian metaphysical quest is to relocate the formless *Dao* back into concrete daily life – the realm into which Confucians are dedicated.

Despite the distinct problems and appeals, a comparable historical moment occurred in each line of thought — both Kant and Zhu Xi (the Neo-Confucians) had to realize a transition to “the supersensible”, or things beyond the form, in their thinking. How to cope the “transcendental” issues determines the orientation of their philosophical development and essentially defines the completion and systematicity of their thinking. As I further argue in the following section, all of these concerns lead them to embrace a methodological shift.

5.3 Third Comparative Finding: Unity, Systematicity and A Methodological Shift

In this section, I examine how Kant’s transition to the supersensible leads to the coining of reflective judgment and its justification. The Kantian methodological evolution will help me to interpret the necessity of the reinvention of investigation of things by Zhu Xi and his Neo-Confucian contemporaries as one of their operations in the remodeling of Neo-Confucianism, so as to cope with the above-mentioned metaphysical crisis.

5.3.1 The Split Reason

This transition to the supersensible is found in the preface of the second edition of the *CPR*, added in April 1787. By a classification of reason into theoretical reason and practical

¹⁵ MT: “子贡曰，夫子之文章，可得而闻也；夫子之言性与天道，不可得而闻也。” (*Analects*, “Chapter Gongyechang”)

reason, Kant finds “an option” for the supersensible:

Now once we have denied that speculative reason can make any progress in the realm of the suprasensible [supersensible], we still have an option available to us. We can try to discover whether perhaps in reason’s practical cognition data can be found that would allow us to determine reason’s transcendental concept of the unconditioned (*CPR*, BXXI).

The notion of “practical reason” inaugurates the transition to the supersensible found in the late transcendental period. In a letter to Christian Gottfried Schütz in June, 1787, Kant confirms his motivation:

I am so far along with my *Critique of Practical Reason* that I intend to send it to Halle for printing next week. This work will better demonstrate and make comprehensible the possibility of supplementing, by pure practical reason, that which I denied to speculative reason-better than all the controversies with Feder and Abel ... For this is really the stumbling block that made these men prefer to take the most impossible, yes, absurd path, in order to extend the speculative faculty to the supersensible. (10:490)

The transition to the supersensible brings critical philosophy from its epistemic pursuit towards a metaphysical quest. But this did not cease with the completion of the second *Critique*. The *CPR* explores the conditions of possibility for objects to be experienced (“how is experience possible” (20:275)) but not the possibility of things or how things come to be, which is a metaphysical question. Although the *CPrR* initiated the first attempt to bring determination to the supersensible and shed light on the issues suspended by the first *Critique*, it nevertheless brought a new problem as “reason” therein was split into two: theoretical and practical. A gap opened up between their distinct domains: nature and freedom, which weakened the systematicity of transcendental philosophy as a whole.

5.3.2 Reason’s unity

Kantian systematicity is not only about symmetry – e.g., the isomorphic structure between philosophy and human faculties¹⁶ – but also about unity (being unified under a single idea or principle).

A vast body of cognitions can be extremely comprehensive (e.g., a database), but it is

¹⁶ More detailed argument on the isomorphic structure between critical philosophy and human faculties see the Part Three of my thesis, where I show how Kant’s ideas of reason’s natural propensity and reason’s need pave the way to the development of the concept of an autonomous reflective judgment in order to finally bring a neat isomorphic structure between transcendental philosophy and human faculties.

not a system in Kant's sense. Kant argues that, systematic connection is the connection of various cognitions in one idea. Now philosophy is the only science that has a systematic connection, and it is that which makes all the other sciences systematic. (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, 28: 533)

And, moreover,

A system must always be thought through, a manifoldness in connection, a combination of cognitions based on a common principle. Hence, we can learn much geography, but not in a system, only as an aggregate. (*Lectures on Logic*, "Docha-Wundlacken Logic, 1790s", 698, p. 435)

Unity is an inner principle of the cognitive powers. To bring unity into the manifold (appearance or cognitions) is not only functional but is also constitutive of the cognitive powers. As Kant argues in the first *Critique*, "The understanding may be considered a power of providing unity of appearances by means of rules; reason is the power of providing unity of the rules of understanding under principles" (B359/A302). The difference between the unity of reason and that of understanding lies in the objects: "reason initially never deals with experience or any object [as does the understanding], but deals with the understanding in order to provide the understanding's manifold cognitions with a priori unity through concepts" (B359/A302). The unity of reason realizes itself by "making inferences [that seek] to reduce the great manifoldness of understanding's cognition to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions) and thereby to bring about the highest unity of this [understanding's] cognition" (A305/B361). Kant thinks that to search for a "unity of principles" and to "bring the understanding into thoroughgoing coherence with itself" is reason's natural demand and subjective law prescribed to itself.¹⁷ In order to complete the unity, reason inevitably seeks for "the unconditioned".¹⁸ Essentially, this demand for the unity of reason leads to its antinomy. By the same token, reason's natural propensity to overstep the boundary of the realm of possible experience and generate

¹⁷ "Manifoldness of rules and unity of principle is indeed a demand of reason. Reason makes this demand in order to bring the understanding into thoroughgoing coherence with itself, just as the understanding brings the manifold of intuition under concepts and thereby brings the intuition into connection. But such a principle prescribes no laws to objects (B363), and does not contain the basis for the possibility of cognizing and determining them as objects at all. It is, rather, merely a subjective law for the management of understanding's supplies [instructing understanding], to reduce the universal use of its concepts- by comparing them-to their smallest possible number..." (CPR B362-363/A305-306)

¹⁸ "That the principle peculiar to reason as such (in its logical use) is: to find, for understanding's conditioned cognition, the unconditioned whereby the cognition's unity is completed." (CPR, A308/B265)

transcendental ideas, as discussed in the first chapter, is an account from another angle.

Nevertheless, the unity of reason also lays the ground for the possibility of the system of critical philosophy, and consequently for a system of metaphysics too. As mentioned before, according to Kant the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* is only a temporal substitute for a *Critique of Pure Practical Reason*. The latter, then, is a proper foundation of the “Metaphysics of Morals” (4:391). Kant explains one major reason for this compromise:

I require that the critique of a pure practical reason, if it is to be carried through complete, be able at the same time to present the unity of practical with speculative reason in a common principle, since there can, in the end, be only one and the same reason, which must be distinguished merely in its application. But I could not yet bring it to such completeness here without bringing into it consideration of a wholly different kind and confusing the reader. (4:391)

It is the unity of reason that frustrates Kant. The issue of the unity of reason and its innate problem of transcendent demand were not alleviated in the *CPrR*, where he in fact strengthened the double role of reason by emphasizing the peculiar usage of the practical use of reason in moral issues. The gap between the two domains, or, the double roles, of reason, i.e., the sensible nature and the supersensible nature and their different laws, indicate a split reason, against Kant’s vision of “the unity of practical with speculative reason in a common principle”.

Insofar as unity is a major principle of the cognitive powers, and understanding and reason are powers of providing either unity of appearances or unity of the intelligence, there is no reason to refuse the demand of unity to the power of judgment. And as far as the tripartite division of pure philosophy is concerned, “the third” arises from and brings the union of the heterogeneous two. Therefore, the unity of the third cognitive power, judgment, is naturally peculiar and distinct from the former two. Hence the realization of the unity of the power of judgment not only brings reflection on its autonomous legislation of a priori principles, but also the union of a divided reason – and consequently the completion of the system of transcendental philosophy. All of these finally converge into one more *Critique*.

Kant started working on a new project called “the Critique of Taste” in September 1787

amid his disputes with various rivals.¹⁹ In December 1787, Kant found something that made him very excited:

Without becoming guilty of self-conceit, I can assure you that the longer I continue on my path the less worried I become that any individual or even organized opposition (of the sort that is common nowadays) will ever significantly damage my system. My inner conviction grows, as I discover in working on different topics that not only does my system remain self-consistent but I find also, when sometimes I cannot see the right way to investigate a certain subject, that I need only look back at the general picture of the elements of knowledge, and the mental powers pertaining to them, in order to discover elucidation I had not expected. I am now at work on the critique of taste, and I have discovered a new sort of a priori principles, different from those heretofore observed. For there are three faculties of the mind: the faculty of cognition, the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. In the *Critique of Pure (theoretical) Reason*, I found a priori principles for the first of these, and in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, a priori principle for the third. I tried to find them for the second as well, and though I thought it impossible to find such principles, the analysis of the previously mentioned faculties of the human mind allowed me to discover a systematicity, giving me ample material at which to marvel and if possible to explore, material sufficient to last me for the rest of my life. This systematicity put me on the path to recognizing the three parts of philosophy, each of which has its a priori principles, which can be enumerated and for which one can delimit precisely the knowledge that may be based on them: theoretical philosophy, teleology, and practical philosophy, of which the second is, to be sure, the least rich in a priori grounds of determination. I hope to have a manuscript on this completed though not in print by Easter; it will be entitled '*The Critique of Taste*'. (*Correspondence*, 10: 514-5)

One can imagine the joy at this moment of intellectual breakthrough for Kant at this important moment for the completion of critical philosophy. Although Kant did not mention reflective judgment in this letter, it is just a matter of time before he adopts the name, “Critique of Judgment (a part of which is the ‘Critique of Taste’).”²⁰

5.3.3. The Philosopher’s Double Obligation and Reason’s Unity

Moving back to the time of the authorship of the *CJ* around 1789, critical philosophy might have proposed a more negative approach to the supersensible. But metaphysics

¹⁹ See Kant’s letter to Ludwig Heinrich Jakob (September 11, 1787): “I shall now turn at once to the Critique of Taste, with which I shall have finished my critical work, so that I can proceed to the dogmatic part. I think it will appear before Easter.” (*Correspondence*, 10:494)

²⁰ See Kant’s letter to Karl Leonhard Reinhold (May 12, 1789): “I am eager to hear of your theory of the faculty of representation, which should appear at the same book fair as my Critique of Judgment (a part of which is the ‘Critique of Taste’) next Michaelmas.” (*Correspondence*, 11:39)

cannot be adequate for this, because its peculiar role, its positive use, or its main end do not rest on the critique of the human faculties, nor on the clarification of the boundary of reason, nor on repeal of transcendental illusions. Besides God and immortality, the so-called “transcendent ideas”, “limiting concepts”, or “pure concept of reason”, such as “the first cause”, “the world [as a whole]”,²¹ or “the origin of concepts”,²² etc., all demand a place in metaphysics. Saving metaphysics and completing critical philosophy come into one, but at the same time are designated different specific tasks and positions within Kant’s philosophical enterprise.

For Kant, philosophy “is obliged to confine itself to a methodical development and systematic arranging of concepts” (NT, 8:390).²³ Although “philosophy is the system of philosophical cognition”, “to learn to philosophize” it is “necessary to use more reason in the method of reason” rather than merely memorizing the “system of philosophy” (*Logic*, “Vienna Logic, 1780s”, 797-798). Furthermore, the human being “needs two things in philosophy”: 1) “a cultivation of our skill”, i.e., development of philosophical method,²⁴ (“we are directed by the method how we are to learn to philosophize”); and 2) to know “the highest maxims” or “the purpose towards which it [philosophy] is directed” (ibid., 800). These obligations or requisitions of philosophy are to some extent interdependent. A new philosophical method or conceptual tool stimulates the evolution of the system of philosophical cognitions, while a new systematic arrangement of philosophical cognitions or philosophical problems promotes and lays the ground for methodological development. Kant’s philosophical enterprise is thus supported by these two fundamental pillars.

Now, in the pre-*CJ* landscape of Kant’s philosophy there are two issues worthy of note:

²¹ In Kant’s 1770s pre-critical period metaphysics lectures, he examines these ideas. For example, he remarks on “the world [as a whole]”: “this concept is a pure concept of reason, and is not arbitrary, but rather is necessary to human reason. Our reason has a need that is not satisfied until it meets a completeness in the series of things, or until it can think a complete totality.” (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, “Metaphysik L1, mid-1770s”, 28:195)

²² In a letter to Ludwig Heinrich Jakob (September 11, 1787), Kant writes: “In my humble opinion, it is necessary to present logic in its purity, as I said in the *Critique*, that is, as consisting merely of the totality of the formal rules of thinking, leaving aside all materials that belongs to metaphysics (concerning the origin of concepts as far as their content is concerned) or to psychology; in this way, logic will become not only easier to grasp but also more coherent and comprehensive” (Correspondence, 10:494); “a pure concept, insofar as it has its origin solely in the understanding (not in the pure image of sensibility), is called notion. A concept framed from notions and surpassing the possibility of experience is an idea, or concept of reason” (*CPR*, B377).

²³ A similar argument is found in “Vienna logic”, on “philosophy”: a system of cognition and methodology.

²⁴ “In considering philosophy as skill we will look more to its method than to the purpose toward which it is directed.” (*Lectures on Logic*, “Vienna Logic, 1780s”, 800)

1) there is a perennial demand to give (metaphysical) place to the supersensible and to settle all the transcendental ideas in a proper manner without dragging reason into another abyss, risking its going astray in the name of reason's propensity or natural reason in its regulative use, and thus essentially there is a demand for a proper philosophical method, i.e., the need of methodological development; and 2) there is also the dichotomy-trichotomy tension in the systematicity of critical philosophy and the ambiguity of the roles of the higher cognitive powers, essentially a problem of the system. Now in its transition to the supersensible, Kantian critical philosophy after the *CPrR* confronts a new problem in its systematicity as an unbridgeable chasm appears between the two split "reasons".

The *CJ*, motivated by reason's demand for unity, is to reconcile the conflict among science, religion and metaphysics and find a way of ascending to the supersensible. By coining the new conceptual tool reflective judgment (as the methodological development) and bringing the unity and systematicity of transcendental philosophy under a tidy trichotomous isomorphic structure (as the "systematic arrange[ment]"), the *CJ* also fulfils a philosopher's double obligation and drives the dynamical project of Kant's thinking to proceed forward on its way. The *CJ*, with reflective judgment and its peculiar a priori principle of purposiveness, would bring the completion of Kant's critical philosophy as well as coming to the rescue of metaphysics.

5.3.4. Comparison and Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I use the ideas from my study of Kant to reflect on the Chinese phenomenon. There was a similar pattern of a shifting of thinking in the revival of Neo-Confucianism, in order to cope with the realm of the formless, or the supersensible in Kant's terms, after Neo-Daoism and Buddhism raised Chinese metaphysics to a new level. The contextual similarity generates a structural and strategic correspondence in the evolution of each philosophy. Facing a metaphysical crisis and a transition to the supersensible with a strong syncretistic spirit, both lines of thought manifested similar movements – methodological development for the sake of the systematicity. These intrinsic movements can be understood again in the light of the Kantian pattern—Kant's personal

intellectual evolution is fuelled by these two reciprocal drives – systematization of philosophy and methodological development.²⁵ Now, for Kant, in order to cope with the remaining metaphysical questions with a proper method, to bring the systematicity of transcendental philosophy under a tidy trichotomous isomorphic structure, and to maintain the consistency of both his thinking and terminology, the coining of a new conceptual tool that is named reflective judgment (with a peculiar autonomy and a priori principles) is inevitable. The *CJ* thus drives the dynamical project of Kant’s thinking to proceed forward to its completion. For Neo-Confucians, to deal with the metaphysical crisis and meanwhile to re-settle Confucian morality into the context of daily life, that is, to remodel Confucianism into a system of thinking with both pragmatic efficacy and metaphysical profundity, requires a proper and basic philosophical method. This shall be realized in Zhu Xi’s development of the notion of “*gewu*” (investigation of things) and “*gewu qiongli*”(to investigate things in order to exhaust principle), which helps to bring the “great completion” of Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism.

In brief, the historical contextual comparison shows that a methodological demand and a pursuit for theoretical systematicity due to similar metaphysical quest of “the supersensible” aroused by their rivals respectively pushes the development of both lines of thinking. In the next part, I examine the mechanism for the realization of this development within each body of thinking.

²⁵ A new philosophical method or conceptual tool stimulates the evolution of the system of philosophical cognitions, while a new systematic arrangement of philosophical cognitions or philosophical problems promotes and lays the ground for methodological development.

Chapter Six Realization of the Systematicity: Kant's Critical Philosophy and Reflective Judgment

In this chapter, I look into Kant's Critical philosophical system itself. I particularly focus on the evolution of his conceptualization of the power of judgment in the course of the systematization of his philosophy as a whole. I want to explain the mechanism for and the intrinsic factors of this evolution. This provides a proper angle from which to appreciate Kant's understanding of the task(s) of critical philosophy and the peculiar dynamics of its systematicity, and to identify the unique place of the *CJ* within Kant's intellectual development during his late critical period.

6.1 Critical Philosophy and Systematicity

6.1.1 The Complete System and Need for "Clarification"

From April 1786 to mid-September 1789, Kant not only significantly revised the first *Critique*, but also composed the *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of Judgment*, not to mention a few short essays. During this creative period of approximately twenty-nine months he intensively contemplated and wrote his critical philosophy (mainly remembered for these three works). This period is essentially different from the years of the authorship of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is reported to have been finished in haste after over a decade's prolonged gestation.¹ By constantly engaging the various fundamental questions investigated in different divisions of critical philosophy, Kant recognized an urgent necessity for reinforcing the systematic unity of his philosophy as a

¹ As reported by Kant himself. See: Letter To Johann Erich Biester (June 8, 1781), "though this book has occupied my thinking for a number of years, I have put it down on paper in its present form in only a short time" (*Correspondence*, 10:272); Letter to Christian Grave (August 7, 1783), "ideas that I had been working out painstakingly for 12 years in succession... I would have needed a few more years instead of the four or five months I took to complete the book" (*ibid.*, 10:338); Letter to Moses Mendelssohn (August 16, 1783), "for although the book is the product of nearly twelve years of reflection, I completed it hastily, in perhaps four or five months, with the greatest attentiveness to its content but less care about its style and ease of comprehension" (*ibid.*, 10:345). Norman Kemp Smith indicates that "the twelve years here referred to are 1769-1780... the 'four to five months' may be dated in the latter half of 1780" (Smith, 2003, pp. xxviii-xxix).

whole, and this highly intensive creative period supplied him the opportunity to do so. By the time he eventually composed the final instalment (the preface and introduction) of the *Critique of Judgment* in March 1790, where he confidently declared the constructive role of the third *Critique* within the architectonics of his system of transcendental philosophy, the so-called “critical period” of Kant reached its culmination.

Responding to an age he called “syncretistic”, “in which a certain coalition system of contradictory principles, replete with dishonesty and shallowness, is contrived” (*CPrR*, 5:24),² Kant considers systematicity not only as “a criterion for empirical truth” as remarked by Guyer³, but also as a true touchstone of philosophical pursuit. “To think always consistently” is considered by Kant the high maxim of reason and is moreover “hardest to attain” (*CJ*, 5:294-5). Despite historical disagreement as to its degrees of success or failure, Kant’s appeal for consistency and systematicity is a defining feature of his philosophy. This appeal for consistency is rooted in concerns for “the greatest obligation of a philosopher” (*CPrR*, 5:24)⁴ rather than a mere personal mania for architectonics,⁵ and it is a major factor driving the development of Kant’s philosophy.⁶

While the exact time of formulation of his system is still a matter of debate, Kant himself claims it had been fully conveyed in the first *Critique*, in 1781,⁷ though with room

² “Ein gewisses Koalitionssystem widerprechender Grundsätze voll Unredlichkeit und Seichtigkeit erkuenstelt wird.” (*CPrR*, A45)

³ Paul Guyer points out that Kant suggests “systematic unity of reason is a criterion for empirical truth” in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique* (Guyer, 2009, p. 84).

⁴ “Konsequent zu sein, ist die grösste Obliegenheit eines Philosophen, und wird doch am seltensten angetroffen.” (*CPrR*, A45)

⁵ Criticism of Kant’s mania for architectonics is common. See, for instance, Norman Kemp Smith’s attack on the “artificial aspect of Kant’s argument”, where he analyses the problem of schematism, which he believes is artificially articulated by Kant and completely for the sake of architectonics. Smith calls for “an ungrateful task”, “that before we can profitably proceed, the various strands in his [Kant’s] highly artificial argument must be further disentangled... [so that] at least the compensating interest of admirably illustrating the kind of influence which Kant’s logical architectonic is constantly exercising upon his statement of Critical principles” (Smith, 2003, pp. 332-334). Peter McLaughlin comments on the idea of “Kant as an Architectonic Psychopath” and traces it back to Erich Adickes. McLaughlin argues against Adickes’ psychological explanation of Kant’s motivations for writing (McLaughlin, 1990, pp. 145-148).

⁶ Kuehn argues that “Kant’s formulation of the systematic whole around 1778” eventually encouraged the work on the *Critique of Pure Reason* and distinguished Kant’s thought from his early critical period (as in his Inaugural Dissertation) (Kuehn, 2001, pp. 233-234).

⁷ Facing criticisms against the first *Critique* from his contemporaries like Christian Garve, Kant responded in 1783 that the *Critique* was doing “a whole new science, never before attempted, namely, the critique of an a priori judging reason”, “in a single, complete cognitive faculty”, “to develop a priori out of the mere concept of a cognitive faculty” (*Correspondence*, 10:340); “in a word, the machine is there, complete, and all that needs to be done is to smooth its parts, or to oil them as to eliminate friction, without which, I grant, the thing will stand still. Another peculiarity of this sort of science is that one must have an idea of the whole in order to rectify all the parts, so that one has to leave the thing for a time in a certain condition of rawness, in order to achieve this eventual rectification”(ibid., 10:339). Even if the novel Kantian system stands, Garve further comments on the obscure terminology of the *Critique*: “but my opinion, perhaps mistaken, is still this: that your

still for “now and again clarification”.⁸ For Kant, a “certain amount” of terminological obscurity is “not altogether avoidable”,⁹ and conceptual clarification is required to reduce this problem but not to refine or revise the system. Such a fully presented systematic whole of philosophy, which is at the same time open to conceptual clarification, as paradoxical as it may seem, in my view makes Kant's system of transcendental philosophy a de facto dynamical project of thinking. It is never a static body of fixed doctrines, enclosed and immune to amendments, which to some extent makes certain attacks on Kant's failure to systematize his thinking misguided.¹⁰

Besides the above-mentioned dynamical feature of Kant's system, viz., the idea of “clarification”, Gerd Buchdahl (1992, pp. 3-104) proposes a conceptual device or so-called “guiding pre-conceptions” for studying the general structure of Kant's transcendental philosophy and its “various nodal points”. He calls this conceptual device “reduction-realization process” (RRP) or sometimes “reduction-realization procedure”. It offers a diachronical angle of viewing Kant's thought as “realizational process” (or, “generative process”), in a “dynamic flow” rather than fixed in “a timelessly given structure”. Certain core Kantian concepts (such as “object” and “thing in itself”) and the Kantian project of transcendental philosophy are to be understood as moving toward multiple realization or, conversely, seen as collapsing back. Moreover,

Implicit in all this is the idea that 'transcendental thinking' should not be construed so much as a 'transcendental argument' structure, with constant checks on the latter's 'validity', but that it should be viewed instead as a constructive device for the purpose of elucidating the relatively permanent elements that are present in the conditioning framework in the context of which the various stages of the object come to be realized. To coin a phrase, “Argument be damned; it's the picture that counts”.(ibid., p.9)

Buchdahl's RRP establishes a sense of internal continuity in Kant's intellectual

whole system, if it is really to become useful, must be expressed in a popular manner, and if it contains truth then it can be expressed" (ibid., 10:331-332); adding that “[the] language must first be explained to the reader” (ibid., 10:330).

⁸ “Nor do I find that there is anything in what I have written that I would want to take back, though now and again clarification could be brought to bear, a task to which I shall turn at the first opportunity” (ibid., 10:273); see Kant's “Letter To Johann Erich Biester” (June 8, 1781).

⁹ Obscurity in terminology is a general problem in Kant's philosophical writings, and he is aware of it. In the *CJ*, Kant again apologizes that “a certain amount of obscurity” is “not altogether avoidable” (*CJ*, 5:170).

¹⁰ For example, argument from “vital revision”, viz. due to the fact that Kant continuously made major changes to his transcendental philosophy and subsequent writings during the critical period, so even if there was a system in *CPR*, it was only transient. An overall system cannot be found.

development throughout both the pre-critical and critical period. It reduces “the endless confusion and perplexity” concerning certain Kantian concepts (such as “transcendental object”), and also supplies a perspective for understanding Kant’s philosophical methodology as well as a “picture” of transcendental philosophy in general with “stages of the process of realization”, which conforms with Kant’s own account of the dynamics of his critical philosophy in light of the idea of constant and necessary “clarification”. The mechanics of a complete system, compatible with further “clarification”, is vividly illustrated in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, in which Kant claims to study “reason... in transition to a quite different use of those concepts from what it made of them there [the first *Critique*]” (*CPrR*, 5:7). Kant emphasizes that “such a transition makes it necessary to compare the old use with the new, in order to distinguish well the new path from the previous one and at the same time to draw attention to their connection” (*ibid.*, 5:7). He warns that this kind of work “should not be regarded as interpolations which might serve only to fill up gaps in the critical system of speculative reason... or as like the props and buttresses that are usually added afterwards to a hastily constructed building, but as true members that make the connection of the system plain, so that concepts which could there be represented only problematically can now be seen in their real presentation” (*ibid.*, 5:7). This Kantian method of further developing his philosophical system through conceptual “clarification” is comparable to the hermeneutic method engaged by both the Neo-Daoists and the Neo-Confucians in their respective philosophical developments, as I argue in more detail in the comparative analysis in Chapter Eight.

In brief, the *CPrR* is essentially an intensive clarification of the new usage of the concepts already surveyed in the first *Critique* rather than a new exploration of the system. By the same token, the *Critique of Judgment* does not necessarily signify the ultimate fulfilment of Kant’s transcendental philosophy, even if Kant, with an unprecedented panoramic view of his own intellectual achievement, can better ground his idea of philosophy as a system in it. Nonetheless, in this last *Critique* the landscape of transcendental philosophy has been fundamentally changed and the system has been expanded to an unprecedented scope. Although Kant comes back to rethink his system in

the later years of his life – after the *CJ* – the significant landmark of his philosophy, the systematicity of transcendental philosophy, is at that time no longer an urgent issue for him.

6.1.2 Dichotomy vs. Trichotomy: Tension in the Systematicity of Kant's Critical Philosophy

As defined by Kant in the introduction of the *CJ*, philosophy, broadly understood as “the system of rational cognition through concepts”,¹¹ is conveyed in the form of a dichotomy between formal and material parts. The formal part, the *forms of thought*, deal with the rules of logic;¹² the material or real part deals with the objects that can be rationally and systematically thought about or cognized. Within the material part of philosophy – Kant also calls this the “real system of philosophy”¹³ – there is a further dichotomy between 1) “theoretical philosophy”, or, “the philosophy of nature”, which concerns the “principles of nature” and their practical applications, and 2) “practical philosophy”, or, the philosophy of “morals”,¹⁴ concerning moral laws and the idea of freedom. Kantian critical philosophy, also called pure or transcendental philosophy, occupies an important place in this comprehensive system of philosophy. Critical

¹¹ “Das System der Vernunftkenntnis durch Begriffe”. The definition of philosophy given by Kant, whereas not so unusual in his time, is quite different from ours, due to its so general extension: “Philosophy applies to everything cognizable” (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790-1791?” 28:532). It encompasses nearly the whole body of human knowledge, and claims to survey all the aspects of life. Thus, in Kant's terminology, physics and “natural philosophy” often could be synonyms while psychology is called “philosophy of human nature”. Thus, it is necessary to investigate Kant's “philosophy” against a wider intellectual picture rather than merely within a history of philosophy reconstructed under the present definition of the discipline. I shall embody this methodological reflection in the second chapter of my thesis. In his 1792 logic lectures, Kant maintains the definitions of philosophy in the *CJ* – “A cognition of reason through concepts is called philosophical. Thus a system through concepts is philosophy” (*Lectures on Logic*, “Dohna-Wundlacken Logic, 1790s”, 697, p. 435). He also points out the popular trend in his time that “regards philosophy as the complex of several sciences”, which included “the 7 so-called liberal arts: (1.) grammar, (2.) rhetoric, (3.) dialectic, (4.) arithmetic, (5.) music, (6.) geometry, (7.) astronomy” (*ibid.*, 699-700, p. 437).

¹² It is worth mentioning that Kant's definition of logics in the *CPR* is not exactly the same. Logics is defined as “the science of the rules of the understanding” (*CPR*, B76-B80); “General logic deals only with that form of the understanding which can be imparted to the presentation” (*CPR*, B80). It has two kinds: general logic and special logic; general logic can be further divided into two: pure and applied; “pure general logic relates to applied general logic as pure morality relates to the doctrine proper of virtue”.

¹³ In the second Introduction of the *CJ*, Kant omits the distinction between formal and material or real philosophy. He only mentions “the system of philosophy” instead of the “the real system of philosophy” (“divided into theoretical and practical”). However, as he still keeps “logic” apart from “the system of philosophy”, it can be inferred that the distinction is still valid.

¹⁴ Compared with his contemporary philosophers, Kant has a very narrow definition of the concept “practical”. He constrains it exclusively within moral philosophy. Kant suggests the practical dimension of the former (theoretical philosophy), namely its practical propositions, better described as “technical” (*technische*) in order to distinguish it from the latter (*CJ*, “First Introduction” 20:200). “Propositions that are called practical in mathematics or natural science should properly be named technical, for these sciences are not concerned with the determination of the will. These propositions indicate only the manifold-of the possible action-that is sufficient to produce a certain effect, and are therefore just as theoretical as are all propositions asserting the connection of the cause [at issue] with an effect” (*CPR*, A47n).

philosophy is not in a part-whole relationship with the system of philosophy in general.¹⁵ It might be useful to compare it to a mirror for reflection. Its obligation is to develop an examination of the cognitive powers (*Erkenntnisvermögen*)¹⁶ which determine all “rational cognitions” (*Vernunftbegriff*) that make all philosophy possible, and to investigate its pure concepts and a priori principles instead of the diverse concepts and empirical principles that are then pursued by the special branches of philosophy (such as natural philosophy, i.e. science). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that critical philosophy mirrors the dichotomy either of the comprehensive system of philosophy in general or that of “the real system of philosophy”, which both are dichotomized according to subject matter or domain.

In the *Logic Lectures*, Kant argues that the central questions from different branches of philosophy, such as metaphysics, ethics, theology, and anthropology, can be essentially rendered into a single anthropological one related to the question “what is man”,¹⁷ and consequently that the subdivision of philosophy necessarily presupposes the different powers or faculties (*Vermögen*) of the human soul/mind.¹⁸ Specifically, if philosophy as the “system of rational cognition through concepts” is essentially the product of human higher cognitive powers – namely the “ability [*Vermögen*] to cognize a priori through concepts” (*CJ*, “First Introduction”, 20:201) – then the above-mentioned dichotomy of the system of philosophy should necessarily reflect the trichotomous division of human cognitive powers. A tension arises.

Kant's framework of transcendental philosophy essentially involves an isomorphic

¹⁵ “For though a critique of pure reason contains a philosophical inquiry into the possibility of such cognition, it does not belong to a system of philosophy as a part of it, but outlines and examines the very idea of such a system in the first place.” (*CJ*, “First Introduction”, 20:195)

¹⁶ On the distinction of the higher cognitive powers, see *CPR*, A131/B170.

¹⁷ “The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions: 1. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope? 4. What is man? Metaphysics answers the first question, morals the second, religion the third, and anthropology the fourth. Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one” (*Lectures On Logic*, “The Jäsche Logic, 1800”, 25, p. 585). “One could call everything anthropology, because the three former questions [Question of Metaphysics: What can I know? Question of Moral philosophy: What should I do? Question of Religion: What may I hope] refers to the latter [Question of Anthropology: What is man]” (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790s”, 28:533-534).

¹⁸ This idea of Kant's can be dated back to 1770s, before the critical period. “If we want to subdivide *philosophia*, we have to ‘presuppose that the activities of our soul consist of cognition, feeling, and desire. The science which deals with the use of the understanding is *logica*, which discusses the universal objects of the understanding is *metaphysica*, which deals with corporeal objects is *physica*, which deals with feeling is *aesthetica*, and the science which has to do with our actions and desires is called morals or *philosophia practica*.” (*Lectures On Logic*, “The Blomberg Logic, 1770s”, 31, p. 19)

structure between philosophical domains and human faculties, which raises a dilemma. If it follows the dichotomy of the real system of philosophy defined by its domains, then “theoretical philosophy” or “the philosophy of nature” finds the “understanding” as its contributor, while “practical philosophy” or the philosophy of “morals” finds it in practical reason. With the first and second *Critiques*, Kant has already exhausted a priori principles in respect of the application of these two powers in their respective domains (*Gebiete*), which together comprise the whole body of philosophy, thus leaving no intact and legitimate “domain” uncriticised. In any case, critical philosophy should have fulfilled its “superior” destiny of the pursuit of pure concepts and a priori principles within an adequate dichotomous structure.¹⁹ In 1783, when Kant had finished the first *Critique* and not yet articulated the second, a third *Critique* devoted exclusively to the power of judgment would have sounded suspicious, or at least unnecessary within the dichotomy of transcendental philosophy. Unsurprisingly, Kant confidently compared his critical philosophy to a well-established machine: “in a word, the machine is there, complete, and all that needs to be done is to smooth its parts, or to oil them as to eliminate friction, without which, I grant, the thing will stand still” (*Correspondence*, 10:339).

However, besides the above-mentioned dilemma, Kant had buried another trichotomous seed from the very beginning in one central argument in the *CPR*, namely, the tripartite pattern of each class of the twelve categories. When the redundancy of the third category, which naturally “arises out of the union of the first with the second [in each group]”, was proposed, and a “change in the system” was suggested by Kant’s contemporary in 1784, he spared no effort in justifying the necessity of the trichotomy in the “system of categories” (*Correspondence*, 10:366-10:367). Therefore with the trichotomy of the higher cognitive powers on which critical philosophy claims to be based, the regular employment of tripartite transcendental arguments in the *CPR* and an initial dichotomous system of transcendental philosophy, an inevitable tension was generated. In spite of being a potential chasm in transcendental philosophy, this tension nevertheless leads to a new development

¹⁹ “The cause of this **superiority** lies precisely in this: Transcendental philosophy deals with concepts that are to refer to their objects a priori.” (*CPR*, B175/A135)

in Kant's transcendental "clarification", providing the condition for the accomplishment of a third *Critique*, which finally solves the dichotomy-trichotomy dilemma. Mature pure philosophy has to be trichotomous, as Kant claims in 1790 in the introduction of the *CJ*:

That my divisions in pure philosophy almost always turn out tripartite has aroused suspicion. Yet that is in the nature of the case. If a division is to be made a priori, then it will be either analytic or synthetic. If it is analytic, then it is governed by the principle of contradiction and hence is always bipartite. If it is synthetic, but is to be made on the basis of a priori concepts (rather than, as in mathematics, on the basis of the intuition corresponding a priori to the concept), then we must have what is required for a synthetic unity in general, namely, (1) a condition, (2), something conditioned, (3) the concept that arises from the union of the conditioned with its conditioned; hence the division must of necessity be a trichotomy. (*CJ*, 5:198n)

"The third" in pure philosophy provides unity. This idea echoes the argument for "the system of categories" in 1784, that the third category provides the occasion for the union of the other two.²⁰ By the same token, it is natural for "the third" cognitive power, namely judgment, to provide ground for the union of the other two. However, from 1784 to 1790 there was still a long way to go before Kant eventually realized the potentiality of the third higher cognitive power.

6.2 The Heteronomous and Ambiguous Power of Judgment

6.2.1 Power of Judgment before the *CJ*

The "power of judgment" (*Urteilkraft*) and "judgment" (*Urteil*) are terms that occur frequently in Kant's transcendental philosophy, but nevertheless lack clarity due to the fact that he had established a vast pedigree of judgments (with multiple classification of the specific usage of the power of judgment) and attributed to its species various functions, concrete applications and conditional affinities with other powers.²¹

²⁰ Kant had maintained this view ever since. For example, in his lectures on metaphysics in the post-critical period he remarks, "in every function the categories are so ordered that the third is composed out of the two preceding ones, e.g., the community of concepts presupposes two substances, with cause and effect, and connects them to a third, namely change-cause and effect. Thus reality, connected with negation, provides limitation. Thus totality is =a plurality that is concurrently unity. Thus necessity is a possibility, from which actuality can be inferred" (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, "Metaphysics Vigilantius (K3) 1794-95", 29:988).

²¹ For instance, according to Paul Guyer there are six main forms of reflective judgment: "reflective judgment on the systematicity of the laws of nature; aesthetic judgment on beauty in nature and decorative art (art without rational content), on the sublime, and on fine art (art with rational content); reflective judgment of organisms; and reflective judgment on nature itself as a system, that is, nature as a purposive system of objects in contrast to the laws of nature as a system"

Despite the complex classification and occasional amendments, some stable characteristics of the power of judgment are found in Kant's writing:

- 1) The power of judgment is one of the three high cognitive powers, parallel to understanding and reason;
- 2) The power of judgment in general is the faculty of subsuming, that is, an ability to subsume the particular under the universal.²² Hence, to make a judgment means to judge A (the particular) according to B (the universal). For any specific judgment there must always be present a "universal" (as the rule, principle, law, etc.²³). "A" can be any particular given fact, whether it is a concept or an intuition, but "B" cannot be an empirical fact. The power of Judgment is to associate a particular with a universal principle, rule or law, etc., but not to associate two matters of fact or two intuitions (which is the imagination's function). So, for example, when one asserts that: (a) it is not raining, according to (b) the observation that there are no ripples on the lake, then one is not making a "judgment" in the terms of Kant's transcendental philosophy;
- 3) The second aspect necessarily implies another characteristic of judgment, namely that the power of judgment necessitates "the universal", which is present as rule, principle, law, etc. In the first and second *Critiques*, a heteronomous power of judgment, which functions according to the universal principles legitimated by understanding and reason, has never fallen short. Through a close review of pre-*CJ* transcendental philosophy one can find not only that the question of autonomy of judgment is never at issue, but also that the actual role of judgment as a parallel higher cognitive power (to the other two) is rather uncertain and ambiguous. However, it is not the case that Kant ignores any treatment of the power of judgment before the third *Critique*, but rather that the power of judgment in the former *Critiques*, as a coordinate power, does not receive equal status within his transcendental philosophy.

(Guyer, 2009, p. 84).

²² Kant made this idea clear in many places – "If understanding as such is explicated as our power of rules, then the power of judgment is the ability to subsume under rules" (*CPR*, A132/B171); "The power of judgment, the faculty of subsuming..." (*Lectures on Logic*, "Dohna-Wundlacken Logic, 1790s", 693, p. 431); "The power of judgment is the faculty of representing the particular as contained under the universal, of the faculty of subsumption" (*ibid.*, 703, p. 442); "Judgment in general is the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal" (*CJ*, 5:179).

²³ "The universal" in Kant's sense can be a rule, a principle or a law, etc. "If the universal (the rule, principle, law) is given, then judgment, which subsumes the particular under it..." (*CJ*, Introduction IV, 5:179)

Insofar as an autonomous power of judgment is surplus and unnecessary in a dichotomous system of transcendental philosophy, the legitimacy of a transcendental critique of this specific higher cognitive power is not self-evident. A further critique of the power of judgment, in order to analyse its a priori principles, is possible only after or alongside the establishment of its autonomy or “inventiveness” in Deleuze’s term (1983, p. 58), viz., the capability of legislating a priori principles. The twofold task motivates the creation of the power of a reflective judgment. In the next section I review in detail the evolution of the role of the power of judgment in Kant’s dynamical project of transcendental critical thinking, in order to prove that the establishment of an autonomous power of judgment (namely, *reflective judgement*) is fundamentally significant for the integration of transcendental philosophy as a whole and manifests the maturity of Kant’s system.

6.2.2 Judging Reason: The Understanding-Judgment Ambiguity

___In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant attributes two basic functions to the power of judgment: a) subsumption to laws (*CPR*, A132/B171), and b) bringing given cognitions to the unity of apperception (*CPR*, B142).²⁴

In both cases, judgment plays the role of a “mediator” or “medium”, compatible with the general ability of judgment, viz., an ability to subsume the particular under the universal. This instrumental conception of judgment (without “spontaneity”), which is a main focus of the first *Critique*, is heteronomous and subordinated to “the universal” legislated by the power of the understanding. Besides the clearly subordinate role as a coordinate faculty to the understanding, Kant’s usage of the term “judgment” also suffers from ambiguity in the first *Critique*. Although he admits the affinity between these two higher cognitive powers (i.e., the parallel between categories or pure concepts of the understanding and different species of judgments²⁵), under some circumstances he blurs the distinction between the

²⁴ “A judgment is nothing but a way of bringing given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception.” (*CPR*, B142)

²⁵ Investigating the functions of judgments, e.g. how the power of judgment actually works, leads to the discovery of the categories, namely, pure concepts of understanding. Kant argues, “in every judgment there is a concept that [comprises and thus] holds for many [presentations], and, among them, comprise also a given presentation that is referred directly to the object” (*CPR*, A68/B93); and, “all judgments are functions of unity among our presentation”, “therefore, we can find all of

power of judgment and reason. Even worse, he sometimes, in a shorthand style, equates the power of judgment to understanding. For example, he writes: "This division of the categories has been generated systematically from a common principle, viz., our ability to judge (which is equivalent to our ability to think)" (*CPR*, A80/B106); and, "all acts of the understanding can be reduced to judgments, the *understanding* as such can be presented as a power of judgment" (*ibid.*, A69/ B94).

Due to this unsettled boundary between the two distinguishing powers, neither is the necessity of a particular critique of judgment possible, nor is the legitimacy of power of judgment as an equal valid higher cognitive power justified. One will not be surprised to find that under the title "transcendental doctrine of the power of judgment" (*ibid.*, A148/B188), Kant actually analyses the categories of understanding. He claims:

Thus the *Analytic of Principles* will be a canon solely for the *power of judgment*, teaching it to apply to appearances the concepts of understanding, which contain the condition for a priori rules. Because of this I shall, in taking as my topic what are in fact the principles of understanding, employ the name *doctrine of the power of judgment*, which more accurately designate this task. (*CPR*, B171/A132)

This understanding-judgment ambiguity is not a misuse due to the haste in the writing of the first *Critique*, because Kant still maintains this ambiguity in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*, which is often regarded as a concise elucidation and updating of the *CPR*. There he provides further explanation:

Experience consists of intuitions, which belong to sensibility, and of judgments, which are solely the understanding's business. (*Prolegomena*, 4:304)

To sum this up: the business of the senses is to intuit; that of the understanding, to think. To think, however, is to unite representations in a consciousness... The unification of representations in a consciousness is judgment. Therefore, thinking is the same as judging or as relating representations to judgments in general. (*ibid.*)

The argument is clear enough: the business of understanding is to think; to think is to unite representations in a consciousness. Since judgment is the unification of

the functions of the understanding if we can exhibit completely the function of unity in judgments". (*CPR*, A69/B94) Again, "The same function that gives unity to the various presentations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various presentations in an intuition. This unity—speaking generally—is called pure concept of understanding". (*CPR*, A79/B105)

representations in a consciousness,²⁶ “thinking is the same as judging or relating representations to judgments in general”. By reducing all the acts of understanding into “judgments”, Kant successfully transforms the power of judgment into an occasional application of understanding and cancels out the necessity for judgment to be seen as an equally valid higher cognitive power, and consequently eliminates the possibility of a critique of it. In the *Prolegomena*, as in the *CPR*, an analysis of the power of judgment is an exclusive approach to discovering the pure concepts of understanding, namely the categories. After all, “all of the synthetic principles a priori are exhibited completely and according to a principle, namely that of the faculty for judging in general (which constitutes the essence of experience with respect to the understanding)” (ibid., 4:308).

Before the third *Critique*, Kant does not actually attribute an equal status to the power of judgment. Because judgment is considered a coordinate power, it would be meaningless if it were separated from the other two powers (reason and understanding). Understanding, or speculative reason, and judgment can work well enough when being forged into a “judging reason”. This is exactly the term Kant applies to introduce the first *Critique* to his contemporaries – “the critique of an a priori judging reason” (*Correspondence*, 10:340).²⁷

In any case, reason can be a very broad concept in Kant's philosophy. In his lectures on logic, after classifying the faculties – namely, “the faculty of thinking of rules” (the understanding, “our power of concepts” (CJ, 5:266)), “the faculty of subsuming” (the power of judgment), and the faculty “of inferring what pertains to something” (reason) (*Lectures on Logic*, “Dohna-Wundlacken Logic, 1790s” 693, p. 431)²⁸ – Kant argues, “reason, the faculty of inferring; this involves judgments, and these cannot occur without concepts [of understanding]” (ibid., 703, p. 441).

6.3 Coining Reflective Judgment: A Judgment with Autonomy

²⁶ One can recall that in the *CPR* Kant talks about the other major role of the power of judgments which is to bring given cognitions to the unity of apperception. “A judgment is nothing but a way of bringing given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception.” (*CPR*, B142)

²⁷ In a letter to Christian Garve, on August 7, 1783.

²⁸ This lecture was given on April 23, 1792, a few years after the publication of the *CJ*. Arguably, there is overlap between the ability of subsuming the particular under the universal and the ability of inferring what pertains to something.

The Understanding-Judgment ambiguity leaves room for conceptual clarification. Further, the tension within the isomorphic structure of transcendental philosophy contains an intrinsic demand for solution, and inevitably induces the self-accomplishment of Kant's system. As mentioned before, the twofold task of the *CJ* (to establish an autonomous judgment and simultaneously to accomplish a critique of it), is first of all of great significance for the integration of Kant's transcendental philosophy. It is not merely derived from a subjective fanaticism or the alleged "private psychological motivations" of an "architectonic psychopath" (McLaughlin, 1990, pp. 145-148), but rather the necessary self-accomplishment and evolution of a dynamical philosophical system as a whole, whose fundamental ordering principle is the isomorphic structure between philosophy and human faculties.

In this section, the resource for conceiving the vital concept of the *CJ*, namely reflective judgment, is to be investigated. Kant has in fact developed conceptions, such as the regulative use of ideas of pure reason and the inferential judgment, which are later to be attributed to reflective judgment.

6.3.1 Reason's Natural Propensity

In the first *Critique*, Kant points out "the special fact: that reason has... a natural propensity²⁹ to overstep this realm's [the realm of possible experience] boundary; and that transcendental ideas are just as natural to human reason as the categories are to the understanding";³⁰ this propensity thereby traps us in irresistible transcendental illusions

²⁹ Kant argues about "natural propensity" in the *Religion within Reason* (1793). By "natural propensity", Kant means a subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination when at the same time it can also be considered as a character of the species and thus universal for all human beings. It pertains to the faculty of desire, not the faculty of reason. Kant differentiates the different levels of the faculty of desire into inclination, propensity, instinct, etc. Inclination "presupposes acquaintance with the object of desire" (*Religion*, 6:29n). Propensity does not need to presuppose acquaintance with the object of desire and "a propensity can indeed be innate yet may be represented as not being such" (*ibid.*, 6:29). Propensity is "the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination (habitual desire, conupiscentia), insofar as this possibility is contingent for humanity in general" (*ibid.*, 6:29). When a propensity is universal for the human being as a character of the species, Kant calls this kind the "natural propensity" (*ibid.*, 6:29). Between inclination and propensity there is instinct, which Kant defines as a felt need to desire an object of which no concept is needed. From Kant's usage of the concept of propensity, we can tell that "reason's natural propensity" is not a mature Kantian idea, the evolution of which also indicates the adjustments of Kantian transcendental philosophy.

³⁰ Kant expresses similar ideas in the section "On Transcendental Ideas", where he defines transcendental ideas as the pure concept of reason, in comparison with categories as the pure concepts of understanding. He argues that

(*CPR*, A642/B670). We cannot eliminate this peculiar nature of human reason. However, we must clarify these illusions in order to neutralize their influence on philosophy as far as possible, and “discover these powers' proper direction”, since “whatever has its basis in the nature of our powers must be purposive and be accordant with their correct use” (*CPR*, A643/B671). This special fact of reason leads Kant to affirm the regulative use of the transcendental ideas of pure reason (or the hypothetical use of reason).³¹

It is worth mentioning that in the former section, “On Transcendental Ideas”, he emphasizes that “objective use of the pure concepts of reason is always transcendent, whereas objective use of the pure concept of understanding must by its nature always be immanent, because it limits itself to possible experience alone” (*CPR*, A327). Transcendental ideas of reason concern “the absolute totality in the synthesis of conditions, and never ends except at what is unconditioned absolutely, i.e., in every reference... The concept of the absolute totality of conditions is not a concept usable in an experience, because no experience is unconditioned” (*CPR*, A326). In a sense, transcendental ideas imply something supersensible,³² and therefore “are transcendent and surpass the boundary of all experience; hence no object can ever occur in experience that would be adequate to a transcendental idea” (*CPR*, B384).

But now Kant argues that even the transcendental ideas of theoretical reason could still have a good and **immanent use**,³³ because “it is not the idea in itself but merely its use that can in regard to our entire possible experience be either overreaching (transcendent) or indigenous (immanent)” (*CPR*, A643/B671). In other words, transcendental ideas are unavoidable, but their consequence depends upon how we judge these ideas. Equating them to concepts of understanding and seeking for objective use of them leads to transcendental

transcendental ideas are “not arbitrarily invented” but “imposed by the nature of reason”. (*CPR*, B384)

³¹ Kant develops the idea of “regulative use” (of reason or of ideas) and distinguishes it from “constitutive use” at the end of his *CPR*. As Burnham and Young (2007, p. 151) explains: “By ‘regulative’ is meant something about the nature of the relation of the principle to its purported object. This principle assigns a task without anticipating the nature of the object to be found. Kant contrasts this with the dialectical principle (the major premise given above) which is termed ‘constitutive’ – this principle illegitimately claims in advance the nature of its object (the unconditioned totality) (A509B537).” They define the term “regulative” as, “of a principle (or concept or idea) that does not constitute the possibility of its object, but nevertheless ‘guides’ the activity of the faculty” (ibid. p. 190).

³² After all, “by an idea”, Kant already means “a necessary concept of reason for which no congruent object can be given in the senses” (*CPR*, A327/B383).

³³ Kant uses the term “idea” peculiarly for a concept of reason: “By an idea I mean a necessary concept of reason for which no congruent object can be given in the senses” (*CPR*, A327/B383).

illusions. Essentially, the matter of the regulative usage of ideas of reason can be reduced to a matter of the power of judgment. Thus, Kant claims: "Hence all errors of subreption are to be attributed always to a deficiency in the power of judgment, but never to the understanding or to reason" (*CPR*, A643/B671).

Kant does not have the concept of reflective judgment at this stage, but the idea that the correct use of pure reason's ideas rests on the right application of judgment has already implied a potential conceptual clarification or a critique on the power of judgment. Meanwhile, the so-called "natural propensity" and the regulative usage of ideas of reason will give way to the development of the concept of an autonomous reflective judgment in the third *Critique*, which finally brings a neat isomorphic structure between transcendental philosophy and human faculties.

In the 1786 essay *Orientation*, Kant again emphasizes the idea of "reason's need", a parallel idea to "reason's natural propensity" in the first *Critique*. More than having the natural but imprudent propensity to overreach, Kant tries to show that under some circumstances, reason is in righteous and constructive need of "at least think[ing] of something supersensible in a way which is serviceable to the experiential use of our reason" (*Orientation*, 8:137). He realizes that

by contrast, pure rational faith can never be transformed into knowledge by any natural data of reason and experience, because here the ground of holding true is merely subjective, namely a necessary need of reason (and as long as we are human beings it will always remain a need) to presuppose the existence of a highest being, but not to demonstrate it. A need of reason to be used in a way which satisfies it theoretically would be nothing other than a pure rational hypothesis, i.e. an opinion sufficient to hold something true on subjective grounds simply because one can never expect to find grounds other than these on which to explain certain given effects, and because reason needs a ground of explanation". (ibid., 8:141)

Kant confirms that it is possible for reason to sufficiently determine "according to a subjective principle" by "a means of orientation", in its special task, namely, thinking of the supersensible. Thus, he claims, "to orient oneself in thinking in general means: when objective principles of reason are insufficient for holding something true, to determine the matter according to a subjective principle" (ibid., 8:137n).

6.3.2 Reflective Judgment – A Result of the Conceptual Clarification

Kant argues in the *Orientation* that when we lack objective grounds but “are nevertheless necessitated to judge” (ibid., 8:138n), such as when we are necessitated to think certain ideas (e.g. the existence of God in respect of religious issues), this compulsion does not necessarily generate transcendental illusions if we correctly apply the power of judgment (*CPR*, A643/B671). Since a heteronomous and subordinate power of judgment acts only according to determinate principles legitimated by understanding and reason, it is meaningless to claim that “all errors of subreption are to be attributed always to a deficiency in the power of judgment, but never to the understanding or to reason” (ibid., A643/B671). Kant’s “means of orientation” for reason in its special task, namely to “determine the matter according to a subjective principle”, opens the door to an autonomous and reflective judgment, which can legitimate subjective principles for its own use, and thus engage the transcendental ideas.

In the introduction to the *CJ*, “IV. On Judgment as a Power that Legislates A Priori”, Kant makes one of the most important “clarifications” in his transcendental philosophy, the distinction between determinative judgment (*die bestimmende Urteilskraft*) and reflective judgment (*die reflektierende Urteilskraft*). First, Kant adheres to his former definition of the power of judgment as “the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal” (*CJ*, 5:179), but he specifies this as “judgment in general”. Second, by relegating the power of judgment, about which he has been talking in the first two *Critiques*, merely into a species of judgment in general,³⁴ he introduces a division between determinative and reflective judgment, and attributes to the latter a special autonomy. “Judgment is not merely an ability to subsume the particular under the universal (whose concept is given), but also, the other way round, an ability to find the universal for the particular” (ibid., 20:209).

This updating is crucial for the third *Critique*. The power of judgment is not only an instrumental power but also possesses spontaneity and can legislate the universal a priori

³⁴ For example, the power of judgment from *CPR* is degraded into “theoretical judgment”: “judgments [here, the pure aesthetic judgments] where it does not (as it does in theoretical judgments) merely have to subsume under objective concepts of the understanding, [so that] it is subject to a law, but where it is, subjectively, object to itself as well as law to itself” (*CJ*, 5:288).

principles – even if the universal it legislates is only subjective (has subjective necessity), as Kant is going to explicate later in the work. He also uses the term cognitive judgment to specify determinative judgment's adjunctive role in association with reason and understanding, so as to distinguish it from reflective judgment.

Therefore, in the case of a judgment that demands subjective universality, we are not dealing with a cognitive judgment, neither a theoretical one based on the concept of a nature as such, as given by the understanding, nor a (pure) practical one based on the idea of freedom, as given a priori by reason ... [The (aesthetic) reflective judgment] just as our judging of an object for the sake of cognition always has universal rules. (ibid., 5:208)

In order to distinguish between the understanding's ability "to think" and reason's ability to refer, (both is "to determine"³⁵), this new spontaneous and autonomous kind of power of judgment is attributed to the ability "to reflect", for which Kant has a detailed explanation in the first introduction of the *CJ*:

To reflect (or consider [*überlegen*]) is to hold given presentations up to, and compare them with, either other presentations or one's cognitive power [itself], in reference to a concept that this [comparison] makes possible. The reflective power of judgment [*Urteil*] is the one we also call the power of judging [*Beurteilung*] (*facultas diiudicandi*). (ibid., 20:211)

The definition of "to reflect" is rather obscure, but it is clear that the reflective ability of judgment makes little allowance for so-called objective reality, for its activities are mainly internalized comparison, between the presentations or between presentations and "one's cognitive power [itself]". By introducing a subtle clarification, the power of judgment gains its autonomy, and Kant does not hesitate to point out that the updated meaning is more proper for the power of judgment when conceived as one of the higher cognitive powers. He writes, "The reflective power of judgment is the one we also call the power of judging (*facultas diiudicandi*)", which inaugurates the transition of his transcendental philosophy from the previous dichotomy to the mature trichotomous form.

If the isomorphic structure between critical philosophy and human higher cognitive powers or faculties intrinsically defines the trichotomous form of Kant's transcendental philosophy, then the general problem of transcendental philosophy shared by the three *Critiques* justifies the systematicity of it. In section 36 of the *CJ*, Kant argues that insofar as

³⁵ "When we reflect (even animals reflect....), we need a principle just as much as we do when we determine." (*CJ*, "First introduction", 20:211)

aesthetic judgments of taste are synthetic,³⁶ the question of how they can lay claim to necessity, or require that everyone assent to them and be considered a priori, leads to “the general problem of transcendental philosophy: how are synthetic judgments possible a priori” (*CJ*, 5:289). By the same token, even if Kant does not directly spell it out, it is certain that reflective teleological judgment is also dealing with “the general problem” from another perspective, namely the synthetic teleological judgment of nature as a system or the totality of empirical laws that forms a system. Therefore, in the light of the same general problem, Kant integrates the *CJ* into the systematic whole of transcendental philosophy and at the same time justifies its own internal consistency, which has often been radically questioned because of the very distinct topics to which the two parts of the *CJ* are devoted. In any case, based on its providing fulfilment of the overall system, Kant claims in the *CJ*'s introduction to find a “territory” for the power of judgment and to establish judgment's legitimacy “as a power that legislates a priori”. Consequently, he expects to conclude his “entire critical enterprise” with the help of the *CJ*, which serves as a bridge across the chasm between the two domains of transcendental philosophy (*CJ*, 5:174-175).

6.3.3 Reflective Judgment and the Concept of Purpose

Following the above analysis of the genesis of Kant's reflective judgment, I now propose a preliminary link between it and the concept of purpose. In the *CJ*, Kant defines “purposiveness” as “a priori principle” legitimated by the power of reflective judgment that is applicable to both the fields of art (in a narrow sense) in aesthetic Judgment, and nature in teleological judgment. The latter via the mediating concept “technic” (*Technik*)³⁷ is also deemed “art” (20:220)³⁸. To some extent, the ostensible consistency in the two parts of

³⁶ “... for they go beyond the concept of the object, and even beyond the intuition of the object, and add as a predicate to this intuition something that is not even cognition: namely [a] feeling of pleasure (or displeasure)” (*CJ*, p. 153).

³⁷ The notion “technic” and its subjective application defined by Kant sheds light on the art–nature relation: “[certain] objects of nature” (“*Gegenstände der Natur*”) also even “nature itself” (“*die Natur selbst*”) as a whole when viewed via the power of reflective judgment, are analogous to “art” (“*Kunst*”) and can be named “technic”. In a sense, the whole *CJ* is a study devoted to “technic”, or art by analogy - something being made according to certain purpose, (comparing the first *Critique*, to knowledge, the second to morality). The common tendency to split the *CJ* into a work part on aesthetics, part on philosophy of biology might stem from a projection which reflects our unchecked predisposition in favour of the contemporary discipline classification. (20:200)

³⁸ “But I shall henceforth use the term *technic* in other cases too, namely, where we merely judge [certain] objects of nature as if they were made possible through art. In those cases the judgments are neither theoretical nor practical (in the [proper] sense just discussed), because they determine nothing about the character of the object, nor about how to

the *CJ* thus can be regarded as manifesting in an integrated study devoted to “art” in a general sense. In fact, Kant’s concepts of art and purpose are deeply intertwined.

According to Kant, “art in general” (*Kunst überhaupt*) must be based on a “rational deliberation [*Vernunftüberlegung*]” rather than mechanical instinct. It has to be “a production through freedom, i.e. through a power of choice [*Willkür*] that based its acts on reason”. Precisely, “we say that it is a product of art, rather than of nature, i.e., that the cause which produced it was thinking of a purpose to which this object owes its form.” Therefore, (1) the concept of art in general postulates the concept of “purpose” and implies “a power of choice”, viz., a will. (2) The concept of art in general entails, instead of a mere logical and formal ground (merely knowing how to do), a real ground which serves as the cause of its actuality with also “a need for ...a mechanism”, (*CJ*, 5:303-4,) ³⁹. This “real ground [or basis, *Grund*]” as the cause of its actuality is the concept of “purpose” - “Art always presupposes a purpose in the cause (and its causality)” (*ibid.*, 5:311). Therefore, “art” is not simply synonymous with “the artificial”. Man made “certain lifting devices-e.g. a lever or an inclined plane...can produce their purpose-directed effect...can be used for purpose” but are not considered as “works of art” if “their [own] possibility does not require a reference to purposes”. (*ibid.*, 20:219) (3) Coherently, nature via reflective judgment is regarded as “technic” or by analogy art in general leads to the core concepts of **purpose and purposiveness**, which are assigned by Kant to the faculty of reflective judgment.

Here I reconstruct Kant’s argument on the basis of the symmetry of his tripartite isomorphic structure between higher cognitive powers and divisions of critical philosophy (20:245-246, 5:198).

A Re-constructed Kantian Argument from Tripartite Symmetry

A Kantian Formula: Power P⁴⁰ has its a priori principles in **higher cognitive Power H** (in its **concept of C**).

produce it; rather, in them we judge nature itself, though merely by analogy with an art, in its subjective relation to our cognitive power, rather than in its objective [objektiv] relation to objects [Gegenstände]”. (*CJ*, “First Introduction” 20:200)

³⁹ Kant reiterates the relevant idea when he analyses “fine art”, which has “as its essential condition something mechanical” and entails the concept of “purpose”. “for something must be thought, as purpose, since otherwise the product cannot be ascribed to any art at all, but would be a mere product of chance.” (*CJ*, 5:310)

⁴⁰ Powers or faculties (*Vermögen*) of the human soul/mind.

Proposition 1: **Power of cognition** has its a priori principles in **pure understanding** (in its **concept of nature**).

Proposition 2: **Power of desire** has its a priori principles in **pure reason** (in its **concept of freedom**)

By Analogy (not logically impeccable), an inference from Kantian “Symmetry” is expected to be true.

Proposition 3: **The feeling of pleasure and displeasure** has its a priori principles in **judgment** (in the **concept of purpose**).

Insofar as the concepts of purpose and purposiveness are used for explanation, the *CJ* is a work engaging with **teleological explanation**. However, Kantian philosophical teleology distinguishes itself from theological teleology, first of all in a fundamental assumption – it is a theory devoted to the study of the use of a peculiar higher cognitive power. I will come back to more detailed analysis of Kantian teleology in the comparative analysis (Chapter Nine).

To conclude this chapter, I have defended Kant against the charge of being an "architectonic psychopath" and argued that the mechanism of his systematization of critical philosophy lies in his idea of conceptual clarification. I have pointed out, in light of Kant's conception of an isomorphic structure between philosophy and human faculties, a systemic tension initiates Kant's need for a third *Critique* and drives the evolution of Kant's notion of “the power of judgment”. I have argued that the understanding-judgment ambiguity in the *CPR* and Kant's provisional idea of reason's natural propensity constitute the elements for his coining of reflective judgment which provides a solution to the problem of systemic asymmetry and leads to a tidy critical system. Finally I orient Kant's newly coined reflective judgment to his concept of purpose, as a preliminary preparation for the unfolding of the coming comparison. In the following comparative study, I argue that Kant's dichotomization of the power of judgment into reflective judgment and determinative judgment in the name of conceptual clarification is comparable to Zhu Xi's hermeneutic operation on investigation of things. Moreover, I further show that, in confronting the metaphysical challenge from the supersensible or the formless, Kant's reflective judgment and Zhu Xi's investigation of things finally lead to a similar theoretical destination— a moral teleology.

Chapter Seven Reforming the Tradition: Zhu Xi's Investigation of Things in Neo-Confucianism

In this chapter I first analyze the peculiar relationship between Chinese hermeneutics and the intellectual tradition. I then explain the important function of Chinese hermeneutics in passing down and developing thinking. Next I examine the extent to which the mechanism of reforming Confucianism can be linked to this peculiar tradition. My focus then shifts to a concrete case: the evolution of the doctrine of investigation of things (*gewu*) of *The Great Learning*, in which both the superficial and deep hermeneutic operations conducted by Zhu Xi and his Neo-Confucian predecessors are expounded. To conclude, I reveal some essential characteristics of Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism and of Chinese traditional thought in general in regard to the mechanism for intellectual development.

7.1 Chinese Hermeneutics and Confucianism

If “hermeneutics is the systematic study of texts — and philosophical texts in particular,” (Rescher, 2007, p.1), by the term “Chinese hermeneutics” I refer to the continuous systematic study of the ancient texts throughout Chinese history. The Chinese thinking tradition often gives the impression of deep indulgence in hermeneutic methods, particularly the “first order art” of hermeneutics.¹ Both Neo-Daoism and Neo-Confucianism, as new intellectual developments, largely rested on the dominant hermeneutic practices via commentaries and re-interpretation of the pre-Qin classical texts, rather than on the composition of new works, as seen in modern Western intellectual developments. In fact, almost all the major Chinese philosophical texts as well as the entire terminology commonly used in the Chinese thinking tradition are somewhat rooted in the

¹ Bjørn Ramberg and Kristin Gjesdal (2005, SEP) distinguish two senses covered by the term “hermeneutics”: 1) “the first order art” or the practice of interpretation, and 2) “the second order theory of understanding and interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions” or “[the] theory of interpretation”.

pre-Qin period – often called the axial age of Chinese civilization.² Moreover, it is no mere coincidence, as Kathleen Wright (2015, pp.674-675, 681) observes, that even contemporary New Confucianism, as “a multifaceted philosophical movement”, showed an immediate affinity for Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics and sought for methodological justification in his “concept of tradition”³.

Generally speaking, there is a conventional distinction between *xiaoxue* 小学 (literally, the primary learning) and *daxue* 大学 (literally, the great learning) in traditional Chinese scholarship. The former is a syncretism of philology, grammarology, historical phonology, textual criticism, etc.; the latter can be roughly understood as the study of thinking – or in a sense, philosophy. The primary learning first flourished due to the exegesis of the Study of [Confucian] Classics (*Jingxue*) in the Han dynasty. It originally focused on grammarology and paleography. The realm of primary learning was extended throughout history when phonology, textual criticism, bibliographical study⁴ and other sub-disciplines were gradually added. Primary learning was considered a necessary and indispensable preparation for higher study. Due to the traditional Chinese educational system, which placed the classics in the center, primary learning and great learning were integrated in the typical scholar, who was supposed to be a competent hermeneutician before claiming to be a thinker. Since the Han Dynasty, this classics-centric education has determined the idiosyncratic hermeneutic spirit and practice in traditional Chinese scholarship.

The study of ancient Chinese texts, or “Chinese hermeneutics”, insofar as

² Ge Zhaoguang in his influential *Zhongguo Sixiang Shi* (*An Intellectual History of China*) borrows Jaspers’s concept “axial age”, and argues that Chinese axial age is “from sixth century BCE to third century BCE”, namely the time of *Zixue* (pre-Qin hundred schools), which begins from when “‘the art of the *dao* was torn apart by the world’ as depicted by the chapter ‘*Tianxia* (The World)’ in the *Zhuangzi*,” and “in this age of disunity in thinking, the Chinese began not to totally depend on the divine beings and self-evident truths but to use their own reason.” (Ge, 2001, pp.69-70) MTS

³ As Kathleen Wright points out: 1) “scholars writing on China’s ‘classical learning’ (*jingxue*) from around the world often acknowledge the help of Gadamer’s theory of philosophical hermeneutics in their books”. (2015, p.674) “‘overseas’ New Confucians such as On-Cho Ng and Alan K. L. Chan try to preserve ‘traditional Confucianism’ by way of Gadamer’s hermeneutics, starting in the 1980s” (p.675). “Where Ng’s concern in 2000 is to advance a profoundly culturally conservative New Confucianism in the Chinese speaking world with the help of Gadamer’s hermeneutics (and later without it)” (p.681).

⁴ *Muluxue* 目录学 is a Chinese traditional scholastic study. Its goal is conventionally summarized into “辨章学术，考镜源流”，which roughly means, to classify the scholarship and to estimate and analyze the research sources. Therefore, it’s not only the study of catalogues, as the name might suggest, but also a comprehensive study devoted to understanding the different traditions in the intellectual history, the transmission of knowledge, etc.

“hermeneutics is the systematic study of texts” (Rescher, 2007, p.1) is, according to Sun Qinshan (2001, pp.4-5),⁵ divided into two basic schools: *kaoju* 考据 (literally, investigation and confirmation — I will call this “evidential study”) and *yili* 义理 (meaning and understanding — I will call this “philosophical study”). The former approaches ancient texts by the investigation of the language, inscriptions, names and institutions and so forth, so as to grasp the original meaning of the text and to reveal its original state. By contrast, the latter is usually free from rigorous linguistic investigation and evidential confirmation, but emphasizes the coherent interpretation of the text in order to convey one’s own understanding of it. A (radical) case is the following bold saying from the Neo-Confucian philosopher Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1192): “it is the ‘Six Classics’ (*liujing*) that comment on me”.⁶ Although these two methodologies are often synthesized in the works of a particular scholar, generally speaking the scholarship of the Han dynasty (represented by the “Old Text” school) is characterized by its achievement in “evidential study”, while the scholarship of the Song dynasty (represented by Neo-Confucianism) is committed mainly to “philosophical study”. In a sense, the scholastic methodology of the Song dynasty largely resembles the previous Neo-Daoism of the Wei and Jin dynasties, which promoted “the study of commentaries (*yishu zhixue* 义疏之学)” and “was fond of talking meaning and understanding (*yili*)”.

My study of Neo-Daoist philosophical method in Chapter Four supports Sun’s points. The synthesis of Daoism and Confucianism by the Neo-Daoists is grounded in a positive hermeneutic method: a reinterpretation of the Confucian text so as to assimilate Confucian

⁵ MTS: “中国古文献学史虽然流派众多, 但从基本倾向上分只有两派: 一是考据学派, 二是义理学派. 前者从语言文字, 名物典制等的考据入手, 以求掌握古文献的本来意义, 恢复古文的原始面貌. 后者往往摆脱语言文字, 为我所用, 穿凿附会, 甚至仁义篡改, 强就我意. 陆九渊所谓‘六经注我’, 确切地说明了义理学派的特点...但这只是就基本倾向而言的, 具体到某一学者, 往往不那么单纯, 可能两种情况兼而有之, 只是侧重点有所不同罢了...魏晋南北朝时期, 北方承汉朝古文学考据之余绪, 南方受玄学影响较大, 出现义疏之学, 喜谈义理, 形成南北对峙的局面...宋元明疑辨思潮兴起, 以理学为代表的义理之学为主, 同时考据学也在不断发展...汉学(以古文经学的考据传统为代表)和宋学(以义理之学为代表)代表着两种不同的传统.”

⁶ Lu was Zhu Xi’s major rival in Neo-Confucianism. Lu, succeeded by Wang Shouren, represented the school of *Xinxue* (the study of hear-mind), which became dominant in the middle and late Ming dynasty. The School of Study of Heart-mind is the most important opponent to Cheng-Zhu School of Study of Principle (*Lixue*) or the Neo-Confucianism orthodox.

doctrines to Daoist thinking. Yang's description of Guo Xiang's hermeneutic method of "excess meaning beyond the denotation" (in Guo's Commentary on the *Zhuangzi*) as "an art of releasing the potential of a text", as well as Feng Youlan's investigation of the Neo-Daoist creative interpretation of the *Analects*, both confirm the Neo-Daoist positive hermeneutic methodology, which was inherited by the later Neo-Confucians in the Song dynasty. I argue that the division of "evidential study" and "philosophical study" refers, respectively, to the negative and positive (or creative) dimensions of Chinese hermeneutics. To some extent, these two dimensions or so-called two schools correspond to the division between primary learning and great learning.⁷

Confucianism has always been the leading practitioner in Chinese hermeneutics, not only because of its fundamentalist spirit – it was regarded as the cultural conservative among the pre-Qin Schools and the rationalizer of the past Western Zhou institution and the ancient teachings – but also because of its scholastic orientation and the necessary requirement of passing down its erudite intellectual heritage. Sima Tan's comment in his essay "On the Six Lineages of Thought" (*"Lun liujia zhiyao"*) demonstrates this need from a negative perspective:

The Confucians take the six arts as their standards. The scriptures and commentaries on the six arts are innumerable. Successive generations have not been able to master their scholarship, while the present generation is not able to penetrate their rituals. (de Bary & Bloom, 1999, p.280)⁸

Because Confucianism has been regarded as the orthodoxy for a very long historical period, the study of the Confucian classics, as Sun argues, naturally became the focus of the study of ancient texts (or Chinese hermeneutics) in general (Sun, 2001, p. 4).⁹ By analyzing Ng's and Chan's "essays that relate Gadamer's hermeneutics to Confucianism", Wright demonstrates in her "comparison of hermeneutics and Confucianism" that Confucian

⁷ It is useful to keep in mind that the difference is not a logical one (for instance, as between realism and non-realism), reflecting rather a disagreement on the priority of methodology. When it comes to a particular historical scholar, one often finds the two dimensions are integrated, only with a difference in the degree of emphasis.

⁸ Sima Tan's comments echoes the criticism in the *Mozi*—"a few generations cannot exhaust all his [Confucius'] learning; a grown man cannot practice all his rituals" (MT: "累寿不能尽其学,当年不能行其礼"). See the *Mozi*, Chapter "Feiru (Anti-Confucianism)."

⁹ MTS: "中国古文献学史以经学史为中心...由于儒家思想被奉为正统, 经学也就自然成古文献学乃至整个学术的中心, 因为经学史也就成了古文献学史的中心."

hermeneutics is a complex of various forms, allowing both conservative preservation and critical reformation of the tradition (pp.686-687). In other words, Confucianism clearly embodies the negative and positive (or creative) dimensions of Chinese hermeneutics in general.

[Ng] fails to mention that these other forms of “Confucian hermeneutics” allow the Confucian interpreter to take a critical stand toward and even reform the Confucian tradition. Instead Ng universalizes Li’s¹⁰ seventeenth century “orthodox” Confucian hermeneutics and equates it with “Confucian hermeneutics” as a whole, including the twelfth century Neo-Confucian hermeneutics of Zhu Xi and the twentieth and twenty-first century hermeneutics of his own New Confucianism. This then is the “Confucian hermeneutics” that Ng likens to Gadamer’s twentieth century Western hermeneutics... This kind of “Confucian hermeneutics” presupposes that Confucius [and Confucians] can only be a “transmitter” of tradition and cannot also be a “reformer” of tradition. What Chan’s “Gadamer–Habermas debate” about Confucius is all about, however, is whether there is not also another kind of “Confucian hermeneutics” that allows Confucius and Confucians to be both transmitters and reformers of tradition... Chan is right to relate Gadamer’s hermeneutics instead to a modern “conservative” Confucianism that develops within itself the capacity to critique ideology and to reform and transform itself from within by attentively questioning the preconceptions and prejudices that inform the canonical texts and traditional ritual practices (*li*) of Confucianism. (Wright, 2015, p.677, p.680, p.687)

Technically, Confucian hermeneutics has developed an ingenious system of textual arrangement with a classical multi-layered (often fourfold) structure, which guarantees both negative and positive hermeneutic aspects. This structure consists of *jing* 经, *zhuan* 传, *zhu* 注, *shu* 疏. Generally speaking, *jing* refers to the pre-Qin classics; *zhuan* refers to the pre-Qin commentary and interpretation of the classics; *zhu* refers to the commentary, notes on and interpretation of the classics, and their original interpretation; *shu* refers to the commentary, notes on and interpretation of the *zhu* or earlier *shu*. The multiple hermeneutic layers appeared in the Han dynasty scholars’ study of the ancient texts and were enhanced in the Tang dynasty. No later than the Song dynasty — the heyday of Neo-Confucianism — a fourfold multi-layered hermeneutic arrangement of the ancient texts appeared. One of the most ambitious collections of Confucian literature assembled in the early sixteenth century, *Shisan Jing Zhushu* (a collection of commentaries and interpretations of the Thirteen Confucian Classics), is an excellent exemplification of this Chinese hermeneutic technique.

¹⁰ Li is “the most culturally conservative Confucian interpreter in the Qing dynasty.”(ibid., p.677)

This multi-layered (often fourfold) structure keeps the “historical traces” of the evolution of the thinking from different historical periods, while at the same time leaving room for up-to-date creativity. Therefore, the regeneration and reinterpretation of texts via hermeneutics is not only justified theoretically by appealing to a positive dimension of hermeneutics but is also secured by substantial techniques at the material level. Moreover, this multi-layered structure allows collective effort on the same text and provides a platform for trans-spatiotemporal critical correspondence. In a sense, it creates a “hermeneutic circle” that transcends the textual part-whole relationship and reaches an existential level by confronting individual interpreters with the tradition, stimulating the interplay between individuality and cultural heritage. It leaves room for both the positive and negative hermeneutic methodologies, namely “evidential study” and “philosophical study”.

The mechanism for remodeling Neo-Confucianism has to be explained in this hermeneutic tradition. I will show that the elevation of the chapter “Great Learning” of the *Book of Rites* to the status of a classic in its own right, numbered among the authoritative Four Books by Zhu Xi, epitomizes the function of the hermeneutic method in the development of Chinese thinking, which in turn exemplifies Zhu Xi's philosophical novelty.

7.2 Re-discovery of the Investigation of Things and Zhu Xi's “Supplemental Hermeneutics”

7.2.1 The Shift in Confucian Primary Literature from Five Classics (*Wujing*) to Four Books (*Sishu*)

The idea of investigation of things is recorded in the short Confucian Classic *The Great Learning*. *The Great Learning* was originally a chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 礼记),

which is known as one of the Five Classics (*Wujing* 五经) in the Han dynasty.¹¹ The Five Classics were derived from the pre-Qin Confucian curriculum – the Six Arts (*Liuyi* 六艺)¹² – and were recognized as the authoritative literature of the Confucian tradition by the official learning since the Emperor Wu of the Western Han dynasty (156-87 BCE).¹³ The chapter “The Great Learning” of the *Book of Rites* received no particular stress or privilege within the Five Classics system. Despite the reorganisation of the officially recognized set of collections of Confucian texts in the successive dynasties, the Five Classics remained the backbone of Confucian literature. Emphasis on the significance of “The Great Learning” increased in the course of the rise of Confucianism from the Tang dynasty onward and finally culminated in Zhu Xi's compilation of the Four Books (*Sishu*)¹⁴. According to Zhu Xi, *The Great Learning* is the first book to study in Confucianism since it “lays down the ground” and “determine[s] the scale” of one's scholarship and it manifests “the priority and the order in learning”; one is supposed to approach the other classics only after having attained a thorough mastery of it (Vol.14, *Yülei*, pp.419-422).¹⁵ Despite its brevity, the

¹¹ The others are the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 诗经), the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚书), the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易经), and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋).

¹² The Six Arts is also called Six Classics (*Liujing* 六经). It is a set of collection of texts used in Confucian education which were believed to be compiled by Confucius on the basis of extant ancient texts available to him. (See the *Shiji*, “Kongzishijia” or The Biography of Confucius). The Confucian Six Arts consists of *Shi* 诗, *Shu* 书, *Li* 礼, *Yi* 易, *Yue* 乐, and *Chunqiu* 春秋 – short names for the *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Changes*, *Book of Music*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The Confucian curriculum Six Arts is to be distinguished from the ancient aristocratic education Six Art (*Liuyi*) recorded in the book *Zhouli* 周礼, which includes these subjects: 礼 *li*, 乐 *yue*, 射 *she*, 御 *yu*, 书 *shu*, and 数 *shu* (Rites, Music, Archery, Charioteering, Calligraphy, and Mathematics). The six basic Confucian classics are related to the ancient aristocratic education but not equal to it.

¹³ According to the “Wudiji 武帝纪” (The Biography of Emperor Wu) in Ban Gu's 班固 *Hanshu* 汉书, “not too long after his ascending to the throne, the Emperor Wu repelled the hundred schools and promoted the six classics”. (MT: “孝武初立, 卓然罢黜百家, 表章六经.”) The *Hanshu* also recorded in the “Rulinzhuan 儒林传” (The Biographies of the Confucians) that the Emperor Wu established the so-called *wujing boshi* 五经博士 (the Masters of the Five Classics), which made the Confucian teaching official. (See “自武帝立五经博士, 开置弟子员, 设科射策, 劝以官禄, 讫于元始, 百有馀年, 传业者浸盛, 支叶蕃滋, 一经说至百万言, 大师众至千余人. 盖利禄之路然也.”)

¹⁴ Namely, the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*, 大学), the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*, 中庸), the *Analects* (*Lunyue*, 论语) and the *Mencius* (*Mengzi*, 孟子).

¹⁵ For Zhu Xi on the significance of the *Great Learning* and its place in Confucian Learning, see *Yülei*: “Scholarship must first start from the Great Learning, and then Analects, and then Mencius, and then the Doctrine of the Mean... I recommend one to read the Great Learning first in order to determine the scale [of one's scholarship]; and then to read the Analects so as to establish the foundation; and then to read Mencius in order to observe its exertion and illumination; and then to read the Doctrine of the Mean so as to explore the subtlety of [the wisdom of] the ancients'. The Great Learning offers the programme and steps, and summarize them all in one [chapter]. It is easy to understand and

Great Learning presents the central ideas of Confucian ideology - such as self-cultivation and moral governance - and it offers an outline of the Confucian value system, which consists of the ultimate goals and a program of steps towards these goals. Zhu Xi's disciple and biographer Hang Gan writes:

Although the master had many works, he particularly attached importance to [his editing and commentaries on the Four Books, namely,] the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *The Great Learning*, among which *The Great Learning* and the *Analects* had been continuously revised for four times until his decease. The revision on [his commentary of] the doctrine "making one's intention sincere" (*chengyi*) of *The Great Learning* was his last writing. (Vol.27, *Xingzhuang*, p.565)¹⁶

The Four Books grouped by Zhu Xi, together with his commentaries, became the basis of the state civil service examinations from 1313 to 1905 in China, and were gradually recognized as the new set of authoritative literature of the Confucian tradition. The shift in the priority of Confucian bibliography, namely, Zhu Xi's Four Books system replacing the classical Five Classics system, is not simply a change of favour in the primary literature, but can also be regarded as an indicator of the remodelling of Confucianism launched by the Neo-Confucians since the Tang dynasty. It is largely a hermeneutic victory. As argued in Part Two, the Neo-Confucians generally sought a return to the pre-Qin Confucian classics in order to cope with new philosophical issues and to overcome their theoretical deficiency, in view of the transformed intellectual landscape that began to emerge following the profound Daoist and Buddhist metaphysical discourses since the third century. This return to the classics was driven by a strong creative hermeneutic methodology similar to, but in many senses surpassing, that of Neo-Daoism. The elevation of the chapter "The Great Learning" of the *Book of Rites* to one of the authoritative Four Books, backed up by a strong hermeneutic methodology, is a triumph that characterizes this return to the pre-Qin

therefore should be studied first... "(MT: "学问须以大学为先, 次论语, 次孟子, 次中庸...某要人先读大学, 以定其规模; 次读论语, 以立其根本; 次读孟子, 以观其发越; 次读中庸, 以求古人之微妙处。大学一篇有等级次第, 总作一处, 易晓, 宜先看...") (Vol.14., *Yülei*. p.419) "*The Great Learning* is the guidelines for one's study. If one accomplishes in *The Great Learning* and establishes the guidelines, all the other classics are will be found within it..." (MT: "大学是为学纲目。先通大学, 立定纲领, 其他经皆杂说在里许。") (ibid., p.422).

¹⁶ MT: "先生著述虽多, 于语, 孟, 中庸, 大学尤所加意。若大学, 论语, 则更定数四, 以至垂殁。大学'诚意'一章, 乃其绝笔也。"

classics. In this regard, Zhu Xi's reinvention of the lost fifth commentary on Investigation of Things in *The Great Learning* is undoubtedly one of the most important moments.

7.2.2 The Reinvention of Investigation of Things and Zhu Xi's Hermeneutics Operations on *The Great Learning*

Zhu Xi's triumph in the Confucian hermeneutic practice is his elevation of the chapters "The Great Learning" to be one of the most authoritative primary literature of Confucianism.¹⁷ However, it is Han Yu, the first real Neo-Confucian protagonist, who rediscovered the significance of "The Great Learning", and its program of self-cultivation and moral development. According to Feng Youlan:

We have seen how Han Yu quotes at some length an important passage from The Great Learning. This little treatise had previously been merely one of many chapters in the Book of Rites – one, moreover, that belonged to Xunzi's rather than Mencius' school of Confucianism. Nobody since the Han dynasty seems to have paid it any particular attention. Han Yu, however, saw that certain of its phrases, such as the "exemplification of illustrious virtue", "rectification of the mind" and "sincerity in thought", could well be directed towards the problems that were of such burning interest in his own day.... From this time onward The Great Learning, like the Mencius, became an extremely important text for Neo-Confucianism. (Feng, 1953, p.412)

What Feng fails to address is that, despite his particular emphasis on *The Great Learning*, Han Yu did not mention the idea of investigation of things in his *Yuandao* at all. Zhu Xi criticized Han's neglect as a mistake due to a lack of an essential grasp of the text (Vol.6, *Huowen*, p.512).¹⁸ This neglect is neither a coincidence nor is it due to a lack of understanding. I argued in Chapter Five that the primary target of Han Yu's *Yuandao* is the Buddhist and Daoist practice, namely, the amoral doctrines and their ecclesiastical organizations, to which Han Yu ascribes various social problems in contrast to the positive social-practical function of the virtue ethics of Confucianism. Therefore, there was no need for Han Yu's pragmatic criticism to engage the sophisticated metaphysical discourse of Buddhism and Daoism, or to reflect on the meta-ethical foundation of Confucian virtue ethics as found in his Neo-Confucian successors. Compared with other doctrines like

¹⁷ Also his elevation of "Doctrine of the Mean", a discussion of which would take us too far afield.

¹⁸ MTS: "然其言极于正心诚意, 而无曰致知格物云者, 则是不探其端, 而骤语其次, 亦未免于择焉不精, 语焉不祥之病矣."

“rectification of the mind” and “sincerity in thought”, the doctrine of investigation of things, if understood as the investigation of external things, seems rather remote from intrinsic virtues, and therefore are not in his account.

In another prominent early Neo-Confucian protagonist, Li Ao's *Fuxing shu*, there is a brief explanation of the meaning of the phrase “*gewu*” (Li, Vol.2, p.5). This explanation is nevertheless preliminary and has no meta-ethical methodological importance. It's only in the works of the Four Masters of the Northern Song dynasty (Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐, Cheng Hao 程颢, Cheng Yi 程颐, and Zhang Zai 张载), particularly the two Masters Cheng – Zhu Xi's direct predecessors – that “*gewu*” becomes a central theme and one of the main methodologies of Neo-Confucianism. In the *Jinsi Lu* 近思录 (*Reflections on Things at Hand*), a central reference, compiled by Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian, for the Neo-Confucian thinking of the Northern Song dynasty, one finds a chapter on the theme of investigation of things with 78 quotations from the Four Masters.

Zhu Xi reports in the preface to his *Daxue Zhangju* (1189) about the Chengs' contribution to the rediscovery of *The Great Learning*:

After the death of Mencius, the transmission [of “The Great Learning”] stopped. Although this work was still extant, there was hardly anyone who knew it...From then on, the mediocre scholars practise merely remembering and reciting the classics, which spares no effort in primary learning but achieves little, while the heretics teach the void, the non-present and the nirvana(*jimie*), which seems higher than great learning but in fact has no essence... until the two Masters Cheng, who were connected to the transmission of Mencius, this text was then respected and praised. They also edited the passages and elucidated its meaning and purports, so that the methodology of the ancient higher education and the essential ideas of the work of the sages would illuminatingly recur in the world. I know this [supplemental hermeneutics] is considered extremely inappropriate and nothing can exempt me from my guilt. However, the benefit is not trivial for the will of the nation in respect of educating the people and transforming the culture, and for the method of the scholars in respect of self-cultivation and social interaction. (Vol.6, *Zhangju*, p.14)¹⁹

From Zhu Xi's account, one captures the obvious hermeneutic effort made by the two

¹⁹ MT: “及孟子没而其传泯焉，则其书虽存，而知者鲜矣...自是以来，俗儒记诵词章之习，其功倍于小学而无用；异端虚无寂灭之教，其高过于大学而无实...于是河南程氏两夫子出，而有以接乎孟氏之传。实始尊信此篇而表章之，既又为之次其简编，发其归趣，然后古者大学教人之法，圣经贤传之指，粲然复明于世...采而辑之，闲亦窃附己意，补其阙略，以俟后之君子。极知僭逾，无所逃罪，然于国家化民成俗之意，学者修己治人之方，则未必无小补云...”.

Masters Cheng in renewing the Confucian scholarship of *The Great Learning*. They had grave doubts about the hermeneutic practice of their time: “the scholars who are not constrained by the [linguistic and philological] meaning of the text, always go astray, while those who do study the [linguistic and philological] meaning of the text, nevertheless are bigoted [by it] without any penetration [into the ideas themselves].”(Erchenji, p.205)²⁰

Cheng Yi emphasizes that:

all who study the texts must first of all understand the linguistic and philological meaning of the texts (*wenyi* 文义), and then seek for the [philosophical] meaning (*yi* 意). There is never anyone who can comprehend the [philosophical] meaning without understanding the linguistic and philological meaning. (ibid., p.296)²¹

All who study the texts must not only study the language, but also recognize the temperament of the sages and the virtuous [whose words are studied].” (ibid., p.284)²²

It is fair to say that the hermeneutics of the Chengs are characterized by a combination of both negative and positive dimensions: viz., the “evidential study” and the “philosophical study” of “Chinese hermeneutics”, which distinguishes them from Neo-Confucians like Lu Jiuyuan, who claims “it is the ‘Six Classics’ (*liujing*) that comment on me”.

Based on the Chengs’ teaching on *The Great Learning*, Zhu Xi “collected and edited them, and ventured to attach... [his] own understanding in ... [his] idleness, [so as to] supplement the lost and the omitted for future scholars”²³. This finally transformed the study on this short classic. Zhu Xi’s hermeneutic position is largely influenced by Cheng Yi. In his “Postscript of The Great Learning” (*Ji Daxue Hou*), Zhu Xi summarized the hermeneutic operations (the new arrangement of ten sections) and also the methodology:

...*The Great Learning*, the text of the classic has two hundred and five words, the interpretation and commentary has 10 sections. This chapter is seen in the Book of Rites transmitted by the Dais [Dai De and Dai Sheng (both lived in the first century BCE)]. The text arrangement is in a disorder and particularly the text of the interpretation and commentary loses the right sequence. Master Cheng had rectified it... here I venture to follow his theory and re-edit this version...[Zhu Xi then lists his new arrangement of the ten sections of the interpretation and commentary (*zhuan*)]...the textual arrangement is ordered, and the meaning is coherent, which

²⁰ MT: “学者不泥文义者，又全背却远去。理会文义者，又滞泥不通”。

²¹ MT: “伊川先生问：凡看文字，先须晓其文义，然后可求其意。未有文义不晓，而见意者也”。

²² MT: “凡看文字，非只是要理会语言，要识得圣贤气象”。

²³ MT: “采而辑之，闲亦窃附己意，补其阙略，以俟后之君子”。

seems to recover the original state of this classic ... When I find the redundant passage [due to misprinting or miscopying] (*yanwen* 衍文) and wrong characters (*wuzi* 误字), I preserve the original text but add my correction next to it in a note. I again compare the suspicious and my correction in the following philological interpretation. (Vol. 23, pp. 3829-3830)²⁴

From this passage it is apparent how Zhu Xi, following the two Chengs' emphasis on the combination of the "evidential study" and the "philosophical study", consciously engages with both positive and negative hermeneutics. Firstly, for him, textual study and the coherent understanding of the philosophical ideas are mutually dependent in recovering "the original state" of the classics ("the textual arrangement is ordered, and the meaning is coherent"). Secondly, by adopting the hermeneutic technique, viz. the multi-layered structure of textual arrangement, he finds a way to preserve the text while at the same time offering an up-to-date interpretation (or more properly, in his eyes, restoration). However, in comparison to the Chengs, Zhu Xi holds a relatively more creative attitude in hermeneutics: "one should pay attention to the overall contextual coherence and should not stick to [the philological correctness of] one single word."²⁵

Chen Lai (2000, pp.276-283) carries out a technical examination of the mechanism of Zhu Xi's hermeneutics. According to him, Zhu Xi conducted three major hermeneutic operations on "The Great Learning"²⁶:

1. He distinguished the pre-Qin classic (*jing*) from its original pre-Qin commentary and interpretation (*zhuan*) in the undivided text, clarifying the conceptions in the classic (*jing*), viz., the so-called three goals (*san gangling* 三纲领) and eight steps (*ba tiaomu* 八条目). Chen comments that Zhu Xi's division is based on "an inference from the textual structure commonly seen in works from the pre-Qin period and the Han Dynasty, namely, the classics (*jing*) accompanied with their original commentaries and interpretations (*zhuan*)"

²⁴ MT: "右大学一篇，经两百有五字，传十章。今见于戴氏礼书，而简编散脱，传文颇失其次。子程子盖尝正之...窃因其说，复定此本...序次有伦，义理通贯，似得其真，谨第录如上。其先贤所衍文误字，皆存其本文而围其上，旁注所改，又与今所疑者并见于释音云"。

²⁵ MT: "凡读书，须看上下文意是如何，不可泥着一字。"

²⁶ The Han dynasty handed down version, as a chapter in the *Book of Rites*.

(p.279).²⁷ Chen argues that “no matter if these two parts can be called *jing* and *zhuan* or not, Zhu Xi's view on the relation between the two parts is basically correct” (p.282).²⁸ In fact, I think this dichotomy helps Zhu Xi to further adopt the above-mentioned fourfold *jing-zhuan-zhu-shu* hermeneutic structure, as illustrated by his *Daxue Zhangju Jizhu*, which will allow both textual preservation and hermeneutic creativity (creative re-generation).

2. He changed the textual arrangement of the pre-Qin commentary and interpretation (*zhuan*). Chen approves of Zhu Xi's division of the handed-down pre-Qin commentary and interpretation (*zhuan*) into 10 relatively independent sections. Based on this dissection, Chen compares Zhu's edited *The Great Learning* with Zheng Xuan's (郑玄 127-200)²⁹ Han dynasty version, summarizing his analysis of Zhu Xi's rearrangement of the order of these 10 sections as follows:

Zhu's edition moved the original [Zheng's] third to sixth sections to the first to fourth sections [in his version], added a [new] fifth section on the relation between investigation of things and Extension of Knowledge, made the original first section the sixth [in his version], kept the seventh to tenth as they were, and incorporated the original second section into his third section. (Chen, 2000, p.282)³⁰

Chen thinks some of these new arrangements “are by and large justified” since they correspond to the logic or inner order of the argument in the classic, namely, the conceptions of three goals and eight steps (ibid., p.282). But Chen doubts the necessity of a rigorous match-up according to one true order conveyed by the text of the classic. He thinks this might result in reversing the hermeneutic merit of Zhu Xi, since the text of the classic itself can also be questioned and thus reorganized for better coherence. (ibid, p.281)

3. He supplemented the Han text with a reinvented “*zhuan*” (commentary and interpretation) on investigation of things. Chen argues:

²⁷ MT: “根据先秦两汉著作中常见的以传系经的文体所作的推断”.

²⁸ MTS: “由上述一般考察可知, 首先, 大学之书, 就其一般结构来说, 先是叙述三纲领八条目的内容, 然后逐条对三纲领八条目的相互关系加以解释. 不管这两个主体部分是否称为经传, 朱嘉对两者关系的看法基本正确”.

²⁹ Zheng Xuan is the great accomplisher of the Han dynasty study of the ancient texts [or Chinese Hermeneutics]. He inherited the previous achievement in the primary learning (*xiaoxue*) of the Han dynasty, made commentary and interpretation for the most classics of the day, and achieved brilliant feats in preserving the ancient texts. However, only his *Maoshi Jian* 毛诗笺 (*Commentary on the Book of Odes of the Mao School*) and *Sanli Zhu* 三礼注 (*Commentary and Interpretation of the Three Books of Rites*) are extant, and the other works of his are mostly lost. (Sun, 2001, p.96)

³⁰ MT “朱订本将原 3-6 章作为一至四章, 补第五章释致知格物关系, 以原 1 章为第六章, 七至十章取原 7-10 章次序不变, 以原 2 章入朱本第三章.”

When examining the holistic textual structure of the handed-down chapter “The Great Learning”, it is obvious that there was absent content³¹ – “the so-called ‘extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things’ means...” and “the so-called ‘sincerity of the will lies in the extension of knowledge’ means...””. Zhu Xi is not un-insightful in reinventing the missing commentaries and interpretations. We can argue whether or not he should have supplemented the original text with his own reinvented commentaries and interpretations, but we cannot conclude that there must be no missing content in the handed-down text of “The Great Learning”. In addition, how to estimate Zhu Xi’s supplement is another matter of debate. (p.282)³²

Chen does not fully approve of Zhu Xi’s reinvented supplement, because it merged the missing two sections, namely, (1) “the so-called ‘extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things’ means...” and (2) “the so-called ‘sincerity of the will lies in the extension of knowledge’ means...” into only one section, which does not conform to the pattern of the original text, where each of the three goals and eight steps has its own commentary and interpretation (p.280-281). But Chen insightfully points out that this intentional arrangement “of course has something to do with his stress on the conception of investigation of things.”³³

Both Zhu Xi’s own account in his “Postscript of The Great Learning” and Chen’s classification of Zhu Xi’s three major hermeneutic operations clearly display Zhu Xi’s synthesis of both negative and positive (or creative) dimensions of the Chinese hermeneutics. Zhu Xi creatively reinvented the missing fifth commentary and interpretation in his edited “The Great Learning”, which eventually would be recognized as an individual classic in his influential “Four Books” —the most influential Confucian primary literature since the thirteenth century. See below my translation of this famous (or notorious, at least most disputable) supplement:

The [left] fifth commentary and interpretation is to explain the meaning of “investigation of things” and “extension of knowledge” [*zhi* means both knowledge and wisdom in Chinese], which is now lost. I venture to supplement [with the new commentary and interpretation] by applying Master Cheng’s thinking: the so-called “extension of knowledge [and wisdom] lies in

³¹ Which were supposed to be the commentaries and interpretations of the two doctrines: the investigation of things (*gewu*) and the extension of knowledge (*zhizhi*).

³² MTS: “按照传文的整体结构考察，今本大学确乎缺少‘所谓致知在格物者’，‘所谓诚其意在致知者’的内容，朱熹为作补传，于此不为未见。吾人尽可说朱子不当补，但不能说大学定无阙文，至于朱子所补如何。则当另论。”

³³ 朱熹这个作法当然与他着眼于格物观念有关。

the investigation of things” means, if one wants to extend one’s knowledge [and wisdom, to the utmost], one must reach into things and exhaust [probe thoroughly] the principle[s] (*li*) therein. Since everyone’s heart-mind is intelligent and no one is incapable of knowing, while all the things under heaven do not lack principle[s], it is thus only that when the principle is not yet exhausted [fully probed], the knowledge [and wisdom] is still limited. Therefore the primary teaching of *The Great Learning* requires the student to reach to all the things under heaven, and to increase one’s knowledge [and wisdom] of the principle[s] with the help of what they have already known, so as to extend [one’s knowledge and wisdom] to the utmost. Now [if one] endeavours for a long term, and when one is eventually illuminatingly all penetrating, then all the things – either the superficial or the deep, either the subtle and the coarse [qualities of them] will not be ungrasped; at the same time the entire essence and great functioning/efficacy of one’s heart-mind will not be unenlightened. This is the so-called “things are investigated”, and this is the so-called “extension of the knowledge [and wisdom] to the utmost”. (Vol.6, *Zhangju*, p.21)³⁴

7.2.3. An Appraisal of Zhu Xi’s Hermeneutic operations on *The Great Learning* – Hermeneutic Fallacy?

This newly reinvented supplement to the original text is the most creative work, or the most positive dimension, in Zhu Xi’s hermeneutic operations on *The Great Learning*. One should notice that Zhu Xi linked the investigation of things to one of the central Neo-Confucian notions, principle (*li*), and forged the famous Neo-Confucian propositions “to investigate things in order to exhaust principle[s]” (*gewu qiongli*)³⁵. By doing so, he not only transformed the original chapter “The Great Learning” into a classic with new philosophical profundity and meta-ethical explanatory potential, from a mere programme for self-cultivation and moral governance that embodies classical Confucian ideology, but he also ratified the Neo-Confucian philosophical achievement. This single hermeneutic operation actually combines two of the six major Neo-Confucian theoretical achievements listed by Chan (1969 p.589). Zhu Xi’s supplemental hermeneutics, exemplified by the newly reinvented fifth commentary and interpretation, as Chen points out, “was totally

³⁴ MT 右传之五章，盖释格物、致知之义，而今亡矣。闲尝窃取程子之意以补之曰：“所谓致知在格物者，言欲致吾之知，在即物而穷其理也。盖人心之灵莫不有知，而天下之物莫不有理，惟于理有未穷，故其知有不尽也。是以大学始教，必使学者即凡天下之物，莫不因其已知之理而益穷之，以求至乎其极。至于用力之久，而一旦豁然贯通焉，则众物之表里精粗无不到，而吾心之全体大用无不明矣。此谓物格，此谓知之至也。”

³⁵ Zhu Xi indeed acknowledged that his thinking on “investigation of things” mainly derived from the two Masters Cheng’s thinking.

motivated by his interpretation of Neo-Confucianism”.³⁶

This hermeneutic creativity has caused endless disputation. As Qian Mu notices, in Zhu Xi's thought, “to investigate things in order to exhaust principle” is valued most by the later philosophers, but is also most disputable (1971, p.504). I now summarize two major points of contention with Zhu Xi that can be viewed in terms of the above clarified negative and positive dimensions of Chinese hermeneutics.

First, according to the rigorous “evidential study”, Zhu Xi's supplement is a terrible hermeneutic fallacy named “*zengzi jiejing* 增字解经”, literally, “to add characters in interpreting the classics”³⁷, which is “against the hermeneutic rules” (F. Chen, 2013, p.59)³⁸. For the sake of convenience, I will call this fallacy “supplementary hermeneutics” or the “supplementary hermeneutic fallacy”. The prominent Qing dynasty hermeneutician Wang Yinshi 王引之(1766-1834) defines the fallacy of supplementary hermeneutics (*zengzi jiejing*) in his *Jingyi Shuwen* 经义述闻 as follows:

The texts of the classics have their own intrinsic patterns (*xun* 训). When the intrinsic pattern is comprehended, the text and [the interpretation of] its meaning will naturally match. It [the classic] will be explicit [even] without the need for [further] interpretation. [However,] when the intrinsic pattern is un-comprehended but one wants to impose an interpretation [on the text], this will leave one in a dangerous and uneasy state. One then has to add more characters into the texts so as to make the interpretation sufficient. One also has to mediate among different [possible conflicting] aspects and finally establish one's own theory. This is to bend the classics to oneself, rather than [to interpret] their own meaning. (Wang, 2002 [1827], p.361)³⁹

Because the Qing dynasty dominated scholarship largely endorsed the “evidential study” methodology of the Han dynasty, Zhu Xi's creative hermeneutics, particularly his supplement of the fifth commentary, was regarded as a typical example of the degeneration in the Song dynasty scholarship, and was fiercely criticized:

The scholars of the Song dynasty did not trust the Han and Tang dynasties' commentary and

³⁶ “应看到朱熹的章句，尤其是补传，完全是由理学诠释出发。”(Chen, 2000,282)

³⁷ Also called “*zengzi xungu* 增字训诂” (Qian, 1971, p.544).

³⁸ MT “何況於大學中增字為訓，有違訓詁條例。”

³⁹ My translation: “经典之文，自有本训，得其本训则文义适相符合，不烦言而已解。失其本训而强为之说，则阂阻不安。乃于文句之间增字以足之，多方迁就而后得申其说，此强经就我，而究非经之本义也。”

interpretation of the classics and even suspected the classics. Not content with mere suspicion, [they] went further to rectify, delete, rearrange the classics in order to fit their own theories. This should not be taken as an example ... the previous Confucian scholars' interpretations of the classics were so prudent — was there anyone who arbitrarily changed the characters of the classics?! ... The academic atmosphere changed dramatically in the Song dynasty... [Master Zhu Xi] rearranged the text of “The Great Learning” and also added a commentary and interpretation [*zhuan*] to it. Moreover, he divided the Classic of Filial Piety into two parts: the pre-Qin classic [*jing*] and the pre-Qin commentary and interpretation, and also deleted certain passages of the text of the classic. This is rather a bad habit of the scholars of Song dynasty. (Pi, 1959 [1907], p.264)⁴⁰

Second, even within the Song scholarship, Zhu Xi's effort on *The Great Learning* was still not free from attack due to its strong endorsement of the Cheng-Zhu's school of study of principle (*cheng-zhu lixue*). As Chan points out, there was “bitter opposition among Neo-Confucianists” in respect of the proper interpretation of the “investigation of things”. Debates between the two schools, viz. Study of the Principle and Study of the Heart-mind, represented respectively by Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, lasted for centuries (Chan, 1969, pp.84-85).

We can thus see that Zhu Xi's hermeneutics, embodied by his *Daxue Zhangju* (Part of the *Sishuzhangju Jizhu*), is a synthesis of both the negative and positive Chinese hermeneutic methodologies. He was not as radical as his contemporary Lu Jiuyuan, the leading philosopher of the School of Heart-mind or Study of the Heart-mind, nor was he like the rigorous Confucian hermeneuticians in the Qing dynasty, such as Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642-1718)⁴¹ and Wang Yinzhi who took the Han dynasty hermeneutic practice, the “evidential study”, as the guiding principle. It is fair to say that Zhu Xi's “great completion”(*ji-dacheng*) in Neo-Confucianism (see.1.1.1) is first of all a hermeneutic victory.

7.3 The Evolution of “*Gewu*”: From “Events Coming Forth” to “Investigation

⁴⁰ MT “宋人不信注疏，驯至疑经；疑经不已，遂至改经，删经，移易经文以就己说，此不可为训者也...先儒之说经，如此其慎，岂有擅该经字者乎！... 乃至宋而风气大变...[朱子]于大学移其文，又补其传，孝经分经传，又删经文，未免宋人习气”。

⁴¹ “Li's profoundly culturally conservative 'Confucian hermeneutics' makes it impossible therefore to question orthodox Confucian doctrines let alone reform them.” (Wright, 2015, p.678)

of Things”

In this section, I present three different interpretations of “*gewu*”⁴² from the Han dynasty hermeneutician Zheng Xuan, the Tang dynasty early Neo-Confucian protagonist Li Ao, and the Song Dynasty Cheng-Zhu school of the study of principle. By comparing these representative interpretations, I will highlight the continuity in discourse on “*gewu*” through history, and more importantly, the line of evolution: how “*gewu*” eventually became “investigation of things” and was elevated to a basic method in Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. I argue that underlying the evolution are some deeper hermeneutic operations in the actual Neo-Confucian exegesis of the thinking of “*gewu*”. They are more “recessive” than the superficial hermeneutic operations on the text of *The Great Learning* itself, as argued in the section above on Zhu Xi’s supplementary hermeneutics. In fact, the continuity and evolution in the discourse on “*gewu*” well exemplifies the co-existence and co-ordination of the negative and positive dimensions in Chinese hermeneutics, which had a profound impact on the formation of a peculiar mechanism for the development of thinking in the Chinese tradition. In Chapter Eight I draw on this account to show how this mechanism provides a new perspective in comparative analysis for making better sense of the architectonics behind Kant’s coining of reflective judgment and his writing of the third *Critique*.

Before the main discussion, I want to further a clarification mentioned in the introduction. The doctrine of investigation of things, often refers de facto to both “*gewu*” and “*zhizhi*”.⁴³ Zhu Xi’s reinvented fifth interpretation and commentary of *The Great Learning* applied to both “*gewu*” and “*zhizhi*”. As Zhu Xi says, “so far as things are investigated, the knowledge is naturally extended. The two [investigation of things and

⁴² In two of these interpretations, “*Gewu*” is not “Investigation of Things”, so here I keep the Chinese phrase to prevent possible misleading implications.

⁴³ The first two of the eight goals or doctrines, due to the affinity of their meaning and actual task, were often treated as one doctrine “*gewu zhizhi*” — “investigation of things (and, or for the sake of) extension of knowledge”, which form the first step (or the preliminary method) for moral self-cultivation. Depending on how to understand the nexus “*zai*” between “*gewu*” and “*zhizhi*” in the text “*zhizhi zai gewu*”, it can be an indication of causal relation (as Zhu Xi and Cheng Yi), or a condition (Li Ao), or neither (Zheng Xuan).

extension of knowledge] are not different things" (Vol. 22, pp. 2377-2378),⁴⁴

7.3.1 Zheng Xuan's Interpretation of "Gewu" in the Han Dynasty

The earliest interpretation of the "gewu" available to us is in the prominent Han dynasty hermeneutician Zheng Xuan's commentary on the *Book of Rites*. In line with the text "extension of knowledge [and wisdom] lies in the investigation of things"⁴⁵ (*gewu zai zhizhi*), Zheng Xuan comments:

"ge", means, "to come" (*lai* 来); "wu", means "event[s]" (*shi* 事). If one knows [what is] the good deeply, then the good things (*wu*) come; [By the same token,] if one knows [what is] the evil deeply, then the evil things (*wu*) come. This is to say that events (*shi*) come in accordance with one's preference. (*Zhengyi*, vol.60, p.1859)⁴⁶

To interpret "zhi" (usually translated as "to know" or "knowledge [and wisdom]"), he writes: "'zhi', means knowing the beginning and ending of the good and the evil, and the lucky and the unlucky." (ibid)⁴⁷

Zheng's philological interpretation of "ge" into "to come" (*lai*) agrees with the common usage of the character "ge" in the ancient texts — for example, as recorded in the *Book of Documents*, in the ritual ceremony "[the spirits of] the progenitors come forth" (*zukai lai ge* 祖考来格)⁴⁸, again in the *Book of Odes* we find the same usage: "here the spirits come forth" (*shenbao shi ge* 神保是格). Literally, "gewu" for Zheng Xuan means events (*shi*) come forth (*lai*). The popular English "investigation of things" (or recognition of things) does not help to make sense of Zheng's interpretation of "gewu". In addition, to a large extent it ignores the possible philosophical implications of this word's etymology – "ge" as "to come" suggests that "wu" (things) in Chinese thinking are not simply the same as the Western conception of inert dead matter ("crude matter" or "lifeless material" in Kant's

⁴⁴ See Zhu Xi's letter to Huang Zigeng, my translation of "但能格物,则知自至, 不是别一事也"

⁴⁵ It is important to keep in mind that this translation is not for Zheng Xuan's understanding "*gewu zai zhizhi*".

⁴⁶ My translation of "格, 来也。 物, 犹事也。 其知于善深则来善物, 其知于恶深则来恶物, 言事缘人所好来也。"

⁴⁷ MT: "知善恶吉凶之所终始也。"

⁴⁸ More examples can be found in the *Book of Documents*, "come forth [or manifest] (ge) in Heaven" (*ge yu huangtian* 格于皇天), "Sage King Yao says: 'come (ge), you Shun!" (*ge ru Shun*, 格汝舜)

terms)⁴⁹. There is a dimension of spontaneity in the things that can manifest, or come forth – they arrive rather than being simply discovered or exploited. In fact, it becomes apparent that, in Zheng Xuan's interpretation, where “*wu*” (events) and “*shi*” (things) are interchangeably used, “*gewu*” is not exactly the same as the investigation of things in the sense of the study of objects.

This immanent etymological dimension in the Chinese approach of “investigation of things” might shed light on the reason why it did not develop into a scientific method. In fact, when Western science was first imported into China, it was translated into *gezhi* (science) (*gezhi* is short for *gewu zhizhi*) or *gewuxue*, literally the study of the investigation of things, so as to conform to the Chinese intellectual tradition for better acceptance. But soon this name lost favour and was replaced by the current translation, *kexue* 科学, which might also explain the fundamental incompatibility between investigation of things and scientific method. Keeping the etymological dimension of the character “*ge*” in mind, in the chapter “Great Announcement” (*dagao* 大诰) of the *Book of Documents*, “*gezhi tianming*” (格知天命) is properly understood as “to let Heaven's command manifest (come forth) for knowing” rather than as “to investigate Heaven's command or decree”.⁵⁰

Zheng's philological interpretation of “*ge*” as “to come” is not only inherited by other leading hermeneuticians like Kong Yingda 孔颖达 (574-648)⁵¹, or the early Neo-Confucian protagonist Li Ao in the Tang dynasty, but is also endorsed by the Song dynasty Neo-Confucian thinkers like Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi. However, based on this hermeneutic heritage, the Cheng-Zhu school made certain philological operations that would eventually transform the philosophical interpretation of “*gewu*”, updating it into a Neo-Confucian method.

Zheng Xuan's “philosophical” interpretation of investigation of things following his

⁴⁹ “Crude matter...[whose] forces [is] governed by mechanical laws” (*CJ*, 5:419). “... nature, i.e., ... matter...no one would attribute to lifeless material an intention in the proper sense of the term, and so no misunderstanding can arise.” (5:383)

⁵⁰ There is a subtle but important difference that the modern mind is not sensitive to and overlooks.

⁵¹ See Kong Yingda's *Liji Zhengyi*. “‘*ge*’, means ‘to come’. One has certain knowledge, and then can cause certain things come accordingly.” MT: “格，来也。已有所知，则能在于来物。” (*Zhengyi*, Vol.60, p.1862)

philological clarification is often regarded as puzzling, and moreover, as He Zeheng points out, Zheng's interpretation omits the character “*zai*” (often translated as “to lie in” or “to rest on”, as an indicator of a causal relation) between investigation of things (*gewu*) and extension of knowledge (*zhizhi*) (He, 2000, p.3)⁵². In fact, Zheng's philosophical interpretation is consistent with his philology. Firstly, one has to replace the common understanding and translation of “investigation of things” with “events coming forth” in Zheng's terms, to prevent the pre-determined judgment. Secondly, one needs to put Zheng's philosophical interpretation back into its intellectual context: the Han dynasty correlative cosmology and the mysticism of *cheng-wei* (讖纬, roughly, *cheng* is the study of omens, and *wei* is the study of the hidden prophetic meaning of the Confucian classics)⁵³. Despite the diversity, this type of thinking generally endorses the supernatural correspondence (a peculiar kind of causality) between the natural world and the human domain (either the human person or the human community). Zheng himself is reported to have been devoted to the study of the hidden prophetic meaning of the Confucian classics (*weixue* 纬学) (Sun, 2001, p.96). The underlying idea of Zheng's interpretation of “*gewu*” is such: one's inner profound knowledge and understanding is responded to by the external correlative events or things which share the same quality of that kind of knowledge and understanding. Zheng's commentary on “*gewu zai zhizhi*”: one has preference in what one desires to know, and so one devotes oneself to one's preference and extends the knowledge in this aspect. If one's knowledge or understanding of one's preference (for either the good or the bad) is deep enough, then good or bad events will correspondingly happen or come forth. Zheng's interpretation on the basis of the Han dynasty cosmology and mysticism of *cheng-wei* was already not as convincing for Kong Yingda in the Tang dynasty, who, despite fully inheriting Zheng's philological interpretation of “*ge*” as “to come” (*lai*) and his philosophical interpretation that “events (*shi*) come in accordance with one's preference,”

⁵² MTS: He's argument—“这两段话都有费解之处...然在郑玄,以行文较简,并未沾著经文在字。”

⁵³ For example, Dong Zhongshu's theory of interaction (or stimulus and response) between Heaven and human beings (*tianren ganying*). The book *Baihu Tongyi* 白虎通义 that produced around 79 AD further synthesis Dong's cosmology and the

nevertheless made a vital modification. Kong's strategy is to directly link events (as the effect) to actions that are the necessary result of one's profound knowledge. The mysterious correspondence between one's inner knowledge and the external events is mediated by the agent's action. Kong argues thus: "it is to say that good/evil events follow one's good/evil deed like a response to it" (*Zhengyi*, Vol.60, p.1862)⁵⁴. Kong's hidden premise here is: one knows what is good/evil so profoundly that one necessarily acts in accordance with the knowledge. This hidden premise to some extent resembles Socratic moral intellectualism,⁵⁵ which in fact resonates with the thinking of investigation of things of Zhu Xi, who clearly claims if one's action does not conform to one's inner knowledge [and wisdom] (*zhi*), "it is only because the knowledge [and wisdom] is not fully accomplished." (Vol.14, Yülei, p.484)⁵⁶ Overall, Kong's interpretation of "*gewu*" to some extent is reminiscent of the Buddhist idea of karma.

The causal relation between investigation of things (the coming forth of events in Zheng's terms) and extension of knowledge, expressed by the character "*zai*", is not missing from Zheng's interpretation, but reversed. Here "*zai*" is not "to lie in" or "rest on", but "to result in". "*Gewu*", understood as good or bad things (events) coming forth, is the effect of the exertion in the extension of one's knowledge (knowing what is good and bad).

The focus of this thesis is not to investigate whether Zheng Xuan's interpretation of "*gewu*" conveys the original meaning of *The Great Learning*. It was indeed favored by the Confucians in the Qing Dynasty from a more rigorous philological point of view. I argue that "*gewu*" understood as the coming forth of things or events, according to Zheng Xuan's interpretation (and later Kong Yingda's), has no methodological potential, and is not even a means to achieve the extension of knowledge (*zhizhi*). It is merely a natural result. What does concern this thesis is how the Neo-Confucian reinvention of *gewu* carried out by the Cheng-Zhu school eventually turned it into a basic doctrine of profound methodological potential. In Zheng Xuan's interpretation, two elements are still missing: first, a proper

⁵⁴ MTS: "言善事隨人行善而來應之，惡事隨人行惡亦來應之"

⁵⁵ The core idea is that virtue is knowledge. Therefore if one truly knows what is good, one will undoubtedly do what is good.

⁵⁶ MT: "此只是知之未至".

causal relation between “*gewu*” and “*zhìzhī*” and, second, a new interpretation of “*gewu*” as “investigation of things”.

7.3.2 Li Ao's interpretation of “*gewu*” in the Tang Dynasty

The Neo-Confucian discourse on investigation of things can be seen as originating in Li Ao. As Feng Youlan points out, “by quoting the famous sentence in *The Great Learning*, ‘The extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things,’ Li inaugurates a subject that was to undergo constant discussion and innumerable interpretations at the hands of later Song and Ming Neo-Confucians.” (Feng, 1953, p.422)⁵⁷ In addition to “quoting” the doctrine, Li Ao gave a brief explanation of “*gewu*” that was in concert with his philosophical position, which actually initiated the Neo-Confucian reforming of this doctrine:

Question: May I ask what does it mean by “the extension of knowledge [and wisdom] lies in the investigation of things” (*zhìzhī zai gewu*)?

Answer: “*wu*”, means the ten thousand things (*wanwu*); “*ge*”, means, “to come” or “to arrive” (*zhi* 至). When the things arrive, one's heart-mind (*xin*) is clear, and can explicitly discern [the things] without responding to them – this is the so-called “extension of knowledge [and wisdom] (*zhìzhī*)”. This is the so-called “extension of the knowledge [and wisdom] to the utmost” (Li, Vol.2, p.5)⁵⁸

Like most traditional scholars (hermeneutician-thinker types), Li Ao's brief explanation has two layers: a philological interpretation of the phrase “*gewu*” and a more philosophical interpretation of the idea itself. Li Ao's philological interpretation clearly derives from Zheng Xuan's: “*Gewu*” means things come forth (*lai*) or arrive (*zhi*). Therefore, it is again misleading if one understands Li Ao's “*gewu*” as “investigation of things”.

Comparing it with Zheng Xuan's exegesis of “*gewu*”, one might notice that Li's interpretation of “*wu*” as “ten thousand things” (which means everything or all things) is different from Zheng Xuan's “events” (*shi*). “*Wu*” for Zheng denotes both events and things and he used the two terms interchangeably. The most interesting philosophical point here is

⁵⁷ I will argue, to translate Li Ao's “*gewu*” into “investigation of things” is also misleading.

⁵⁸ MT: “曰：‘敢問致知在格物，何謂也？’曰：‘物者，萬物也；格者，來也，至也；物至之時，其心昭昭然，明辨焉而不應於物者，是致知也，是知之至也’。”

not whether “*wu*” is “ten thousand things [everything]” or “events”, but the subtle change in perspective shown in Li’s overall interpretation, which, conceiving “*wu*” (the ten thousand things) as the external objects, puts “*wu*” at odds with the heart-mind (*xin*). This confrontation of an object versus subject perspective is not seen in Zheng’s interpretation, and it is fundamental for reforming “*gewu*” into “investigation of things”. Furthermore, the causal relation between “*gewu*” and “*zhìzhī*” is reversed in Li Ao’s interpretation, although strictly speaking, Li Ao’s “*gewu*” (still understood as “things come forth or arrive” or “the coming forth or arrival of things”) is not a particular method of extending one’s knowledge, but rather a necessary condition — “when the things arrive, one’s heart-mind is clear, and can explicitly discern [the things] without responding to them – this is the so-called ‘extension of knowledge’”.

Li Ao’s philosophical interpretation of the doctrine “*gewu*” is quite different from that of the later Cheng-Zhu school. According to him, when things (*wu*), and more precisely external things, arrive before us, they necessarily arouse the internal feelings: “things arrive from without and the feelings respond to them from within” (ibid)⁵⁹. However, “the feelings are the evils in one’s nature... these evils originally do not exist, if the heart-mind remains immovable, all evil thoughts rest by themselves. As long as one’s nature reflects [on things] illuminatingly, from where can the evils be generated? ”(ibid.)⁶⁰ As a human being, one cannot stop things from coming forth, but self-cultivation helps one return to the original illuminating nature and annihilate evil feelings: “without seeing and hearing anything, this is not human; to see and to hear clearly but without responding to what is seen and heard — this is feasible. Without ignorance, without reaction, one’s heart-mind remains tranquil. What illuminates Heaven and Earth is the brightness of the sincerity (*cheng* 誠) [in one’s heart-mind]”⁶¹. As Feng points out, in Li Ao’s thinking the “Buddhist influence is particularly evident”:

⁵⁹ MT: “物格於外，情應於內”。

⁶⁰ MT: “情者，性之邪也，知其為邪，邪本無有，心寂然不動，邪思自息，惟性明照，邪何所生。”

⁶¹ MT: “不睹不聞，是非人也；視聽昭昭，而不起於見聞者斯可矣。無不知也，無弗為也，其心寂然，光照天地，是誠之明也”。

Li Ao's ideas of self-cultivation as returning to one's original nature, his proposal of the constraint of feelings which are regarded as evil, and his interpretation of the notion of sincerity (*cheng*) in the *Zhongyong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*) as an absolute kind of quiescence, in all aspects resemble the *Tian-tai* Buddhist teaching of cessation (*zhi*) and contemplation (*guan*), but are somehow implanted in the Confucian classics such as the "Appendices" of the *Book of Changes*, *The Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (Feng, 1953, p.423)

Li Ao's "*gewu*" is not a doctrine of methodological importance: it is rather a condition of self-cultivation for annihilating feelings, and represents the moment when external things arrive or come forth and create the stage for one's recognition and the return to one's original nature. Essentially, its focus is not the "things" without, but the feelings within. Comparing this interpretation with Zheng Xuan's "*gewu*", what becomes clear is that Li Ao's version evolves insofar as the causal relation between "*gewu*" and "*zhizhi*" is reversed, which seems one step closer to the investigation of things of the Neo-Confucian Cheng-Zhu School. Moreover, in Li Ao's philological interpretation of "*ge*", a synonym "*zhi*" (to arrive) is added so as to ensure a more up-to-date explanation. This small change again embodies the double dimension of Chinese hermeneutics, which allows for continuity in a new linguistic and intellectual context. However, it also provides a lever for Zhu Xi's later critical reforming of the doctrine "*gewu*". Furthermore, Li Ao's interpretation also inaugurates the tendency in later Neo-Confucianism (particularly the school of Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming) to conflate investigation of things (*gewu*) into investigation of heart-mind (*gexin*)⁶².

7.3.3 Cheng-Zhu School: Investigation of Things as a Basic Philosophical Method

As a consequence of this broad intellectual development – that is to say, the return to

⁶² According to Wang Yangming: "[After the failure in investigating the principle of the bamboo] I then recognized there was nothing [external to me] under Heaven for investigation. The effort of investigation of things must only be applied on one's body and one's heart-mind. It is decisive that everyone has the potential to become a sage, there is then naturally the obligation [of realizing the potential]." (vol.3, p.120) (MT: "乃知天下之物本无可格者,其格物之功,只在身上心上做, 决然以圣人为人人可到, 便自有担当.") " 'Investigation of things' is to investigate the things [or objects] in one's heart-mind, to investigate things [or objects] in one's intentions, and to investigate things [or objects] in one's cognitions." (Yangming, vol.2, p.76) (MT: "格物者, 格其心之物也; 格其意之物也,格其知之物也".) "Therefore, the learning of the gentlemen only seeks to find the heart-mind....nothing is beyond and external to my heart-mind" (vol.7, p. 239) (MT: "故君子之学惟求得其心...未有能出于吾心之外者也".) Considering the above Wang Yangming's ideas, it is not surprising that in Wang's famous "four sentences teaching", investigation of things is taught as "to conduct good and remove evil [according to one's innate pure good knowledge]" rather than as exploring objective moral principles in the external things.

the Confucian classics in search of a new possibility that would allow for the transition to the formless as a response to Neo-Daoist and Buddhist metaphysical philosophizing (as discussed earlier) — “*gewu*” of *The Great Learning* is transformed into a central Neo-Confucian method (investigation of things) that has an important meta-ethical role. The reforming of “*gewu*” by the Cheng-Zhu school on the basis of the previous discourses, by prominent Confucian scholars like Zheng Xuan and Li Ao, can be divided into two major steps: (a) the reinterpretation of “*gewu*” via hermeneutic operation, especially the philological interpretation of the character “*ge*”, and (b) the association of investigation of things with the Neo-Confucian principle (*li*) in the hermeneutic supplement—the reinvented fifth commentary and interpretation of *The Great Learning*.

a. Reinterpretation of “*Gewu*” via Hermeneutic Operation

The reversal of the causal relations between “*gewu*” (“the coming forth of things” in Li Ao’s term) and “*zhizhi*” (the extension of knowledge) was already realized in Li Ao’s interpretation. For the Cheng-Zhu school, the meaning of “*gewu*” has to be updated. There is a “twisting” of meaning through one crucial hermeneutic operation on Li Ao’s philological interpretation of “*ge*”.

Cheng Yi says:

(1) “*Ge*” means “to come” (*zhi*). It is the same as the “*ge*” used in “[the spirits of] the progenitors come forth” (*zukai lai ge*). (*Erchengji*, p.188)⁶³

(2) Question again: what is Investigation of Things? The master says: *ge*, which means “*zhi*”, that is to say, “to probe thoroughly (*qiongzhi*) the principles of things”. (*ibid.*p.277)⁶⁴

Zhu Xi says:

(3) The way of extension of knowledge lies in approaching [daily] matters and observing principles [therein] so as to investigate things. “*Ge*”, means “to the utmost” (*jizhi*), such as used in “*ge yu Wenzu* [King Yao]”. It is to say “thoroughly and to the utmost”. (Vol.6, *Huowen*, p.512)⁶⁵

(4) “*Ge*”, means “*zhi*”, “*wu*”, means “*shi*” (events, matters). To probe thoroughly (*qiongzhi*) the principle of things, to the utmost without anything unreached. (Vol.6. *Zhangju*, p.17)⁶⁶

⁶³ MT: “至也，如‘祖考来格’之格”。

⁶⁴ MT: “又问：如何是格物，先生曰，格，至也，言穷至物理也”。

⁶⁵ MT: “致知之道在乎即事观理以格夫物。格者，极至之谓，如格于文祖之格，言穷而至极也”。

⁶⁶ MT: “格，至也，物，犹事也。穷至事物之理，欲其极处无不到也”。

From the above four quotations, there seems to be an obvious “hermeneutic fallacy” in Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi’s interpretations of “*gewu*”. According to Zheng Xuan, “‘*ge*’ means ‘to come’”. Li Ao added a synonym “*zhi*” (to arrive) for an up-to-date explanation in his linguistic and intellectual context: “‘*ge*’, means, ‘to come’ or ‘to arrive’”. Both Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi followed Li Ao in using “*zhi*” for explaining “*ge*”, while there is a transition in its meaning.

The character “*zhi*” has two main usages 1) as a verb, meaning “to reach” or “to arrive”; 2) as adjective or adverb, meaning “most[ly]” or “extreme[ly]”, to indicate maximum degree. According to the Han dynasty paleographer Xu Shen’s (ca.58- ca.147) *Shuowen Jiezi*, the character “至” is a pictogram and its ancient seal script  represents “a bird flying from a higher place to reach the ground”.⁶⁷ The meaning “to reach” or “to arrive”, according to the Qing dynasty paleographer Duan Yucai (1735-1815), is the first derivation from the original pictogram. The meaning “most[ly]” or “extreme[ly]” is a further derivation (*Shuowenzhu*, pp.583-584). In other words, the first usage of “*zhi*” as a verb, “to reach” or “to arrive”, is the first-order derivation, while the second usage of it as adjective or adverb, “most[ly]” or “extreme[ly]”, is the second-order derivation. It is not difficult to make sense of the inner logic of these linguistic derivations. To the extreme or to the utmost (the maximum degree) means to reach a certain point where no further reaching is possible. The second-order derivation “most[ly]” or “extreme[ly]” (the degree of maximum) is the negation of the first-order derivation of “*zhi*”, “to reach”.

In Cheng Yi’s philological interpretation of “*gewu*”, where “*ge*” is explained by “*zhi*”, the double usage of “*zhi*” is still present. The single “*zhi*” in Cheng’s quotation of the *Book of Documents* means “to come”, while “*zhi*” in the binomial “*qiongzhi*” apparently takes the meaning of “most[ly]” (in this specific context I translate “*zhi*” as “thoroughly” for better textual coherence. In Zhu Xi’s interpretation, the first-order derivation of “*zhi*” is muted; only the second-order derivation that indicates the maximum degree is present, either in the single “*zhi*” or binomial “*qiongzhi*” (to probe thoroughly) or “*jizhi*” (to the utmost). The

⁶⁷ MT: “鸟飞从高下至地也”.

table below shows the evolution of the philological interpretation of “*ge*” in which a hermeneutic continuity persists. In fact, this Neo-Confucian case resembles methodologically the Neo-Daoist hermeneutic operations on the notion of *kong* in the Analects (see 4.1.1). It again shows that the co-ordination of the positive and negative dimensions of hermeneutics functions as a peculiar mechanism in the development of thinking in Chinese tradition.

The Evolution of the Philosophical Interpretation of “ <i>Ge</i> ” in “ <i>Gewu</i> ”					
Zheng Xuan		<i>ge</i>	<i>lai</i> 来		
			to come		
Li Ao		<i>ge</i>	<i>lai</i>	<i>zhi</i> 至	
			to come	to arrive	
Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism	Cheng Yi	<i>ge</i>		<i>Zhi</i>	
				to arrive	to the utmost
	Zhu Xi	<i>ge</i>			to the utmost

b. Association of Investigation of Things with Principle

Zhu Xi's skill of philological interpretation was the vital condition and catalyst for his philosophical genius. By muting the meaning “to come” or “to arrive” in the character “*zhi*” and by using the binomial “*qingzhi*” (to probe thoroughly) and “*jizhi*” (to the utmost) to specify and reinforce the second-order derivation, “*gewu*” in the Cheng-Zhu school departs from its earlier meaning, namely, “the coming forth of things (or events)” — as the natural result (Zheng Xuan) or the necessary condition (Li Ao) of extension of knowledge (*zhizhi*). It gains a new meaning: literally, [to investigate] things to the utmost. In the reinvented fifth commentary and interpretation (see 7.2.2) of *The Great Learning*, Zhu Xi expounds his thinking on investigation of things. Three propositions that represent the general position of the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism are embedded in it: 1) a proposition about the

relation between things and principle[s], (All things in the world embody principle[s]⁶⁸); 2) a proposition about the capacity of the human heart-mind as cognitive power (Everyone's heart-mind is intelligent and can perceive the principle[s] in things⁶⁹.); and 3) a proposition about the relation between principle[s] and knowledge (Knowledge is knowing the principle[s] in things). Clearly, all three propositions lead to and rely on the Neo-Confucian notion of principle.

My goal in this section is not to analyse the validity of these Neo-Confucian propositions from the Cheng-Zhu school but to appreciate the mechanism by which Zhu Xi transformed of “*gewu*” into a philosophical method of meta-ethical importance. By associating investigation of things with principle, Zhu Xi forged the famous Neo-Confucian doctrine “to investigate things in order to exhaust [probe thoroughly] principle[s]” (or perhaps, more properly, “to investigate things and to exhaust principles” insofar as the two were understood as the same process rather than two individual processes). When Zhu Xi writes: “‘investigation of things’ is the so-called ‘exhausting principle[s]’, (Vol.20, *Wenji*, p.631)⁷⁰ he actually equates “investigation of things” with “exhausting principle”, and establishes the former as the basic methodology in his remodelling of Neo-Confucianism. This parallel is already seen in Cheng Yi's thinking, where he used a hermeneutic technique, namely a philological interpretation of the characters, to bridge the two terms “*gewu*” and “*qiongli*”: “‘To investigate (*ge*)’ is as if ‘to exhaust’(*qiong*) while ‘things’(*wu*) is like [the] ‘principle (*li*)[of things]’. [Saying ‘investigation of things’, or ‘to investigate things’] is merely like saying ‘exhausting principle[s], or to exhaust principle[s]’ ”⁷¹ The point here is not whether Cheng's hermeneutic technique is absolutely justified. It's not hard to see that, in the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism, the original doctrine “*gewu*” (the “coming forth of things” in Zheng Xuan's terms) of *The Great Learning* is updated into the investigation of things and further translated into “*qiongli*” (“exhausting principle[s]” or

⁶⁸ From “all the things under heaven do not lack principle[s]”, I change the typical double-negation into affirmation.

⁶⁹ From “everyone's heart-mind is intelligent so that no one cannot perceive”, I change the typical double-negation into affirmation.

⁷⁰ My translation “夫格物者，穷理之谓也”.

⁷¹ MT: “格犹穷也，物犹理也，犹曰，穷其理而已也”.

“probing principle[s] thoroughly”). (For a diagram of this transition via hermeneutic operations see the end of this chapter)

The reformation of “*gewu*” is thus not in fact a hermeneutic fallacy, as the rigorous hermeneuticians believe. The Chinese hermeneutic tradition facilitates the intellectual development via the coordination of negative and positive dimensions of hermeneutics, which secure continuity within the evolution of thought. An intellectual tradition is like a living organism that has its own spontaneity. In this sense, it is better seen as a continuum (reflected by the Chinese idea of transmission of the *Dao*, *daotong*) rather than the accumulation of a bundle of discrete segments – the various intellectual movements that replace one another for the sake of historical, chronological convenience. Besides the explicit hermeneutic wholeness manifested in the Chinese transmission of the *Dao*, an implicit intrinsic law of thinking characterized by a certain teleological quality is also suggested. I will come back to this point in the comparative study between Kant and Zhu Xi in Chapter Eight, and as well as in the conclusion.

The transformation of investigation of things into the basic Neo-Confucian philosophical method rests on the transplantation of the philosophical significance of principle into this doctrine. The methodology itself does not offer philosophical profundity and complexity. As Zhu Xi says:

In this book [*The Great Learning*], the key word is the ‘Investigation of Things’ (*gewu*). If one can grasp it, then many words are needless... [However,] the saying ‘Investigation of Things’ is merely pointing the beginning of the path [namely, showing the direction, the “way”], one must start to investigate [all sorts of] things [in order to actually find the principles]. (Vol.14, Yülei, p.425-425)⁷²

In the comparative analysis, I will further expound the philosophical impact of this re-invented Confucian doctrine and its involvement in the establishment of the Neo-Confucian central notion principle, and compare it to the relevant aspects of Kant’s thinking.

To conclude this Chapter, I suggest that the mechanism for remodeling

⁷² MT: 此一书之间，要紧只在“格物”两字，认得这里着，则许多说自是闲了...格物两个字，只是指个路头，须是自去格那物始得。(语类，卷十四)

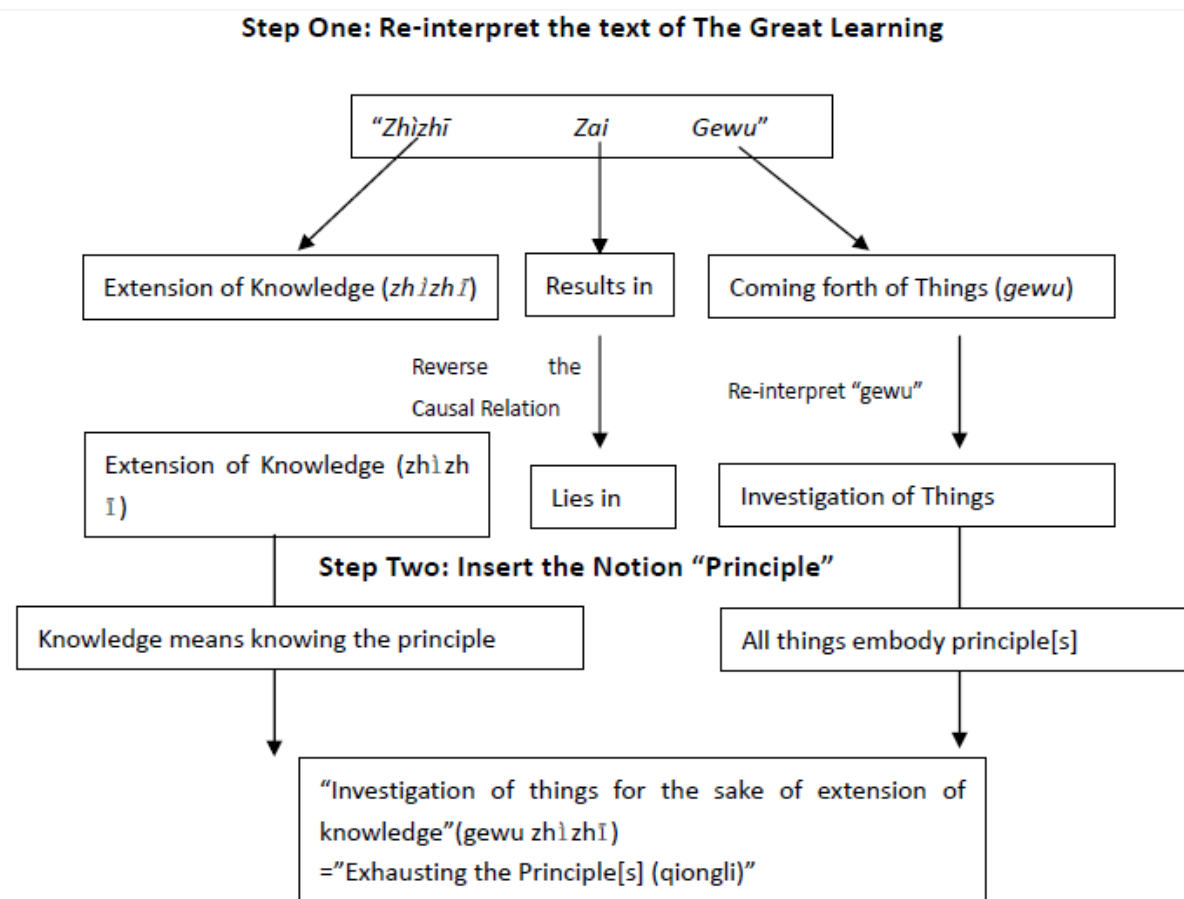
Neo-Confucianism must be explained in accordance with the Chinese hermeneutic tradition in two senses:

At the textual level, the shift in Confucian primary literature from the Han dynasty Five Classics to the Four Books that are grouped, edited, commented and interpreted by Zhu Xi is, by and large, a hermeneutic victory. In this shift, the elevation of the chapter “The Great Learning” of the *Book of Rites* to one of the authoritative Four Books via Zhu Xi's textual re-arrangement and reinvention of the lost fifth commentary on investigation of things is arguably the most important moment. Zhu Xi's supplemental hermeneutics is not a fallacy as the rigorous hermeneuticians often claimed, but a good example of the synthesis of the negative and positive dimensions of the Chinese Hermeneutics, which secures both the continuity and the evolution in passing down ideas.

In addition, there are some “recessive” hermeneutic operations in the actual exegesis of the thinking of “*gewu*”. I identified three phases in the evolution of “*gewu*”: (1) the Han dynasty hermeneutician Zheng Xuan's “coming forth of events”, (2) the Tang dynasty early Neo-Confucian protagonist Li Ao's “arrival of the external things”, and (3) Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian “investigation of things” as equated to exhausting or probing the principle(s) thoroughly. In this evolution, the positive hermeneutic operations on the philosophical interpretation of “*ge*” played a vital role, which echoes the Neo-Daoist methodology. Moreover, another effective hermeneutic operation lies in the association of “investigation of things” with the notion principle in Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, which transplants the philosophical profundity into this doctrine, bringing it into the up-to-date intellectual context, and eventually establishes it as a fundamental philosophical method in Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy.

Chinese thought is profoundly shaped by the hermeneutical methodologies. The complexity of the latter provides an adaptable mechanism for Chinese intellectual development, which is consequently characterized by a peculiar dynamic between continuity and evolution in thinking. From Neo-Daoism to Neo-Confucianism, the so-called theoretical novelty or philosophical creativity (as criteria) has to be understood in light of this fundamental and indigenous practice. Zhu Xi's philosophical genius is not

separate from his philological competence. The question raised in the Introduction (1.1.1) concerning Zhu Xi's theoretical novelty within his synthetic "great completion" is itself problematic.⁷³ In the following comparative study, I will further expound the hermeneutic mechanism in philosophy, and thereby provide a new angle of appreciating the systematization of Kant's critical philosophy.



⁷³ More on hermeneutics and creativity in the following chapter.

Chapter Eight Comparative Analysis: The Mechanism of Systematization of Thinking

Part Three of this thesis is devoted to an analysis of the special moments in the actual realization of the argued (in Part Two) transition to the supersensible via a methodological shift in the course of Kant's systematization of critical philosophy and Zhu Xi's remodelling of Neo-Confucianism. Chapter Six reveals the motivations, conditions, mechanism and source materials of the genesis of Kant's third *Critique* and his coining of reflective judgment. Chapter Seven presents the vital function of Chinese hermeneutics in remodeling Confucianism illustrated by Zhu Xi's complex hermeneutic operations on the Four Books, and particularly on *The Great Learning* and its "investigation of things".

In this Chapter I present the fourth comparative finding concerning hermeneutic mechanism for intellectual development. I first try to bridge the two hermeneutic traditions in order to justify the legitimacy of the hermeneutic operations as a method of intellectual development. I also want to redefine the idea of philosophical creativity in light of hermeneutics. With these findings, I then attempt to defend Kant's problematic architectonics of critical philosophy and mechanism for systematization. Finally, I integrate the two compared mechanism on a common ground, or in a common idea.

8.1 Bridging Two Traditions of Hermeneutics

Two Dimensions in Hermeneutics

Chinese hermeneutics is characterized by its dominant, widespread and continuous practices. In contrast, Western modern hermeneutics, particularly after Schleiermacher, advances in its systematic "second order... theoretical thinking". In this section, I want to bridge the two hermeneutic traditions. In light of the findings, Zhu Xi's re-invention of investigation of things and Kant's coining reflective judgment are studied and compared.

In his essay “The Rise of Hermeneutics” (1900), Dilthey reviewed the formation and characteristics of Western hermeneutics (1996[1900], pp. 239-243) – it sprouted from the Greek “*hermeneia*” (“the art of interpreting”), “took a second important step forward with Alexandrian philology”, gained “coherently expositing hermeneutic theory” from the competitive “theological schools of Alexandria and Antioch” in Late Antiquity, and “entered a new stage with the Renaissance”. In this new stage, “the ultimate constitution of hermeneutics stems from Biblical interpretation”, while the “*ars critica*”, namely “the philological codification of classical studies” also contributed to “hermeneutical rules”. Western hermeneutics continued to develop in the works of Flacius, Baumgarten, Meier, etc., but “all of this converged in Schleiermacher” who laid down the ground for “a scientific hermeneutics”. (ibid., p. 246) According to Dilthey, a scientific hermeneutics is equipped with two conditions: the methodical rules (or “codification” in his terms) and “the possibility of universally valid interpretation”.

Hermeneutics is the theory of the rules of interpreting written monuments...Hermeneutics determines the possibility of universally valid interpretation on the basis of an analysis of understanding. (ibid., p. 238)

The process of a scientific hermeneutics involves both a “logical” viewpoint and a “psychological-historical viewpoint”. The former requests the comprehensive application of a set of grammatical, historical, aesthetico-rhetorical, and material rules or knowledge in the process of interpretation; the latter demands the use of “understanding” “as a re-creation or reconstruction...in its living relation to the process of literary production itself”(ibid., p. 246). Dilthey believes that the use of understanding is precisely the decisive new development which converts “psychological-historical modes of thought into a new philological art of interpretation” (ibid., p. 247). In Chapter Seven, I have introduced a traditional division between “evidential study” and “philosophical study” in the study of Chinese ancient texts. The former approaches the ancient texts by the investigation of ancient language, inscription, names and institutions and so forth, so as to grasp the original meaning of the text and to reveal its original state, while the latter is usually free from strict linguistic investigation and evidential confirmation but emphasizes the coherent interpretation of the text in order to

convey one's own grasp of its meaning. Although as Sun Qinshan points out, Chinese traditional scholarship in the different historical periods often placed distinct priority in the two studies and thus generated two basic hermeneutic schools, I argue that these so-called two schools of Chinese hermeneutics respectively refer to the negative and positive (or creative) dimensions which are united in the general hermeneutic practice, particularly, synthesized in the concrete work of traditional scholars like Zhu Xi.

From the above, a strong parallel between the two Chinese hermeneutic schools and Dilthey's two aspects of a scientific hermeneutics distinction is found – Chinese “evidential study” resembles Dilthey's “logical” viewpoint of hermeneutics (or the “grammatical interpretation”), and the “philosophical study” is comparable to the “psychological-historical viewpoint” of hermeneutics (or the “psychological interpretation”). Besides this methodological correspondence, each tradition has its unique advantage that makes possible a mutual illumination and thus entails a productive comparison. The Confucian thinking tradition with its explicit hermeneutic spirit and continuous practices can be therefore understood in the light of Western modern hermeneutic theories. In return, the Confucian hermeneutic achievement offers rich case studies for verifying Western modern hermeneutics and strengthens its explanatory power.

Neo-Confucian Hermeneutics in light of Western Hermeneutic Theories

I have demonstrated in Chapter Seven that Zhu Xi's development of investigation of things and his remodeling of Neo-Confucianism largely rely on his skillful employment of the negative and positive hermeneutic techniques – seen in his textual re-arrangement of *The Great Learning*, his creative reinvention of the missing fifth commentary, his reinterpretation of “*gewu*” and associating it with the Neo-Confucian notion of principle, etc. A theoretical justification of this sort of factual complex hermeneutic mechanism for Chinese intellectual development can be drawn from Western hermeneutic insights. Dilthey's comments on Schleiermacher are also applicable to Zhu Xi's hermeneutic practice:

An effective hermeneutics could only develop in a mind where a virtuous skill of philological interpretation was united with a genuine capacity for philosophical thought. Such a one was

Schleiermacher. (ibid., p. 245)

Hermeneutics for Dilthey (and his understanding of Schleiermacher) is never only about philological exegesis but also a philosophical creation through understanding. Zhu Xi's philological interpretation of “*zhi*” provides a perfect example of this combination. As argued in Chapter Seven, by shifting the meaning of “*zhi*” from its first-order derivation – “to reach” or “to arrive” used by Li Ao, to its second-order derivations – “most[ly]” or “extreme[ly]”, Zhu Xi not only renewed the meaning of “*gewu*” and adapted it for the Neo-Confucian linguistic and philosophical context, but also gave it a methodological potential to be associated with the Neo-Confucian notion of principle. This single hermeneutic operation is so critical that it changed “*gewu*” from “the coming forth of things (or events)” as the natural result (Zheng Xuan) or the necessary condition (Li Ao) of Extension of Knowledge (*zhizhi*), to literally “[to investigate] things to the utmost” which could be further expounded as investigation of things and exhausting (probing thoroughly) principle.

Zhu Xi's hermeneutics is a synthesis of both the negative and positive Chinese hermeneutic methodologies. He was not as radical as his Neo-Confucian contemporary Lu Jiuyuan who claimed “it is the ‘Six Classics’ that commentates on me”,¹ nor like the rigorous Confucian hermeneuticians in the Qing dynasty, such as Li Guangdi, who took the Han dynasty hermeneutic practice, the “evidential study”, as their guiding principle. As opposed to the condemnation of Zhu Xi's hermeneutic operations on *The Great Learning* as a “supplementary hermeneutic fallacy” from the rigorous hermeneuticians in the Qing dynasty like Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766-1834) and Pi Xirui 皮锡瑞 (1850-1908), Dilthey's insight of “an effective hermeneutics” justifies Zhu Xi's employment of both the negative and positive hermeneutic techniques in which his “philosophical genius” and creativity is concretized via his art of philology.

Moreover, Dilthey's conceptions of hermeneutics further explains the hermeneutic

¹ Lu's idea to some extent reduced the importance of education (through study of the classics) – a central idea in Confucian ideology. Zhu Xi's investigation of things also incorporated “reading books” as a necessary part for the investigation, because, besides focusing of one's daily life, from reading one encounters the historical events and things which were important source for recognizing the principles.

mechanism for intellectual development. According to Dilthey, “understanding” is a human capacity of re-creation located in the intuitive process of imagination (1996[1867-68], p. 229). One should differentiate Dilthey’s “understanding” from the Kantian cognitive power whose “business” is “to think” by abstract concepts (4:304) – as “the faculty of thinking of rules” (*Lectures on Logic*, “*Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*, 1790s”, 693) or “[the] power of concepts” (*CJ*, 5:266). Dilthey argues that “sympathy is the basis of all understanding... Understanding arises when a series of inferences from particular to particular is placed in the service of intuition”.² The use of “understanding” converts “psychological-historical modes of thought into a new philological art of interpretation” which underlies the possibility of universally valid interpretation of the past “written monuments” (1996[1900], p. 247). By exerting Schleiermacher’s thinking, Dilthey describes the process of recreating universality through understanding in the hermeneutic practices as such:

The possibility of a universally valid interpretation can be derived from the nature of understanding. In understanding, the individuality of the exegete and that of the author are not opposed to each other like two incomparable facts. Rather, both have been formed upon the substratum of a general human nature, and it is this which makes possible the commonality of people with each other for speech and understanding...Now inasmuch as the interpreter tentatively projects his own sense of life into another historical milieu, he is able within that perspective to momentarily strengthen and emphasize certain psychic processes and to minimize others, thus making possible within himself a re-creation of an alien form of life.(ibid., pp. 248-249)

It is important to note that Dilthey acknowledges the limits of understanding and hence the ideality of the “universality” suggested by it:

Theoretically... all interpretation... is able to fulfill its task only up to a certain point. For all understanding always remains partial and can never be completed. *Individuum est ineffabile*.(ibid., p. 249)

A human being who understood everything would not be human – he would not be a real individual. It has been noted that a person who can transpose himself into anything is not a moral person.(1996[1867-68], p. 230)

I have argued that the tradition of Chinese thought is deeply intertwined with

² See student lecture notes, in which Dilthey explains: “all understanding involves a recreation in my psyche..this human capacity of recreation [is located] in an imaginative process..imagination is an intuitive process in which I add to intuitive moments that are given some that are not...concerning morality Schleiermacher has observed that if sympathy is the basis of all understanding, then the highest understanding require love...how understanding comes about. Understanding arises when a series of inferences from particular to particular is placed in the service of intuition. When something external is given to me, I must supplement it with an inner thought process. Such a task I can fulfill only by means of analogous cases.”(1996[1867-68],pp. 229-230)

hermeneutics. This symbiosis defines the peculiar mechanism for Chinese intellectual development. In such a hermeneutic mechanism, the driving force is not the so-called “creativity” – a concept that predominates in the contemporary world, despite the fact that the Chinese are often criticized for lacking it. I think the issue of “creativity” is an invention due to the birth of modern science which is explicitly characterized by the non-linear and non-comparable revolutions – the so-called incommensurable “paradigm shift” in Kuhn’s terms (1996, p. 150).³ But this issue of “creativity” finds no place, as an indigenous element, in a continuous and on-going hermeneutic evolution within a living tradition. However, the possibility and efficiency of the development or adaption of thinking via hermeneutics is never at stake – to infer from the above mentioned ideas of Dilthey:

First, at the heart of the hermeneutic mechanism is the dynamic between an ideal universality and its concrete realization “upon the substratum of a general human nature” or via “the psychological-historical modes of thought” that are available to all individuals. This dynamic reflects on the tension between the abstraction of universal humanity and the concretization of personalized individuality. For Dilthey, “understanding”, as a human capacity of re-creation located in the intuitive process of imagination, is the right device to convert this tension into a hermeneutic power resource, and thus to drive the unfolding of thinking through hermeneutic effort. In Neo-Confucian hermeneutics, we find a similar but concise proposal by Cheng Yi: “in all textual study, one only needs [to] ‘change’ (yi) one’s heart-mind, then the principle naturally manifests. The principle is nothing else but the [universal] principle for all human beings, it is so clear, as an even path [stretching ahead].” (*Erchengji*, p. 205).⁴ Cheng Yi’s “chang[ing] one’s heart-mind” in order to let the universal principle naturally manifest, is comparable to Dilthey’s hermeneutic projection via the “psychological-historical modes of thought” of understanding that underlies the possibility of a universally valid interpretation of the past “written monuments”. The Neo-Confucian universality lies in the inter-subjectiveness of the principle that is available and recognizable

³ For Kuhn, “the Copernican, Newtonian, chemical, and Einsteinian revolutions” are the examples of “paradigm shift”(p. 150).

⁴ My translation of “凡解文字，但易其心，自见理。理只是人理，甚分明，如一条平坦底道路”。

to every heart-mind with similar capacity, like the path that can be trod by all; for Dilthey, the universality is based on “the substratum of a general human nature” underlying the hermeneutic re-creation, namely, “understanding”. Further, for Zhu Xi and the Neo-Confucian scholars, besides the universality of principle recognizable to all, an assumption of the ideal and perfect ancient teaching as a historical embodiment of the universality also functions in the hermeneutic mechanism.

In addition, I have argued in Chapter Seven that Cheng Yi emphasizes a combination of the study of “linguistic and philological meaning” and the grasp of “the [philosophical] meaning” of the text – “[to] study the language, but also recognize the temperament of the sages and the virtuous [whose words are studied]” (*Erchengji*, p. 284, p. 296). However, Cheng Yi, like many Chinese hermeneutician-thinkers, does not bother to explain how to actually recognize the temperament of the sages and the virtuous. Dilthey’s psychological explanation of “understanding” makes up this lacuna.

Secondly, from a hermeneutic point of view, “creativity” is never without a ground, without a tradition or a destination – it is always a synthesis of the negative and positive hermeneutic elements which allow the synchronization of the continuity and change in the course of intellectual development. Therefore, on the one hand, “creation” is properly understood as a re-creation of the ideal universality in each concrete and particular context via “the individuality of the exegete”. On the other hand, this re-creation or realization of the ideal universality is a self-negation of it, which brings the trans-spatiotemporal idea of universality into a spatiotemporal embodiment. From a hermeneutic perspective, the development of thinking is thus the result of the dynamic between concretization and generalization, or that between universality and individuality. The Confucian idea of transmission of the *Dao* (*daotong*) well illustrates this hermeneutic mechanism of intellectual development. *Dao* is universal, as Zhu Xi put it – “*Dao* is the principle that in the past and at the present all depends on.” (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 397). However, *Dao*’s universality rightly rests on its being able to be concretized in everyday life and be available to each individual.

Dao is so called precisely because it is the natural principle of everyday life, like the road that

ought to be traveled by millions of people within the four seas and on the nine continents... Dao is [pervasive] under heaven: [it is] between [the daily social relations like] the ruler and the subject, or the father and the son; [it is] within the moments of [one's] waking and sleeping, action and rest. All of these have specific proper principles, which are not to be abolished even for a second. (Vol. 21, *Wenji*, p. 1690)

The idea of the transmission of the *Dao* allows that each generation, through the hermeneutic study of the ancient texts, has the possibility to embody the universal *Dao* and thus to reunite with the predecessors'. This reunion, cast in Dilthey's terms, is the "re-creation of an alien form of life" on the basis of "the substratum of a general human nature" by hermeneutic projection with the help of "psychological-historical modes of thought...[as] a new philological art of interpretation" available to all individual exegetes. In fact, Graham Parkes' image of drawing on transparencies (1987, pp. 2-4), although initially proposed for illustrating the comparative method, can well capture the hermeneutic mechanism for intellectual development and the dynamics between an ideal text and its up-to-date concretization, as long as Parkes's "original pattern" is understood as the ideal text, and the image drawn on "transparent sheet" as its hermeneutic re-creation.

In conclusion, the issue of "creativity" is absent in Chinese intellectual tradition with its strong hermeneutic spirit, but this does not forbid "philosophical genius" and intellectual development with the help of a hermeneutic mechanism. The historical thinking sketched in Chapter Four and Chapter Seven provides proofs aside from the above theoretical justification drawn from Dilthey's ideas. Moreover, this Chinese hermeneutic mechanism is secured by solid techniques, or in Dilthey's words, by "codification". As argued in Chapter Seven, the indigenous system of textual arrangement with a multi-layered (often fourfold) structure accomplished by Confucianism guarantees a combination of both negative and positive hermeneutic operations. It consequently enables the conservative preservation and the critical reformation of the texts, as well as the transmission and updating of an intellectual tradition, to go hand in hand at the same time, as shown in Zhu Xi's *The Great Learning*. Thus it can be seen that the problem raised in Chapter One (1.1.1) concerning the theoretical novelty and originality of Zhu Xi's synthetic "great completion" of Neo-Confucianism is an unfair accusation. Zhu Xi's philosophical legacy is not grounded on the modern conception

of “creativity”. In addition, Tillman’s “historical approach” which “place[s] him [Zhu Xi] in the historical context of colleagues whose contributions have conventionally been slighted” does not in the least reduce Zhu Xi’s towering achievement but rather indicates the peculiar hermeneutic mechanism for Chinese intellectual development.

8.2 Kant’s Coining Reflective Judgment in a Hermeneutic Explanation

Chinese hermeneutic methodologies and the findings from bridging two hermeneutic traditions can be used in re-thinking Kant’s problematic architectonics of critical philosophy and the paradox in its systematization.

Revisit Kantian Mechanism for Unfolding Critical Philosophy

In Chapter Six, as I have pointed out, Kant regarded his critical philosophical system as fully conveyed in the first *Critique* in 1781, though with room for “now and again clarification”. For Kant, due to a “certain amount” of terminological obscurity that was “not altogether avoidable” (*CJ*, 5:170), conceptual clarification was required to reduce the obscurity but not to refine or revise the system. Therefore, in 1783, when Kant had not yet articulated the second or third *Critique*, he confidently compared his critical philosophy to a well-established machine: “in a word, the machine is there, complete, and all that needs to be done is to smooth its parts, or to oil them as to eliminate friction, without which, I grant, the thing will stand still” (*Correspondence*, 10:339). I have argued that this seeming paradox – a fully presented systematic whole of philosophy (since the first *Critique*) at the same time open to a continuous conceptual clarification for further development (more critiques) – contains the mechanism for Kant’s systematization of critical philosophy. This hypothesis is confirmed by Kant’s own expectation of the *CPrR*, as essentially an intensive clarification of the new usage of the concepts already surveyed in the first *Critique*, as opposed to a new exploration of the system (*CPrR*, 5:7).

I have also introduced a conceptual device invented by Gerd Buchdahl’s (1992, pp. 3-104) – the so-called “reduction-realization process” (RRP) or sometimes

“reduction-realization procedure” for studying the general structure of Kant's philosophy and its “various nodal points”. He argues that “RRP” offers a diachronical angle for viewing Kant's thought as a “realizational process” (or, “generative process”), in a “dynamic flow” rather than fixed in “a timelessly given structure”. From the “RRP” perspective, certain core Kantian concepts (such as “object” and “thing in itself”) and Kant's entire transcendental philosophy are to be understood as moving toward multiple realization or, conversely, seen as collapsing back. Buchdahl's RRP establishes a sense of internal continuity in Kant's intellectual development throughout both the pre-critical and critical period. It reduces “the endless confusion and perplexity” in certain Kantian concepts such as “transcendental object”, and also supplies both an angle for understanding Kant's own philosophical methodology as well as a “picture” of transcendental philosophy in general with “stages of the process of realization”, which conforms with Kant's own account of the dynamics of his critical philosophy in light of the idea of constant and necessary “clarification”.

Critical Philosophy Viewed as a Hermeneutic Composition

Dilthey argues that “the ultimate goal [and also the highest possibility] of hermeneutics is to understand an author better than he understood himself. This is a principle that is the necessary consequence of the theory of unconscious creation.”(1996[1900], p. 250) Here from a hermeneutic position, I suggest that Kant's “clarification” or Buchdahl's “RRP” both can be properly explained by the Chinese hermeneutic mechanism.

Kant's intellectual development after the first *Critique* can be viewed as a self-exegesis – a hermeneutic realization which is comparable to the Neo-Confucian remodelling of Confucianism. Firstly, the architectonics of critical philosophy with its final triadic-symmetrical structure can be understood in light of the Chinese multi-layered hermeneutic arrangement. In this sense, Kant's critical philosophy is not seen as a systemic whole supported by the three *Critiques* as three parallel pillars, but an original “text” (the first *Critique*) interpreted and enriched by hermeneutic multi-layers. The second and third *Critiques* are hermeneutic re-creations based on the systemic whole already conveyed in the first *Critique* as Kant himself declared. Secondly, Kant's idea of “clarification” is essentially

hermeneutic. The *CPrR* is the first hermeneutic layer in which Kant re-interprets his concept of reason by a distinction between practical and theoretical reason. Consequently, this self-exegesis allows a breakthrough in Kantian ethics; the *CJ* is the second layer of Kant's critical self-exegesis, in which he re-interprets the power of judgment and introduces the distinction between reflective judgment and determinative judgment. These two *Critiques* are based on two decisive conceptual or "terminological" clarifications, which, besides their philosophical rationale, are of no little philological genius. Kant's associating the power of judgment with the term "reflective" is to some extent also a hermeneutic philosophical operation.

Here I in particular want to compare the process of Kant's coining of reflective judgment with Zhu Xi's philological interpretation of "zhi" that transformed the term "gewu" in light of the hermeneutic mechanism. Firstly, in order to gain a hermeneutic continuity, Kant adheres to his former definition of the power of judgment as "the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal" (*CJ*, 5:179). This is similar to Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's inheritance of Li Ao's philological interpretation of "ge" as "zhi". It is a negative hermeneutic operation for the sake of textual and meaning preservation.

Secondly, Kant also employs more positive hermeneutic operations: he further specifies the definition as "judgment in general" and relegates "the power of judgment" conceived in the first two *Critiques* into a mere species of judgment in general. He then creatively introduces the dichotomization between determinative and reflective judgment, and attributes to the latter a special autonomy – "judgment is not merely an ability to subsume the particular under the universal (whose concept is given), but also, the other way round, an ability to find the universal for the particular." (*ibid.*, 20:209) This division is compatible with the previous definition of judgment, but also re-invents the power of judgment, which now *de facto* contains the ability "to reflect", namely, to legitimise subjective *a priori* principle for itself. To adopt Yang's (2010, p. 77) comment on Neo-Daoist hermeneutics, one can say that Deleuze's contention, that "reflective judgment manifests and liberates a depth which remained hidden in the other [namely, determinative judgment]" (1983, p. 60),

conveys Kant's "art of releasing the potential of a text". The mechanism underlying Kant's positive hermeneutic reinvention of the power of judgment is comparable to that of Zhu Xi's creative philological interpretation of "*zhi*". By shifting the meaning of "*zhi*" from its first-order derivation – "to reach" or "to arrive" used by Li Ao, to its second-order derivations – "most[ly]" or "extreme[ly]", Zhu Xi not only renewed the meaning of "*gewu*" into investigation of things and adopted it for the Neo-Confucian linguistic and philosophical context, but also gave it a methodological potential to be associated with Neo-Confucian principle. Kant's coining of reflective judgment also in the first place relies on his linguistic distinction between "to reflect" and "to determine" (6.3.2).

In brief, Kant's coining of reflective judgment promotes the power of judgment into an autonomous power while Zhu Xi's re-interpretation of "*gewu*" transforms it into a central Neo-Confucian method. Both offer a possible way of coping with the supersensible (or the formless) and solve their respective metaphysical crises as argued in the second part. Both are excellent deployments of the negative and positive hermeneutic techniques, in which their "philosophical genius" and creativity is concretized by means of their arts of philosophy in terms of Dilthey's insight of "an effective hermeneutics".

8.3 Hermeneutic Circle

Hermeneutic mechanism for both Kant's unfolding of critical philosophy and Zhu Xi's remodelling of Confucianism leads to an important idea – the "hermeneutic circle". As Dilthey explains:

The whole of a work is to be understood from the individual words and their connections with each other, and yet the full understanding of the individual part already presupposes that of the whole. This circle repeats itself in the relation between an individual work and the development and spiritual tendencies of its author, and it returns again in the relation between individual work and its literary genre. (1996[1900], p. 249)

The idea of a "hermeneutic circle" is perennial in western hermeneutic thinking.⁵ Before

⁵ Spinoza on "Hermeneutic circle": "There is an analogy, Spinoza claims, between our understanding of nature and our understanding of the Scriptures. In both cases, our understanding of the parts hinges on our understanding of a larger

Heidegger turned it into “something completely different”⁶, “in Spinoza, Ast, and Schleiermacher, the hermeneutic circle was conceived in terms of the mutual relationship between the text as a whole and its individual parts, or in terms of the relation between text and tradition” (Ramberg and Gjesdal, 2005). I argue that the remodeling of Confucianism by the Neo-Confucians manifests the “hermeneutic circle” at a few levels:

First, the individual textual level represented by Zhu Xi’s operation on *The Great Learning*. Zhu Xi’s (1) rearrangement of 10 sections of the pre-Qin commentary and interpretation (*zhuan*) in accordance with the classic (*jing*), and (2) reinvention of the fifth commentary and interpretation on investigation of things, are both justified as a textual “hermeneutic circle” in terms of the part-whole relationship. *Jing* and *zhuan* form the textual whole. The two parts are mutually dependent in virtue of the textual coherence and thus form a “hermeneutic circle”. In addition, *jing* has priority because *zhuan* is its interpretation. Therefore, it is valid that Zhu Xi adjusts the *zhuan* in accordance with the inner logic of the *jing* for the sake of this particular textual coherence, even if it is also true, as Chen argues, that the extant text of *jing* itself can also be questioned and reorganized, with better coherence a potential result. (Chen, 2000, p. 281).

Second, at the level of systematic codification. The multi-layered textual arrangement in Confucian hermeneutics manifests a structural “hermeneutic circle” in terms of the text-tradition relationship. It keeps the “historical traces” of the evolution of thought from different periods, and at the same time leaves room for up-to-date creativity. It allows collective effort on the same handed-down text and provides a platform for

whole, which, again, can only be understood on the basis of the parts. Seen in a larger perspective, this hermeneutic circle, the movement back and forth between the parts and the whole of the text, is an important hermeneutical theme. What does not lend itself to immediate understanding can be interpreted by means of philological work. The study of history becomes an indispensable tool in the process of unlocking hermetic meaning and language-use.” Ast on “Hermeneutic circle”: “This, Ast thought, was possible through the combination of a synthetic and an analytic approach, the former focusing on the whole, the latter on the particular parts of which this whole consists. Ast thereby extends the scope of the hermeneutic circle. Originally conceived in terms of the relationship between the parts and the whole of the text, the hermeneutic circle now includes the text’s relationship to historical tradition and culture at large.” Ranke on “Hermeneutic circle”: “Ranke argues, echoes the structure of a text in so far as it consists of a particular kind of co-dependence between parts and whole. Like reading, understanding history means moving along the paths of the hermeneutic circle, from part to whole and back again. Because the historical mind is itself situated in history, there is, however, no end to this circular movement. History cannot, as the Hegelians had been arguing, be conceptualized, once and for all, by speculative philosophy. Understanding history is an ongoing activity.” (Ramberg and Gjesdal, 2005)

⁶ As “the interplay between our selfunderstanding and our understanding the world” or “entails an existential task”. (ibid.)

trans-spatiotemporal critical correspondence, bringing individual interpreters to confront the tradition and stimulating the interplay between the individuality and the cultural heritage or the ideal universality.

Third, an intellectual historical level. Generally speaking, as argued in Chapter Four, fuelled by a long lasting intellectual movement stimulated by the Neo-Daoist and Buddhist philosophical accomplishment since the Tang dynasty, Neo-Confucianism is characterized by a return to the pre-Qin Confucianism for the sake of self-transformation and new growth. This seemingly paradoxical phenomenon – a regression for progression in the course of intellectual development – itself manifests a hermeneutic circle in intellectual history. A similar pattern is also seen in the Wei and Jin dynasties in the Neo-Daoist reconnection to the pre-Qin Daoist metaphysical tradition, and even in the *Puxue* of the Qing dynasty (which has little direct philosophical interest) in the calling of the rigorous hermeneuticians for a renaissance of the Han dynasty scholarship, as mentioned in Chapter Seven. Thus the idea of a “hermeneutic circle” sheds light on an inner nexus of Chinese intellectual history.⁷

In Kant’s case, the final presentation of his critical philosophical system, from a hermeneutic perspective, is not an edifice supported by the three *Critiques* as three parallel pillars, but an original “text” (the first *Critique*) interpreted and enriched by two hermeneutic layers. However, the idea of a “hermeneutic circle” and the above Chinese case study brings a more dynamic view: Kant’s critical project (mainly) executed by his three *Critiques* is in fact an on-going self-exegesis that is capable of responding to feedback, adjusting to changes and incorporating new ideas. In this sense, even if critical philosophy at the last moment of Kant’s self-exegesis still failed to convey a flawless system, it is never a patchwork (1.2.4) which is essentially made of material that comes to hand by chance without a purposeful articulation. Kant’s thinking, unfolded in the three critiques, expresses a constant hermeneutic circle. The criterion of hermeneutic mechanisms is never about a perfect completion, or a full realization of the universality in Dilthey’s terms, but about the appropriate concretization in each re-creation and re-generation.

⁷ Currently, one might observe such a phenomenon in China – the idea of “Chinese Dream”, in which a so-called Chinese cultural rejuvenated plays an indispensable part, is gradually replacing the slogan of “modernization”. Perhaps this is not a simple political propaganda but rooted in a peculiar cultural genetic trait.

In conclusion then, hermeneutic mechanism is characterized by a “hermeneutic circle” that manifests a part-whole relationship – either concrete like that between a text and its parts or abstract like that between an individual and tradition. From a hermeneutic perspective, a tradition of thought in general, or a particular philosophy, on the level of either collective effort or individual accomplishment, is like a living organism which as defined by Kant is also characterized by its dynamic and mutual-dependent part-whole causality. Philosophy conceived as organism has its own spontaneity. “Spontaneity” in a Kantian sense refers to the ability to act, rather than being merely receptive – “receptivity is distinct from spontaneity (self-activity)” (*Lectures on Logic*, “Dohcha-Wundlacken Logic”, 703, p. 441). More precisely, it implies the ability to initiate a causal relation. Therefore, spontaneity is associated with organisms – “a cause that has spontaneity (which, as such, cannot be matter)” (*CJ*, 5:411)⁸. Like an organism, philosophy grows and adapts; it preserves and mutates; it generates and regenerates; it flourishes and perishes.

⁸ Kant further associates “spontaneity” with the cognitive powers: “everything that is sensible rest on receptivity; but what belongs to spontaneity belongs to the higher powers” (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, 28:584). The supreme form of spontaneity is freedom – the absolute ability to initiate a causal chain from and for oneself. Kant describes the “aesthetic purposiveness ...[as] the [subjective] lawfulness of the power of judgment in its freedom” (*CJ*, 5: 271), which is associated with the harmony caused by “the spontaneity in the play of the cognitive powers” (5:197). Thus, via the concept of “spontaneity”, aesthetic purposiveness (judgment in its freedom) can be connected to the concept of freedom. In the *CPR*, Kant alludes to “the idea of a spontaneity that can, on its own, start to act- without, i.e., needing to be preceded by another cause by means of which it is determined to action in turn, according to the law of causal connection” (A533/B561). In the *CPrR* Kant makes it clear that “the idea of freedom [is] a power of absolute spontaneity” (5:48).

Chapter Nine: Destination of the Transitions: A Moral Teleology

In this chapter I present my final comparative finding: both Kantian and Neo-Confucian metaphysical transitions to the supersensible, or the formless, eventually converge into a moral teleology, despite differences in argumentation, terminology, and emphasis. First, I look into the idea of philosophical teleology and propose a preliminary conception of moral teleology. Then I provide an analysis of Kant's critical philosophy in an integrated teleological picture and abstract the key characteristics of Kantian moral teleology. Next, in light of these findings, I draw out the comparable philosophical elements in Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism as well as the central doctrines of Neo-Confucian moral teleology. In the course of this comparative reconstruction, the commensurability and incommensurability between the two philosophies concerning moral teleology is interrogated.

9.1 Philosophical Teleology

9.1.1. Language and Thinking – the Changing Fortune of “Teleology” in Daily Language

Language is the scaffold and carrier of thinking. According to Kant, the forms of spoken or written judgment correspond to the ways of human thinking, that is, the ways of the understanding (*Verstand*).

Our ability to judge... is equivalent to our ability to think. (*CPR*, A81)

The business of the senses is to intuit; that of the understanding, to think... thinking is the same as judging or relating representations to judgments in general. (*Prolegomena*, 4:304)

It is from this basic standpoint that Kant discovered the famous twelve categories (or pure concepts) of understanding, by an analysis of the different forms of judgments. I have argued that, in Dilthey's proposal of “an effective hermeneutics”, as well as in the hermeneutic mechanism for Zhu Xi's re-interpretation of investigation of things and Kant's coining of reflective judgment, one finds a synthesis of the negative and positive dimensions of hermeneutics – the philosophical genius and the philological skills in resonance. I now further argue that underneath this synthesis is a twofold dynamic between thinking and language: 1)

The evolution of language – the up-to-date preference of certain terms – might offer the moment for an intellectual breakthrough, as seen in Li Ao’s using “*zhi*” (to arrive) for an up-to-date interpretation of Zheng Xuan’s “*lai*” (to come), which gives Zhu Xi a lever for re-inventing “*gewu*”; while 2) new ideas in return promote and reinforce the usage of new language, as seen in Kant’s pedigree of “purposiveness” in the *CJ*, which he attempts to coordinate with the different usages of reflective judgment.¹

Our everyday language preserves the traces of historical intellectual developments. From a linguistic point of view, teleological thinking has deeper roots than a modern mind might expect. For example, the common Chinese phrase used to initiate a “why” question, namely, *weishenme* 为什么, or *weihe* 为何, literally means “for the sake of what”. Similar cases can be found in other archaic languages too, such as “forwhy” and “whereto” in old English, with its obsolete implication of “to what end”. These interrogatives designate an innate teleological formula, which seems to demonstrate a primacy of *telos* in ancient thinking that has been almost forgotten.

Philosophizing often starts with the asking of a “why” question. Aristotle thinks that philosophy begins in wonder:² “All men by nature desire to know” (*Meta.*, 980a22), and “it is owing to their wonder that man both now begins and first began to philosophize”(ibid., 982b12). Giving causal explanations is arguably the most common way of answering “why” – “We do not know a truth without some knowledge of its causes” (ibid., 993b24). “Clearly wisdom is knowledge about certain causes and principles” (ibid., 982a3). However, let’s not forget that, in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle famously argues that “causes are spoken of in four senses”: 1) “the substance, i.e. the essence”, 2) “the matter or substratum”, 3) “the source of the change”, 4) “for the sake of which and the good... [namely] the end of all generation and change” (*Meta.*, 983a24-983b5)³. It is notable that Aristotle’s doctrine of “four causes” responds to his linguistic classification of “the number of ways in which the term ‘cause’ is used” (*Physics*, Book II, 3). Among the four causes, the fourth cause, namely, the *telos*, is a cause “in the sense of end or ‘that for the sake of which’ a thing is done” (*Physics*, Book II,

¹ See the following argument in this chapter.

² “For men were first led to study philosophy, as indeed they are today, by wonder. Now, he who is perplexed and wonders believes himself to be ignorant... [he] took to philosophy to escape ignorance...” (*Met.*, 982b)

³ The four causes can be rendered in a tidy manner, as the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause, viz., the end or purpose, see (*Meta.* 1013a24–1013b3).

3), or, more metaphysically, “that for the sake of which a thing is” (*Meta.*, 1013a24–1013b3). “For the sake of which” is the characteristic formula of uttering this peculiar causal explanation.

In Chapter Three, I mentioned the “transformation of the way of thinking” in the West accomplished by the Scientific Revolution, which advocated an empirical and quantitative “method of philosophizing”. This transformation changed the way of our questioning and our anticipation of the answer. In a sense, the profound impact made by the Scientific Revolution lies foremost in a still on-going conversion of many “why” questions into the “how” questions in our everyday language.⁴ In a standard scientific quest, the functions of the two questions below are congruent:

Question One: Why do proteins have intrinsic signals that govern their transport and localization in the cell?

Question Two: How do proteins have intrinsic signals that govern their transport and localization in the cell?

Both questions lead to an investigation of molecular mechanisms by which proteins are moved to different places inside cells or secreted from cells. However, as shown in Aristotle’s classical doctrine of the four causes, the question “why” embraces more possible answers from different perspectives – such as, e.g., an alternative teleological explanation – which are eliminated by converting “why” into “how”. In the following, I want to re-evaluate philosophical teleology and its characteristics.

9.1.2. Aristotle and Philosophical Teleology

Aristotelian teleology derives from his thinking on “*telos*”. It is a classical philosophical teleology – “an explanation that makes a reference to the *telos* or end of the process” (Falcon, 2015, SEP). Here I want to stress a few points crucial to Aristotelian teleology in order to draw out the characteristics of philosophical teleology in general.

1. *Primacy*. The *telos*, conventionally also known as the final cause (*causa finalis*), is nevertheless listed as the “first” out of the four causes in *On the Generation of Animals*.⁵

⁴ Historically, these “why” questions, such as why does it rain, why are there earthquakes, why does wheat grow, and why do I have a headache, are rendered into actual “how” questions. Answers from the common-sensical modern point of view for those “whys” will hardly be “for the sake of the fertility of the earth”, “in order to punish the sin of the emperor”, “to supply human beings with food” and “as a sign of warming from the spirit”. All these answers, despite their variety, share something in common: an engagement with the concept of “purpose”, and thus are essentially teleological.

⁵ “There are four causes underlying everything: first, the final cause, that for the sake of which a thing exists; secondly, the

Andrew Falcon specifically stresses “the explanatory priority of the final cause” in Aristotelian causality – “the explanatory primacy of the final/formal cause over the efficient and material cause” (Falcon, 2015, SEP).

2. *Criticality*. Aristotle’s rich reflection on the causality of “telos” often brings about an incorrect impression that he is “the inventor of teleology”, but as Monte R. Johnson points out, he is more accurately “the first philosopher to examine critically the methodology of teleological explanation, and to argue for limits to its application in specific scientific contexts, such as physics, life sciences, and anthropology” (Johnson, 2006, p. 35). In a sense, Aristotelian teleology is an “aporetic” “approach to ends and purposes”, with a strong critical dimension. Aristotle was “a critic of the earlier use of purposes and goals”, who “worked to reign in abusive teleological explanations” and “was concerned to determine specific ‘standards’ (‘canons’ or ‘limits’) for teleological explanation” (ibid., p. 36).

3. *Atheism*. From a Judeo-Christian perspective, historically, “teleology” has often been categorized as a theological theory. God personified and has his own will – “*Jehoveh-jireh* (The Lord will provide)” (“Genesis” 11.27-2526). The world is God’s purposive creation. Therefore, everything that exists has its particular purpose, and history is proceeding towards a particular end, which conforms to a divine plan. “Teleology” in this sense, as put forward, for example, by divine design theory, is an apology that proves the existence of a higher intelligence, namely God, by appealing to a lawful arrangement of the world. However, this sort of “teleology” is distinct from the Aristotelian one. As Falcon points out, the Aristotelian teleology essentially demands no “purposive agent who is sensitive to an end”. The Aristotelian “teleological model for the study of natural processes... does not involve beliefs, desires, intentions or anything of this sort” – “the artistic model is understood in non-psychological terms... Aristotle does not psychologize nature because his study of the natural world is based on a teleological model that is consciously free from psychological factors” (Falcon, 2015, SEP). Johnson also points out that Aristotelian teleological explanations “are more like contemporary biological theories of evolutionary adaptation, and quite different from either ‘the teleological proof’ or ‘design argument’

formal cause, the definition of its essence (and these two we may regard pretty much as one and the same); thirdly, the material; and fourthly, the moving principle or efficient cause.” (GA, 715a)

employed by natural theology” (2005, p. 4). It is thus necessary to rectify the theological abuse of the concept of teleology before having a correct understanding of philosophical teleology.⁶

4. *Irreducibility*. For Aristotle, teleological explanation is not made superfluous by the other causes. *Telos* and “the necessary moving and materials causes... can be simultaneously explanatory... ‘it is possible for the same thing to be both for the sake of something, and out of necessity’ (94b27–8)” (Johnson, 2005, p. 57). Besides the simultaneity of both *telos* and the “necessary” causes, there is also “compatibility” between the two, which is “central to Aristotle’s teleology and natural science” (Johnson, 2005, p. 58).⁷ In a sense, *telos* is not only simultaneously explicative but also ineliminable.

In the 1720s, Christian Wolff invented the term “teleology” in order to designate “the study of final causes... as a separate discipline”. He “in fact holds teleology itself to be a special science, distinct from physics (which explains according to efficient causes)”. As he writes, “physics demonstrates the efficient causes of natural things, while teleology demonstrates their final causes. Now final causes are seen after the efficient causes have been recognized” (ibid., pp. 30-31). Based on his distinction between “the material world as mere appearance” and the “thing in itself” as its incognizable substrate, Kant argues for the irreducibility of the two causalities:

Hence we would consider in terms of mechanical laws whatever is necessary in nature as an object of sense; but the harmony and unity of the particular laws of nature and of the forms based on them are contingent in terms of mechanical laws, and [so] this harmony and unity, as objects of reason, we would at the same time consider it in terms of teleological laws (as, indeed, we would consider the whole of nature as a [teleological] system)... although the principle of a mechanical derivation of purposive natural products is compatible with the teleological principle, the mechanical one could certainly not make the teleological one dispensable. (CJ, 5:409)

To conclude this section, a philosophical teleology in general (literally, the study of *telos*) can be defined as a doctrine of using the concept of purpose to explain, which produces theories that employ concepts like purposiveness and principles like the causality of purpose (*nexus finalis*). Such a philosophical teleology holds teleological explanation to

⁶ I summarized in “Appendix One” Kant’s criticism of theological teleology.

⁷ Johnson argues that, “This compatibility of necessary factors and the cause for the sake of which is central to Aristotle’s teleology and natural science: ‘there are very many things of this sort, especially among things which are constituted by nature or are being so constituted; for nature makes them, on the one hand for the sake of something, and on the other out of necessity’ (Post ii 11, 94B34–37).”

be irreducible to mechanical and materialist explanation, and regards it as having primacy in certain issues. Like general philosophical theories, it is the fruit of critical thinking and, according to Kant, essentially irrelevant to theological apology.⁸ A moral teleology is a sort of teleology that holds that the *telos* (purpose) is at the same time a moral property. For instance, a metaphysical theory that claims that the final end (or final purpose) of the world (both the human and natural domains) is identical to the highest good is, then, a typical moral teleology.

9.2 Kant's Moral Teleology

In light of this conception of moral teleology, in this section I provide two ways of understanding the relationship between Kant's critical philosophy in general and his teleological thinking. I argue: 1) The *CJ* and the *CPrR*, viewed as two hermeneutic layers, together depict a broader picture of Kantian philosophical teleology that surpasses the mere teleological reflection on organism. The three *Critiques*, despite their being devoted to different cognitive powers, finally converge into a common path towards a moral teleology that culminates in Kant's conceptions of final purpose and highest good. 2) The critical philosophical project itself was driven by a teleological motivation, underwent a turn to teleology, and eventually proceeded toward a teleological destination.⁹

9.2.1 The *CJ* and *CPrR* in an integrated Philosophical Teleological Review

Kantian philosophical teleology essentially descends from the Aristotelian tradition.

⁸ "Now although teleology is useful to theology in very important ways, it quite obviously does not belong to theology as part of it" (*CJ*, 5:416). "The methodology [the study of the method] of teleology has at least a negative influence on... how this science can, in metaphysics, serve as a propaedeutic in relation to theology" (*ibid.*, 5:417).

⁹ Since there is hardly any available literature on this topic, my arguments are mostly based on my original reading of Kant. (My discussion on the relevant literature on Kant's teleology, see Chapter One "1.2.3 The Problematic *CJ* in Western Kantian Study" and "1.2.4 The Treatment of 'The Critique of Teleological Judgment'") Besides Rachel Zuckert's work that is referred in the following argument, Courtney D. Fugate's *The Teleology of Reason* (2014) also attempts to provide an integrated explanation of Kant's critical philosophy in light of teleology. Although Fugate and I both emphasize the intrinsic relation between Kant's teleology and his understanding of what is true philosophy, and we both notice the teleological concern underneath Kant's idea of the unity of reason and the teleological motivation driving Kant's critical philosophical project, I insist that Kant's teleology is essentially a moral teleology. Thus, my reading and interpretation of Kant's teleology is based on a central Kantian moral teleological thesis: the final purpose as the highest good. In addition, different from Fugate, I particularly focus on the role of reflective judgment in constructing a coherent Kantian teleology and the place of the third Critique in it. I also thereby integrate Kant's "Critique of teleological judgment" into a coherent Kantian teleology, which is not treated by Fugate.

Johnson argues that, even if “Kant doesn’t mention Aristotle in his critique of teleology”, in the Kantian teleological thinking on related themes “echoes of him [Aristotle] are unmistakable” (Johnson, 2005, p. 34). Ginsborg finds an apparent parallel between Kant’s and Aristotle’s teleology that consists of two common conceptions: 1) “a teleological conception of organisms... the analogy between organism and artifacts”, and 2) “a conception of organism as natural... different from artifacts”, namely, a ““non-machine-like’ view of organism” (Ginsborg, 2004, p. 58, p. 60).

As I attempt to show in what follows, if the philosophical teleology is a doctrine that employs the concepts of purpose and purposiveness and the principle of the causality of purposes for explanation, then Kantian teleology is actually established much earlier before his “Critique of Teleology” in the *CJ*, and is also much broader than his teleological reflection on the organism (which I specify as Kantian philosophical teleology in the narrow sense, or Kantian teleology of nature in the following argument). In fact, even the “Critique of Teleology” in the *CJ* surpasses a mere biological explanation of organism¹⁰ and reaches a more metaphysical level in its discussion of nature as a teleological system, the final purpose of the world, and the validity of the physicotheological teleological proof of the existence of God.

Below I will review the major themes investigated by Kant’s reflective judgment from a general philosophical-teleological perspective in the terms of purposiveness and purpose. From there, I also bring the themes of the *CPrR* into an integrated teleological picture. This reveals an inner teleological coherence within critical philosophy during Kant’s transition to the supersensible in order to save metaphysics in his late critical period.

a. Purposiveness in the *CJ*

The Concept of Purposiveness in General

For Kant, purposiveness is a peculiar lawfulness¹¹ – “purposiveness is a lawfulness that

¹⁰ In Peter McLaughlin’s excellent book *Kant’s Critique of Teleology in Biological Explanation: Antinomy and Teleology*, he reads and interprets “Kant’s critique of teleology as philosophy of biology” and “as a reflection on philosophical, in particular, methodological problems that arose through the constitution of an independent science of life, biology” (McLaughlin, 1990, p. 1).

¹¹ In critical philosophy, Kant has various terms for different kinds of rules, such as principle (*der Grundsatz-die Grundsätze*), rule (*die Regel-die Regeln*), law (*das Gesetz-die Gesetze*), maxim (*die Maxime-die Maximen*), imperative (*der Imperativ-die imperative*), etc., and each has very distinct applications and pertains to a few specific powers. “Lawfulness” implies necessity and universality while it does not simply equate to “law”. This terminological arrangement is not trivial.

[something] contingent [may] have [insofar] as [it] is contingent” (*CJ*, 20:217). Besides this not so helpful subtle definition, the peculiarity of the concept of purposiveness of the power of reflective judgment is rather clear, which can be understood in the followings aspects:

1. The concept of purposiveness is neither immanent like pure concepts of the understanding, nor transcendent like the ideas of reason.

Objective use of the pure concepts of reason is always transcendent, whereas objective use of the pure concept of understanding must by its nature always be immanent, because it limits itself to possible experience alone (*CPR*, A327) ¹²

On the one hand, it is not immanent in the sense that “the concept of purposiveness is not at all a constitutive concept of experience; it is not [a concept that can] determine an appearance [and so] belong to an empirical concept of the object, for it is not a category” (*CJ*, 20:219-220). On the other hand, the concept of purposiveness is also unlike mere ideas of reason which are transcendent in the sense that “no corresponding object can be given for them in experience” (*LM*, “Metaphysik K2, 1790s”, 28:775). The concept of purposiveness, as the a priori principle of reflective judgment, is realized in a “reflection” that entails something given in a presentation, either as intuition or concept (*CJ*, 20:211).

This peculiarity – being neither immanent nor transcendent – echoes Kant’s odd provisional notion of the possible immanent “use” of reason’s transcendental ideas (about the supersensible) in the *CPR* (argued in Chapter Six, 6.3.1). But in a mature, tidy trichotomous-symmetrical critical philosophical system, the function of the provisional notion is clarified and transferred to the legitimate capacity (a priori principle) of the newly promoted autonomous power of reflective judgment, which pulls reason out of limbo.

2. Among the Kantian hierarchy of lawfulness, unlike the other sorts of lawfulness such as pure concepts of understanding or imperatives of practical reason, purposiveness of judgment, is coordinated with one of the three capacities of the soul, the feelings of pleasure or displeasure(*CJ*, 5:177).

3. Purposiveness is a self-given legislation by an autonomous power of reflective judgment. It is a concept “perceive[d] in our power of judgment... [when] it merely reflects on... the

The term “purposiveness”, as the reference to a peculiar kind of lawfulness (rather than “law”) does not have a strong presence in the first *Critique*. In the *Prolegomena* (section36), Kant started to engage more with this term. It is emphasized and intensively used in the third *Critique*, which shows the development of Kant’s thinking.

¹² More on Kant’s dichotomy between “transcendent” and “immanent” see my argument in 6.3.1, and Kant (*CPR*, A327), (*CPR*, A643/B671), (*Metaphysik Dohna*,1792-93,28:679)

object's empirical intuition [of the aesthetics presentation]... or on the empirical concepts [of the natural objects]" (ibid., 20:220). Therefore, "it is actually the power of judgment that is technical. Nature is presented as technical only insofar as it harmonizes with, and [so] necessitates, that [technical] procedure of judgment" (ibid.). By "technical" Kant here means art-like. Insofar as the essence of art according to Kant is the presupposition of a purpose in its causality (rather than merely something being made, or artificial) as argued in Chapter Six (6.3.3), "technical" can be understood as "purposive" in this context.

Generally speaking, the two parts of the *CJ* are devoted to the a priori principles of the power of (reflective) judgment in its concept of purpose (and purposiveness) – the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" on subjective purposiveness of aesthetic presentation in ourselves, and the "Critique of Teleological Judgment" on objective purposiveness of organisms.

The Concept of Purposiveness of Aesthetic Judgment

Kant uses purposiveness for interpreting these major notions in the *CJ*:

1) He defines beauty in terms of purposiveness without a purpose (*CJ*, 5:226), or subjective formal purposiveness (ibid., 5:190). I argue that the actual inference involves a mediating concept, "cognition in general", that connects beauty with "purposiveness" in a delicate argument (roughly from section 1 to 13 of the *CJ*). "Cognition in general" is not a specific cognition, but the a priori pattern or structure of the cognitive powers in a "proportioned attunement" (ibid. 5: 217-219). (For more see "Appendix Two Beauty and Purposiveness").

2) He defines "the sublime" in terms of a subjective and non-formal purposiveness.¹³ "Aesthetic purposiveness is the [subjective] lawfulness of the power of judgment in its freedom" (*CJ*, 5: 271), which merely refers to subjective bases. He explains that judgments about "the beautiful" or "the sublime" each contain a purposive relation to the cognitive

¹³ "The sublime in nature can be regarded as entirely formless or unshapely and yet as the object of a pure liking, manifesting a subjective purposiveness in the given presentation." (*CJ*, 5:279)
 "When we speak of the sublime in nature we speak improperly; properly speaking, sublimity can be attributed merely to our way of thinking, or rather, to the foundation this has in human nature. What happens is merely that the apprehension of an otherwise formless and unpurposive object prompts us to become conscious of that foundation, so that what is subjectively purposive is the use we make of the object, and it is not the object itself that is judged to be purposive on account of its form. ([That is, what is subjectively purposive is,] as it were, *species finalis accepta, non data*, [namely, purposive appearance as received, not as given]." (*CJ*, 5:280)

powers. However, the former leads to “cognition in general” which lies a priori at the pattern of understanding (ibid., 5:219), while the latter lies a priori at the basis of the power of purposes, viz., the will, and thus is associated with practical reason (*CJ*, 5:280).

In this sense, aesthetic reflective judgment via its concept of purpose and principle of subjective purposiveness cooperates with and also bridges the other two higher cognitive powers (and also their respective concepts, nature and freedom). The concept of (aesthetic) purposiveness therefore provides the first moment of a teleological coherence in the critical philosophical system:

Both of these are explications of universally valid aesthetic judging and as such refer to subjective bases. In the case of the beautiful, the reference is to subjective bases of sensibility as they are purposive for the benefit of the contemplative understanding. In the case of the sublime, the reference is to subjective bases as they are purposive in relation to moral feeling, namely, against sensibility but at the same time, and within the very same subject, for the purposes of practical reason. The beautiful prepares us for loving something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, for esteeming it even against our interest (of sense), [and therefore realize the freedom]. (*CJ*, 5:267)

The Concept of Purposiveness of Teleological Judgment

In contrast to the above-mentioned two species of aesthetic purposiveness, the objective purposiveness of the natural organism, or so called “natural purpose” in the teleological judgment, manifests a paradox in its very conception: “as concept of a natural product it contains natural [not artificial] necessity; and yet, as concept of that same thing as a purpose, it contains at the same time a contingency” (5:396). It also leads to “the concept of a natural causality in terms of the rule of purposes – and even more so the concept of a being which is the original basis of nature, viz., a being” as the first cause, which “cannot be proved by reason” or “given us in experience” (5: 397).¹⁴ The teleological judgment in its reflection on the natural world assumes “a special kind of causality, or at least a quite distinct lawfulness of nature” (5:359), “viz. the causality of purposes (the *nexus finalis*)” (5:360) or the so-called second causality that I will explicate in detail later.

The causality of purposes is not problematic in the practical domain, since Kant defines the will as the faculty of purpose (*Metaphysik Dohna*, 1792-93, 28:677). However, this

¹⁴ But the concept of a natural causality in terms of the rule of purposes – and even more so the concept of a being which is the original basis of nature, viz., a being such as cannot at all be given us in experience – while thinkable without contradiction, is nevertheless inadequate for [making] dogmatic determinations. (*CJ*, 5:397)

causality perceived by the teleological judgment in its reflection on the natural world is merely a pseudo *nexus finalis*, insofar as it is only “designated... by analogy with the causality [the real *nexus finalis*] we have in the technical [purposive] use of reason” (5:383) so as to guide scientific research. It has “a negative [methodological] influence on how we must proceed in theoretical natural science”,¹⁵ and provides “a heuristic principle for investigating the particular laws of nature” (5:411), or “a special guide” in “describing nature” in terms of the natural purpose and the teleological system (5:417).¹⁶ After all, teleological purposiveness is only a foreign principle, rather than an indigenous (or inherent) principle for science (5:380).

To conclude, the purposiveness of teleological reflective judgment is a self-legislated lawfulness by reflective judgment in analogy to reason’s capacity,¹⁷ and is vouched for by the peculiarity of our discursive understanding (5:408). It is a purposiveness with a presupposed purpose – “we need the idea of purposes in order to study these things in their causal connection and to cognize the lawfulness in that connection” (*CJ*, 5:399). It is truly functional as an a priori principle of reflective judgment, but without a confirmation of objective reality by other cognitive powers.

For purposes in nature are not given to us by the object: we do not actually observe purposes in nature as intentional ones, but merely add this concept [to nature’s products] in our thought, as a guide for judgment in reflecting on these products. [And] an a priori justification for accepting such a concept, as having objective reality, is even impossible for us. (5:399)

Rachel Zuckert (2007, p. 358) is correct in claiming that “the *CJ* may be read to comprise a unified project in defense of the subjectively necessary principle of purposiveness, a project necessary to supplement Kant’s account of the a priori conditions for the possibility of judgment, knowledge, and experience in the *CPR*”. In this regard, the *CJ* is what I call a hermeneutic layer of the critical philosophy established in the *CPR*.

¹⁵ I add the emphasis. “Hence, the methodology [the study of the method] of teleology has at least a negative influence on how we must proceed in theoretical natural science, and also on how this science can, in metaphysics, serve as a propaedeutic in relation to theology.” (5:417)

¹⁶ I add the emphasis. “Positing purposes of nature in natural products insofar as these form a system in terms of teleological concepts is only part of describing nature, namely, by using a special guide [provided by the power of judgment].” (5:417)

¹⁷ “The concept of a thing as a natural purpose is one that subsumes nature under a causality that is conceivable only [as exercised] by reason, this subsumption then allows us to use that [causal] principle in order to judge what experience gives us of the object.” (5:396)

However, her generalization of a unified a priori principle of “three forms of judgment”¹⁸ as “the principle of purposiveness without a purpose” (ibid., pp. 69-87)¹⁹ needs reconsideration. At the least, her argument that purposiveness of teleological judgment is also “the principle of purposiveness without a purpose” (ibid., p. 90)²⁰ is inaccurate. Different from aesthetic judgment, Kant emphasizes that teleological judgment cannot be simply “without a purpose” but needs to presuppose a purpose as a functional part in the actual judging (CJ, 5:270, 5:435),²¹ even if this presupposed purpose does not have any objective reality.

In the concept of purposiveness of teleological judgment, one finds the second moment of a teleological coherence in the critical philosophical system. However, its mediating role is quite different from that of the purposiveness of aesthetic judgment, which plays the intermediary by referring to two different subjective bases that respectively link to understanding and practical reason. The purposiveness of teleological judgment, via its presupposed natural purpose and causality of purposes in nature as a teleological system, elicits the idea of “final purpose” or the “highest purpose” – a practical concept into the natural domain.²² The investigation of the different human higher cognitive powers eventually converges into a single idea – final purpose.

It is judgment that presupposes this condition a priori, and without regard to the practical, [so that] this power provides us with the concept that mediates between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom: the concept of a *purposiveness* of nature, which makes possible the transition from pure theoretical to pure practical lawfulness, from lawfulness in terms of nature to the final purpose set by the concept of freedom. For it is through this concept that we cognize the possibility of [achieving] the final purpose, which can be actualized only in nature and in accordance with its laws (CJ 5:196).

¹⁸ “Reflective judging proper (by which term I shall henceforth refer only to the epistemic activities of empirical concept formation, seeking higher laws, etc.), aesthetic, and teleological judging may, however, be understood more weakly to have in common that they are cases of non-determinative judging.” (p.66)

¹⁹ “This function of the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is its most significant, and proper, function, as a principle of the faculty of judgment itself.” (p.86)

²⁰ “I shall modify this claim in what follows; for now, I wish to argue only that the purposiveness of nature for our understanding may, on the most straightforward reading, be taken as purposiveness without a purpose.” (p.80, n23)

²¹ One standard to distinguish pure aesthetic judgment from teleological judgment is whether there is a presupposed concept of a purpose. “The transcendental aesthetic of judgment must be concerned solely with pure aesthetic judgment. Hence we must not take for our examples such beautiful or sublime objects of nature as presuppose the concept of a purpose. For then the purposiveness would be either teleological, and hence not aesthetic, or else be based on mere sensations of an object (gratification or pain) and hence not merely formal”. (CJ, 5:270); “...with a causality that is teleological, i.e., directed to purposes.” (5:435)

²² “The object and final purpose of pure practical reason” is the highest good” (5:129); “the highest good is the necessary highest purpose of a morally determined will – a true object of practical reason” (5:115).

b. Purposiveness beyond the *CJ*.

Lawfulness implies necessity and universality. Purposiveness as a peculiar lawfulness – the a priori principle of reflective judgment (either aesthetic or teleological) – is a peculiar self-given lawfulness which allows us to “put final causes into things” during the reflection of our presentation, which is empirically given, and thus, entails only subjective universality.²³ Kant argues: “[this] concept of reflective judgment, which enables us to perceive inwardly a purposiveness of our presentations, can also be applied to the presentation of the object [itself] as falling under this concept” (*CJ*, 20:220). A footnote follows this claim: “We say that we put final causes into things, rather than, as it were, lifting them out of our perception of things” (*ibid.*).

In the *CJ* Kant makes a distinction between aesthetic purposiveness and “pure intellectual purposiveness (the supersensible)”²⁴ – the latter refers to “the moral good” and reveals the “supersensible power” of our “inner freedom” (*CJ*, 5:271-273). This distinction leads Kant’s teleological thinking on purposiveness to transcend the boundary of the *CJ* and merges it into a bigger picture. In the practical domain, the sort of lawfulness of the purposiveness engaged by practical reason (such as the idea of highest good in a moral purpose) has more than heuristic self-legislated subjective necessity: rather it concerns the moral imperative which has “the pure objective determining basis” in the pure practical reason of “all finite beings” (5:32). In the *Groundwork*, Kant conceives the famous “categorical imperative” in terms of purpose:

So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end [purpose], never merely as a means. (*Groundwork*, 4:429)
Every rational being must act as if he were by his maxim at all times a lawgiving member of the universal kingdom of ends [purpose]. (*ibid.*, 4:438)

The *CPrR* is Kant’s further systematic study of “the practical use of reason”, in which “reason deals with determining bases of the will” (*CPrR*, 5:15).²⁵ It is “concerned with a will and has to examine reason not in relation to objects but in relation to this will and its causality” (*ibid.*,

²³ Kant explains “subjective universality”: “Subjective universality... demands everyone’s assent, even though it is not a cognitive judgment but only judgment... claiming a subjective purposiveness that is valid for everyone, without exception” (section 31), thus, subjective universality demands universal assent, and is valid for everyone (having the same cognitive powers).

²⁴ Kant also calls this sort of purposiveness as being “intellectual and intrinsically purposive”.

²⁵ Kant defines will as “a power either to produce objects corresponding to one’s presentations, or, at any rate, to determine itself to bring about these objects (whether or not one’s physical power is sufficient), i.e., to determine its causality” (*CPrR*, 5:15).

5:16). For Kant, the will “is the faculty of ends [purposes]” (*LM*, “Metaphysik Dohna, 1792-93”, 28:677). As P. C. Lo (1987, p. 41) points out, “Kant makes it very clear that when we deal with human conduct on an individual level... we have to deal with it through a teleological perspective.”

Kant’s teleological thinking is indeed already in his practical or moral philosophy before the “Critique of Teleology”. The *CJ* and the *CPrR* together depict a broader picture of Kantian philosophical teleology that surpasses the teleological reflection on organism. In this regard, it is not coincidental that both *Critiques*, even if starting from critical investigations of rather disparate cognitive powers, eventually converge concerning the moral proof of metaphysical ideas such as the special second causality of purpose, the concept of first cause or the original basis of nature (or the world), namely, God, etc.. All these points entails a single idea: the highest good.

c. The Moral Teleological Confluence: Final Purpose as Highest Good

Kant’s philosophical teleology is a moral teleology. Critical thinking is finally accomplished in Kant’s identification of the *Summum Bonum* (highest good) as the final purpose, and consequently sheds light on a moral teleological fact (that has “subjective practical reality”): “the idea of a final purpose in using our freedom according to moral laws... [lies in that] reason determines us a priori to strive to the utmost to further the highest good in the world” (5:453). In addition, the “ultimate purpose of humanity” is “morally good” (*CJ*, 5:298). The realization of this moral teleological confluence in the *CPrR* and in the *CJ* are not exactly the same but related. Below I reconstruct the main arguments:

***CPrR*: From Highest Good to Final Purpose**

In the *CPrR*, by a transcendental deduction, Kant first demonstrates that the “possibility of the highest good” rests “solely on a priori bases of cognition”: “it is a priori (morally) necessary [and possible] to produce the highest good through freedom of the will” (5:113).²⁶ He then links the moral idea of “highest good” to the teleological idea of “final purpose” (*Endzweck*), or “highest purpose” (*höchster Zweck*) in light of his reflection on “the moral law”. Although the highest good is not “the determining basis” of “a pure practical reason, i.e.,

²⁶ Emphasis is added by me.

of a pure will” (5:109), which is solely the moral law, it is nevertheless “the object and final purpose of pure practical reason” (5:129).²⁷ “The highest good is the necessary highest purpose of a morally determined will – a true object of practical reason (5:115). “To bring about the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law” (5:122). Finally, based on his moral teleological conception of “highest good”, Kant justifies the necessary metaphysical “postulate[s] of pure practical reason”, such as “the immortality of the soul” (5:122) and “a supreme cause” (or “a cause of nature as a whole”), i.e., God (5:125). These so called transcendental ideas, or “the supersensible,” which had been causing perennial problems within the German intellectual scene during Kant’s late critical period (as argued in Chapter Three 3.2.1–3.2.3), are now for the first time settled within his critical philosophical system with a teleological coherence. Metaphysics was thereby saved, in Kant’s opinion, thanks to the moral teleology.

However, although Kant’s second *Critique* for the first time properly settled the issue of “the supersensible” in critical philosophy, it nevertheless caused the split of reason (as argued in Chapter Five, 5.4) and exposed a vital systemic asymmetry within Kantian critical philosophy (as argued in Chapter Six, 6.1.2). The third *Critique*, as a hermeneutic effort of self-exegesis of critical philosophy (as argued in Chapter Eight, 8.2.3), was therefore a necessary remedy for the newly emerged systemic problem, as well as a reinforcement for the settlement of the issue of “the supersensible” which still confronted critical philosophy with its new variations (for example, Herder’s “organic force”, argued in 3.2.3).

CJ: From Final Purpose to Highest Good

The moral teleological confluence realized in the *CJ* takes a change in direction: here Kant orients the teleological idea “final purpose” to the moral idea “highest good”. By applying the teleological judgment in the study of nature, Kant harvests two major concepts: organism as the natural purpose (5:396), and nature as a teleological system.²⁸ The former expands the explanatory power of Kant’s critical philosophy into the inconceivable “chimera of natural powers” (5:411), namely, “natural objects whose possibility is

²⁷ Or, the “entire object of a pure practical reason” (ibid., 5:109).

²⁸ “Positing purposes of nature in natural products insofar as these form a system in terms of teleological concepts is only part of describing nature, namely, by using a special guide.” (5:417)

inconceivable to us in terms merely of the principle of mechanism (which in the case of a natural being always has a claim [to being applied]) so that we must rely also on teleological principles” (5:413). The latter leads the third *Critique* eventually to a quest to reach the end of the teleological causal chain, the ultimate purpose of nature,²⁹ “the purpose by reference to which all other natural things constitute a system of purposes” (5:430). Kant argues that the human is the ultimate purpose of nature, because “he is the only being on earth who can form a concept of purposes and use his reason to turn an aggregate of purposively structured things into a system of purposes”.

Kant then links the ultimate purpose to “the final purpose”. A few key propositions in his reference are worthy of notice:

1) Ultimate purpose is not congruent with final purpose. Final purpose must be something supersensible rather than “natural” (in the sense of material nature). “We can even prove a priori that what might perhaps be an ultimate purpose for nature can still, insofar as it is a natural thing, never be a final purpose, even if we endow it with all conceivable [natural] attributes and properties”. (5:426)

2) Only humans have the capacity to refer to the supersensible. Therefore, through the very existence of the human being, Kant connects the ideas of the ultimate purpose of a teleological system and the final purpose.

If we regard nature as a teleological system, then it is man's vocation to be the ultimate purpose of nature, but always subject to a condition: he must have the understanding and will to give both nature and himself reference to a purpose that can be independent of nature, self-sufficient, and a final purpose. The final purpose, however we must not seek within nature at all. (5:431)

Next, insofar as the supersensible in us (and available to us) is essentially moral, Kant reveals that the final purpose, different from other natural or human purposes, is characterized by its moral constitution (property) – it is identical to the highest good. At this point, the *CJ* connects up with the *CPrR* in an integrated moral teleology.

3) Echoing number one, final purpose³⁰ has to be unconditioned, and thus it is not within nature but the supersensible.³¹

²⁹ “An ultimate purpose of nature is certainly required for such a system to be possible.” (5:427)

³⁰ “If we find in the world arrangements in terms of purposes, and we follow reason's inevitable demand to subordinate these merely conditioned purposes to a supreme, unconditioned one, i.e., a final purpose, then, to begin with, we are obviously not concerned with a purpose of (i.e. within) nature, so far as nature [already] exists, but with the purpose of the [very] existence of nature and all its arrangements. In other words, we are then concerned with the ultimate purpose of

A final purpose is a purpose that requires no other purpose as a condition of its possibility (5:434).

The final purpose is unconditioned. ... For nothing in nature (considered as a being of sense) has, within nature itself, a basis determining it that is not always conditioned in turn. This holds not merely for nature outside us (material nature) but also for nature within us (thinking nature). (5:435)

4) The power of judgment in its reflection on nature steers our teleological thinking from the supersensible idea of final purpose – which is essentially beyond its grasp – towards a moral idea of highest good. But only in pure practical reason and its a priori principle can the final purpose be identified as the highest good, as is already established by Kant in the *CPrR*.

Only pure reason can provide a priori a final purpose (because all the purposes in the world are empirically conditioned and [hence] cannot contain what is good absolutely, but only what is good for this or that, i.e., for some contingent aim). And only a final purpose would instruct me how I must conceive of the supreme cause of nature in order to judge nature as a teleological system... (5:441)

5) Therefore, in the existence of the human “as a moral being” and through human’s moral capacity (namely, “the freedom of his power of desire”), the “final purpose of creation” is thereby discovered, and so is its moral property–“the highest good under moral law” (5:443-443).³²

Moral laws... have this peculiar characteristic: they prescribe something to reason and they prescribe it as a purpose not subject to a condition, and hence just as the concept of a final purpose requires... the only conceivable final purpose of the existence of a world is the existence of this kind of reason, in other words, the existence of rational beings under moral laws... The moral law is reason's formal condition for the use of our freedom and hence obligates us all by itself, independently of any purpose whatever as material condition. But it also determines for us, and a priori, a final purpose, and makes it obligator for us to strive toward [achieving] it; and that purpose is the highest good in the world that we can achieve through freedom. (5:449-450)

6) The teleological causality of purpose, in its supreme form, is freedom under moral law (or free will), the capacity that all rational beings have to initiate a causal chain in

creation, and actually, within that purpose, with the supreme condition under which alone there can be a final purpose.” (5:443) Regarding the final purpose, see also AK 29:847.

³¹ For more argument on the difference between natural/supernatural and supersensible, see Chapter Three, 3.3.2 .

³² "We must already presuppose that man is the final purpose of creation... the only [thing] that can give man's existence an absolute value, and by reference to which the existence of the world can have a final purpose, is the power of desire... [More precisely,] I mean the value that he can only give himself, and that consists in what he does, how and on what principles he acts, not as a link in nature, but in the freedom of his power of desire; in other words, I mean a good will... only as a moral being that man can be a final purpose of creation. "(5:443) "It is only as a moral being that we acknowledge man to be the purpose of creation. Thus we now have, in the first place, a basis, or at least the primary condition, for regarding the world as a whole that coheres in terms of purposes, and as a system of final causes." (5:444)

terms of purpose, as confirmed in the *CPrR*.³³ In the *CJ*, Kant again comes to save metaphysics by solving metaphysical puzzles (God, freedom, and immortality)³⁴ in light of the idea of “freedom under moral law” (5:473).³⁵

Among the three pure idea of reason, God, freedom, and immortality, that of freedom is the only concept of the supersensible which (by means of the causality that we think in it) proves in nature that it has objective reality....we have in us a principle[the moral law] that can determine the idea of the supersensible with us, and through this also the idea of the supersensible outside us....Hence the concept of freedom (the concept underlying all unconditioned practical laws) can expand reason beyond those bounds within which any concepts of nature (i.e., theoretical concept) would have to remain hopeless confined. (5:474)

The third *Critique*, as the last beam of Kant’s critical enterprise, with its newly coined philosophical method of reflective judgment in the quest of its a priori principle in terms of purposiveness and purpose safely steers the project of critical philosophy through the metaphysical crisis caused by “the supersensible”, and transfers the teleological explanation to the final jurisdiction by practical reason, joining up with the *CPrR* to form a general Kantian moral teleology.

Moral Teleology

There is a physical teleology; it provides us with a basis that gives us sufficient proof, for theoretically reflective judgment, for assuming the existence of an intelligent cause of the world. But we also find in ourselves, and even more so in the general concept of a rational being endowed with freedom (of its causality), a moral teleology. (5:447)

Kant further explains his idea of a moral teleology:

This moral teleology, then, deals with the reference of our own causality to purpose, and even to a final purpose at which we must aim in the world, and also with the reciprocal relation the world has with that moral purpose and with how we can, as far as external [nature] is concerned, carry it out (for which a physical teleology cannot give us any guidance). (5:447)

In his proposal of moral teleology, Kant solves the problem that initially urged him on to create a third *Critique*, namely, the gap between nature and freedom caused by the split reason after the *CPrR*. “There is indeed a moral teleology. It is connected with the *nomothetic* of freedom on the one hand and with that of nature on the other” (5:448). With

³³ Practical reason on its own “provides a suprasensible [übersinnliche, or supersensible] object of the category of causality, namely freedom, with reality (a practical concept... only for practical use).” (5:6)

³⁴ “God, freedom, and immortality of the soul are the problems at whose solution all the apparatus of metaphysics aims as its ultimate and sole purpose.” (5:473)

³⁵ “Now the only such [supersensible, yet proved in experience that they have reality] concept to be found in human reason is that of man’s freedom under moral law, together with the final purpose that reason prescribes through these laws.” (5:473-474)

this moral teleology, Kant also reconciles the conflict between natural philosophy, metaphysics, and religion, by combining “our cognition of physical purposes with that of the moral purposes... [so as to] support the practical reality of the idea of God”, insofar as it is “reason’s maxim to strive to unify principles as much as we can”(5:456). In brief, teleological judgment in its reflection on nature cannot help but conjure up “a physical teleology”, while reason in us provides the philosopher’s stone, turning it into “a moral teleology”. With its necessary inference from this moral teleological transformation, there is no more metaphysical daydream or theological dogma around the supersensible.³⁶

9.2.2. The Teleological Nature of Kant’s Critical Philosophical Project

In addition to the aforementioned teleological convergence in critical thinking, the project of critical philosophy itself is also characterized by a teleological spirit. In Kant’s 1787 essay “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy” (in the same period as his working on the *CPrR*), he recognizes “a need to start from a teleological principle where theory abandons us”, and calls for a teleological turn in his philosophical pursuit, which resonates with his transition to the supersensible and the effort in saving metaphysics in his late critical period:

Elsewhere I have shown that in metaphysics reason on the theoretical path of nature[physics] (with respect to the cognition of God) is not able to achieve its entire intention as wished, and that therefore only the teleological path remains for it--yet in such a way that it is not the natural ends [purposes], which rest only on arguments from experience, but an end [a purpose] that is given and determined a priori through pure practical reason (in the idea of the highest good) that may supplement the shortcoming of the deficient theory. In a small essay on the human races I have attempted to prove a similar warrant, indeed a need to start from a teleological principle where theory abandons us. But both cases contain a demand to which the understanding submits only reluctantly, and which can give sufficient occasion for misunderstanding. (*TP*, 8:157)

For Kant, teleology is almost another name for metaphysics; the investigation of nature³⁷ bifurcates: either “theoretical” or “teleological”, the first case referred to as physics, the second, metaphysics (*ibid.*). The use of a moral purpose “that is given and determined a priori through pure practical reason (in the idea of the highest good)” and

³⁶ “In this way moral teleology compensates for the deficiency of physical teleology and for the first time supplies a basis for a theology.” (5:444)

³⁷ By nature Kant means “the sum-total of all that exist as determined by laws, taking together the world (as nature properly so called) and its supreme cause” (*TP*, 8:157).

which constitutes vital arguments in the *CPrR* confirms that a teleological turn in critical philosophy started no later than 1786. The above claim made by Kant also shows that his teleology is essentially a metaphysical and moral teleology, with the “highest good” as the final purpose of the teleological system.

In fact, a teleological motivation can be identified at the very beginning of Kant’s critical philosophical project; the project itself has been motivated by the “highest good” and “final purpose”. In his logic lectures around 1780 (*Logic*, “Vienna logic, (around 1780s)”, 798-799), Kant argues that “philosophy is the system of philosophical cognition”, of “speculative cognition from concepts”. He further distinguishes it into two senses: 1) a skillful and correct construction of a system of *principia a priori* in the scholastic sense, and 2) “in *sensu cosmico*... a science of the highest maxims of the use of our reason”. He believes that true philosophy is an idea of the most perfect legislation or righteous use of human reason,³⁸ and it “aimed at wisdom, which must be the highest good for our striving”. More precisely, in terms of the two senses of philosophy,³⁹ Kant argues that “the true worth of the use of reason can only be determined through the connection that this cognition has with the final end. There is therefore a science of wisdom”. That is why he also calls philosophy in the second sense “a science of ultimate final ends of human reason”.⁴⁰ Thus, the philosopher’s task is “to cognize the connection of all cognition of reason with the final ends”.⁴¹

Judging from the above argument, critical philosophy begins with a crucial (moral) teleological motivation: to determine the true worth of the use of reason through its connection with the final end (highest good), or to cognize the connection of all cognition

³⁸ In the argument Kant uses both “reason” and “understanding” interchangeably. I think the term “human reason” is in a more general sense, which does not mean the specific one higher cognitive power, but rather human intelligence.

³⁹ The idea of two senses of philosophy is essentially comparable and compatible with Kant’s idea of the two obligations of philosophy which I have investigated before, namely systematization of concepts and methodological development. Both ideas first emphasize the systematic arrangement of philosophical cognition. The respective second points of the two ideas are not as distinct as they seem to be but logically related — a scrutiny of the use of human reason (or an examination of the legislation of human reason) must at the same time demand the determination of the proper philosophical methods in regard to the different domains of the investigation.

⁴⁰ “a conceptus cosmicus [cosmic concept]... is a science of ultimate final ends of human reason”. When Kant argues philosophy is a science of the use of reason, he uses a different phrase, “in *sensu cosmico*”, namely, in cosmic sense.

⁴¹ Kant further divides the task into threefold goals: to determine “1. the sources of human knowledge, 2. the beginning of the use [of those cognitions], 3. their limits, this is one of the hardest, but also most sublime things in philosophy which presently only a few have attained.” The third goal of determining the limits, reminds us of the claim of critical philosophy. Kant remarks that “philosophy in *sensu cosmico* is also called philosophy in *sensu eminent*.” (*Logic*, “Vienna logic, (around 1780s)”, 798-799)

of reason with the final ends. In the *CPrR*, Kant confessed that this idea came from his understanding of the ancients, “for whom philosophy was an instruction [directed] to the concept wherein the highest good is to be posited and to the conduct whereby this good is to be acquired. We would do well to leave this word in its ancient meaning, as [signifying] a doctrine of the highest good insofar as reason endeavors therein to attain to science” (5:108)⁴².

In the post-critical period, Kant maintained almost the same teleological motivation of philosophizing:

Philosophy in the scholastic sense <in sensu scholastico>, is thus the system of the philosophical rational cognitions from concepts, but in the cosmopolitan sense <in sensu cosmopolitico> it is the science of the ultimate ends of human reason...Philosophy is a science of the highest maxims of the use of our reason ...One can never become a philosopher without cognition; but cognitions alone never constitute a philosopher; there must be a purposeful unity of this skill [systematize the cognitions], and an insight into the agreement of this skill with the highest ends. (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, “Metaphysik L2”, 28:532-534)

But now he stresses more clearly that the second sense of philosophy “gives... [it] dignity”, “absolute worth”, “inner worth” and “usefulness”; “philosophy in the first sense is thus the doctrine of skill, but in the other of wisdom” (28:532). Most importantly, Kant extends the teleological motivation and now uses the concept of purpose to justify the systematicity of his philosophy. For Kant, the systematicity of philosophy is ultimately explained in the single idea of the final purpose of our human reason. In this sense, his philosophical project, by analogy, an intellectual “organism”, not only starts from a teleological motivation but eventually returns to a single teleological idea:

Not every science allows of a systematic connection. Systematic connection is the connection of various cognitions in one idea. Now philosophy is the only science that has a systematic connection, and it is that which makes all the other sciences systematic...there must a higher end [purpose] in which the others have unity. Our use of reason also can have worth with respect to this science only insofar as it is determined how far these cognitions concern the ultimate final ends [purposes] of human reason. (*L M*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790s”, 28:533)

I have argued that the actual thinking in the three *Critiques* converges into a moral teleology. Now, if the Kantian philosophical project must be unified into a single idea, it has to be also a moral idea of a final purpose.

⁴² Kant’s renewing the definition of philosophy via his “understanding” of the ancients to some extent corresponds to my argument on critical philosophy and hermeneutics (8.2.3).

Philosophy, then, is an idea of the most perfect legislation of the human understanding, and the philosopher is the legal expert of human reason. ...morals is in fact always the end [purpose] toward which all speculations tend. Morals constitutes a unity of all cognition of reason, and only he who follows its rules can be called a philosopher. (*Logic*, “Vienna Logic,(around 1780)”, 798-799)

To conclude, according to Kant, it is the practical dimension (unity via a moral idea of a final purpose) that lets philosophy arise from “the system of rational cognition through concepts” (28: 251) to “wisdom” – “the highest good for our striving” (*Logic*, “Vienna Logic (around 1780)”, 798-799). Therefore, “the practical philosopher is the genuine philosopher. Philosophy is the idea of a perfect wisdom, which shows me the ultimate ends [purposes] of human reason” (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, “Metaphysik L2, 1790s”, 28:533).

9.3 Comparative Analysis of the Neo-Confucian Moral Teleology

9.3.1 Philosophical Impact of the Re-invented “*Gewu*”

We have saw earlier that, by transforming investigation of things into a philosophical method associated with the Neo-Confucian notion of principle via hermeneutic operations, Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism realizes its metaphysical quest with a strong moral teleological orientation. In what follows, I reconstruct the Neo-Confucian moral teleological elements in light of my findings on Kant.

a. From *Dao* to *Li*

Zhu Xi believed that the Daoist and Buddhist metaphysical approaches separate daily life from the ultimate truth and make *dao* “empty, void, still and dead, and of no use to the people” (Vol. 21, *Wenji*, p. 1690), and even worse, make the *dao* amoral – they “[are] ignorant and they separate them [*dao* and virtue] into two things,” “whereas for the Confucians, the *dao* and virtue are the same thing ”(Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 397).⁴³ The notion of principle of the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism is thus a proposal to counter the Daoist and Buddhist supersensible amoral *dao*, to re-unite the split virtue and ultimate truth, and to save classical Confucianism from its metaphysical crisis.

⁴³ My translation and summarization of “老子说：‘失道而后德。’ 他都不识，分做两个物事，便将道做一个空无底物事看。吾儒说只是一个物事。”

Whether self-consciously or not, Zhu Xi's transition of terminology⁴⁴ – from *dao* to principle – strategically adapts to this philosophical demand:

Dao is the principle that in the past and at the present all depend[ed] on. (ibid.)

Dao is so called precisely because it is the natural principle of everyday life". (Vol. 21, *Wenji*, p. 1690)

All with form and phenomenon are utility (*qi* 器). The principle that makes them so as utility is then the *dao*. (ibid., p. 1573)⁴⁵

Between Heaven and Earth, there are principle[s] and *qi* energy.⁴⁶ Principle is the *dao* beyond the form, and the essence (or root, *ben*) that generates things. *Qi* energy is the utility within the form, and the instrument (*ju* 具) for generating things. (Vol. 23, *Wenji*, p. 2755)⁴⁷

The *dao*, defined as “beyond the form” in opposition to *utility* “that within the form” in the *Book of Changes*, is hereby reduced to principle. Consequently, the classical *dao* vs. *qi* (unility) division in the Neo-Daoist study of “the formless”,⁴⁸ is hence updated in a Neo-Confucian context into *li* vs. *qi* energy. Zhu Xi's disciple Chen Chun clarifies the subtle difference between the terms *dao* and principle in the Neo-Confucian philosophical and linguistic context in his *Beixi Ziyi* (or *Master Beixi's Explanation of the Neo-Confucian Terms*):

Generally speaking, the *dao* and principle refer to the same thing. But the two terms are necessarily distinguished in order to indicate a difference [in emphasis]. The term “*dao*” is named in terms of feasibility for all the people [namely, universality] [while] the term “principle” implies unchanging certainty. Therefore, [to emphasize the aspect of this same thing] which is universally valid, [use] “*dao*”; [to emphasize the aspect of this same thing] which is forever unchanging, [use] principle. (*Ziyi*, pp. 41-42)⁴⁹

Chen Chun might be right in this subtle terminological distinction, but in Zhu Xi's usage and Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism in general, principle apparently becomes a more generic term that incorporates the sense of the metaphysical universality conveyed by the term “*dao*”, not vice versa. I will further explain the meaning of principle and understanding of it as a moral teleological property in due course.

⁴⁴ Feng Youlan points out that the Neo-Confucian notion of principle has very minor presence in the thinking of the Early Song dynasty Neo-Confucians such as Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, Zhang Zai, but it only gains “real prominence” in the thinking of the two Chengs and gains clarity (and complexity) in Zhu Xi (Feng, 1953, p. 501).

⁴⁵ MT: “凡有形有象者，皆器也。其所以为是器之理者，则道也”。“MT” is short for “my translation”. “MTS” is short for “my translation and summarization”.

⁴⁶ 气, is translated into “material force” by Wing-tsit Chan, or “ether” by Feng Youlan. A.C. Graham leaves it un-translated. I will call it *qi* energy to avoid confusion with *qi* 器 as utility.

⁴⁷ MT: “天地之间，有理有气。理也者，形而上之道也，生物之本也。气也者，形而下之器也，生物之具也。”

⁴⁸ See Chapter Four, my argument on Chinese “metaphysics”.

⁴⁹ MT: “道与理大概只是一件物，然析为二字，亦须有分别。道是就人所通行上立字…理有确然不易底意。故万古通行者，道也；万古不易者，理也”.

b. Investigation of Things in Operation

The doctrine investigation of things, as Neo-Confucian recasting as exhausting principle[s] (or probing principle[s] thoroughly), is then the method commissioned to bring the attention back to daily life. It re-orientes the transcendental metaphysical quest back to the living world that is full of things and (social) events in which principle[s] is embodied – “All the things under heaven do not lack principle[s]” (Vol. 6, *Daxue zhangju*, p. 20); “Nothing is without principle, only by investigation of things, one can probe thoroughly principle[s]” (*Erchengji*, “Cuiyan, Vol. 2”, p. 1267);⁵⁰ “There is a thing, there is a [corresponding] principle” (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 470).⁵¹

Zhu Xi says: “the Sage did not teach people to exhaust principle out of thin air; instead, one must investigate things, which requires one to discover the principle therein. [Principle found in things] is then substantial and concrete (*shi* 实)” (ibid., p. 428).⁵² Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian investigation of things is clearly articulated for countering the introspective philosophical methods such as the Daoist “fasting mind” and Buddhist meditation which are in Confucian eyes used to probe principle out of thin air. Zhu Xi thinks that the Buddhist teachings “only understand ‘the void’ (*xu* 虚), but [have] not yet recognized [concrete and solid] principle within ‘the void’ (*xu*). This is precisely why *The Great Learning* values and promotes [investigation of things and] exhausting principle[s]” (ibid., p. 311).⁵³

Underlying the Cheng-Zhu investigation of things is the assumption of the objective reality and moral relevance of the external world. The concept “things” (*wu*), is much broader than natural objects and social events – “between Heaven and Earth, all that one confronts before one’s eyes are things... however, what concerns the social order and moral relations (*renlun* 人伦) is the most urgent” (Vol. 15, *Yülei*, p. 1839).⁵⁴ Therefore in a sense, “reading books [study] is investigation of things”, since “there are so many moral relations and social orders, which need carefully study in order to gain [true understanding]” (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p.

⁵⁰ MT: “无物无理，惟格物可以尽理”。

⁵¹ MT: “格物穷理，有一物便有一理”。

⁵² MT: “圣人令人悬空穷理，须要格物者，是要人就那上见得道理破，便实”。

⁵³ MT: “大学说格物，都只是要人见得透...如释氏亦设教授徒，它岂道自不是，只是不曾见得到，但知虚，而不知虚中有理存焉。此大学以贵穷理也”。

⁵⁴ MT: “天地之间，眼前所接之事，皆是物...惟是人伦最要紧”。

319, p. 289).⁵⁵

In addition, instead of seeking for a sudden enlightenment by the recognition of a single ultimate principle or truth, Neo-Confucian investigation of things requires the accumulation of concrete principle[s]⁵⁶ and the gradual reaching to the state of “all penetrating”. Theoretically, the Neo-Confucian proposition “one principle and multiple realizations” (*liyi fenshu* 理一分殊) presumes the existence of an ultimate universal single principle, which Zhu Xi calls “the one root” (*yiben* 一本).

A multitude of things is all united in one principle. (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 368)⁵⁷

All in Heaven and on earth, no matter the subtle or the coarse, and the fundamental or the incidental, all are [embodiments] of one principle. (ibid., p. 292)⁵⁸

Principles are naturally coherent. That’s why it is called one principle... From one principle there scatters ten thousand things, clearly in an order with no chaos. Therefore, everything then embodies one [particular] principle, and everything has a name (or role, *ming*). Each has its propriety. One should observe whether a thing is proper for its principle or not. (ibid., pp. 248-249)⁵⁹

As Zhu Xi acknowledges, the idea of “one principle and multiple realizations” was similar to the Buddhist idea conveyed by the moon metaphor (ibid., p. 607).⁶⁰ However, practically, the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism doctrine investigation of things is designed to shift the emphasis on “imprudent discourse on one principle”.⁶¹ Zhu Xi says, “It is not hard to recognize [there is] one root, but it is hard to recognize there are ten thousand particular principles” (Vol. 15, *Yülei*, p. 989).⁶²

Although ten thousand principles are all [essentially] one principle, the scholar nevertheless must grasp it from the investigation of ten thousand principles in the myriad things. When [the investigation is] done in all aspects, the one principle is naturally revealed. Merely trying to grasp the one [ultimate] principle, without comprehending the ten thousand of principles [of concrete things]... is just having hallucinations (Vol. 18, *Yülei*, p. 3692).⁶³

“Then one who advocates the theory as heavenly principle (*tianli*) [the recognition of

⁵⁵ MT: “读书是格物一事” and “论读诗经:若子细看, 里面有多少伦序, 须是子细参研方得”.

⁵⁶ “Investigate one thing today and one more tomorrow.” MT: “今日格一物, 明日格一物”. (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 367)

⁵⁷ MT: “千头万绪, 终归一理”.

⁵⁸ MT: “彻上彻下, 无精粗本末, 只是一理”.

⁵⁹ MT: “理固是一贯, 谓之一理, 则又不必疑其多. 自一理散为万事, 则灿然有条而不可乱, 逐事自有一理, 逐物自有一理, 各有当, 但当观当理与不当理耳”.

⁶⁰ Zhu Xi says: “Buddhism argues: ‘one moon universally reflects on all the water while all the moons on the water are the reflection of one moon’. Buddhism also has a glimpse of this principle. The book *Tongshu* of Master Lianxi is all about this idea.” (MT: “释氏云: ‘一月普现一切水, 一切水月一月摄’. 这是那释氏也窥见得这些道理. 濂溪 *通书* 只是说这一事”.)

⁶¹ Zhu Xi says: “I dislike the imprudent discourse on one principle”. MT: “某怕人便说理一” (Vol. 15, *Yülei*, p. 1822).

⁶² MT: “不是一本处难认, 是万殊处难仁”.

⁶³ MT: “万理虽只是一理, 学者且要去万理中千头万绪都理会, 四面凑合来, 自见得是一理. 不去理会那万理, 只管去理会那一理... 只是空想象”.

which will enlighten all other principles], actually ignorantly expresses human desire [without self-awareness]” (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 598).⁶⁴ This thinking can be traced back to the writings of the Masters Chengs, who talk about the idea of “extension” (*tui* 推), meaning to infer the unknown principle from the known, rather than enlightenment by one principle. In brief, Zhu Xi believes that the major reason why, despite all their merits, Buddhism and Daoism are rather limited, is because they do not practice the method of investigation of things (*ibid.*, p. 485).⁶⁵

9.3.2 Comparative Reconstruction of a Neo-Confucian Moral Teleology in light of Kant

Engaging a different strategy, the last finding in my comparison lies in this – I will, in light of Kant’s teleological thinking and argument, conduct a comparative re-construction of Zhu Xi’s moral teleological thinking characterized by the Neo-Confucian elaboration of the notion of principle. Two propositions are to be established: 1) The Neo-Confucian notion of principle is comparable to Kant’s concept of purpose. The Neo-Confucian dichotomy between principle and *qi* energy provides a counterpart of the Kantian doctrine of double causality, despite its significant incommensurability, and 2) through the method of investigation of things and exhausting principle, a similar moral teleology is realized in Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, which nevertheless leads to quite disparate practical implications.

a. Purpose vs. Principle

I have so far intentionally avoided dealing with the philosophical complexity of the meaning of principle and engaged it only in a formalist manner. The method of the investigation of things itself does not offer philosophical profundity, only meditating “things” and “principle”. Zhu Xi argues that, although concrete matters and things in daily life are important for the metaphysical quest of principle or the *dao*, they are not principle or the *dao* itself – “principle is not external to things. But it is wrong to regard things as the *dao*” (Vol. 16, *Yülei*, p. 1858).⁶⁶ The question now shifts to asking what principle is.

A. S. Cua points out that there is no “single, easily comprehensive use [of the term *li*] in

⁶⁴ MTS: “天下岂有一理通便万里皆通，也须绩累将去。学问有渐，无急迫之理。须是逐旋做将去，不成只用穷究一个，其他便不用管，便都理会得？岂有此理。为此说者，将谓是天理，不知却是人欲”。

⁶⁵ MTS: “所以贵格物，如佛老之学，它非无长处，但它只知得一路。其知所及者，则路径甚明，无有差错；其知所不及处，则皆颠倒错乱，无有是处，缘无格物功夫也”。

⁶⁶ MT: “理不外物，若以物为道则不可。”

Chinese discourse”, and correspondingly, “there is no literary English equivalent” – be it “principle”, “pattern”, or “reason” (Cua, 1999, p. 201). A generalization of the meanings of the notion of principle is hardly possible. Chen Lai classifies five senses of this Neo-Confucian term “*li*”: 1) *tian-li*, or heavenly principle, as the universal cosmic law; 2) *xing-li*, or the principle of human nature; 3) *lun-li*, or the principle of social relationships, as seen in moral rules and norms; 4) *wu-li*, the principle of things, seen in the essence of and laws governing the domain of myriad things; and finally 5) *li-xing*, the rational capacity, namely, reason. Chen also points out that the Neo-Confucians thinkers normally failed to address in which sense they use the term “*li*”. Chen thinks that the five senses of “*li*” are coherent but not exchangeable in concrete contexts, though, he does not give a detailed argument for the rationale behind this claim (Chen, 2011, p. 15-16).⁶⁷

Cua’s insightful linguistic clarification of the term “*li*” might help to solve the puzzle: “for the generic sense of *li* can have many specific terms (*bieming*), say, as instantiations of the schema ‘*x zhi li*’ (the *li* of *x*)”, the latter can be expressed into “*li-binomials*” (Cua, 1999, p. 203, p. 204, p. 207).⁶⁸ In this regard, the five senses of “*li*” distinguished by Chen can be understood as the “*li-binomials*” of the “generic term” “*li*”. Cua suggests that “*li*” in a generic sense does indeed refer to something substantial, viz., “reason” – “a distinctive capacity of the human mind exemplified in such mental acts as thinking, deliberating, inferring, and judging”, and hence, rendering the generic term “*li* as a functional equivalent of ‘reason’ is plausible” (ibid. p. 205).

Cua’s idea is inspiring and might even offer a shortcut to Kantian philosophy, but I call for a re-consideration. First, his argument in fact equates the generic “*li*” to Chen’s fifth sense of *li* which is one of these “*li-binomials*”. This can cause a logical contradiction. Moreover, his conclusion would make better sense if it is drawn from Wang Yangming’s Neo-Confucianism, namely, the study of heart-mind. For Zhu Xi, “*li*” is not simply a subjective (or inter-subjective) human capacity, namely, reason, but also objectively exists in things:

⁶⁷ MTS: “理的意思则更可分析为五种:宇宙的普遍法则, 这个意义的理可称天理;作为人性的理, 可称为性理; 作为伦理于道德规范的理, 可以成为伦理;作为事物本质与规律的理, 可以成为物理; 以及作为理性的理, 如理学讨论的理气相胜问题所表现的可以成为理性. 理学家在使用诸如理这样的概念时, 并不预先说明其使用的特定立场, 虽然, 在理学的范畴结构中, 理的这五种意义可以在某种方式下具有统一性, 但对具体讨论而言, 这些不同意义的理是不能随便替代的, 所以对于具体讨论中的理, 我们需要在上下文具体地理解其意义.”

⁶⁸ According to Cua, “a generic term is a formal, general, abstract term amenable to specification by other terms in different discursive contexts. These terms, used in practical or theoretical context, may be said to be specific terms... A generic term may have various level of abstraction differentiated by the use of specific terms...” (1999, p. 207)

“principle is not external to things” (Vol. 16, *Yülei*, p. 1858). However, Zhu Xi does agree that the principle in things and principle in us are not ultimately different things but ‘connected’, which will be explicated later.

For the moment, my own proposal is that the coherence behind the various senses of “*li*”, first of all, manifests a hermeneutic philological consistency.⁶⁹ The Neo-Confucian notion of “*li*” shared by many philosophers has to be understood primarily as a creative hermeneutic polymerization. After all, Zhu Xi’s understanding of “*li*” is not entirely the same as those of his predecessors like Zhang Zai or Cheng Yi, or his disciples like Chen Chun and Huang Gan. In what follows, I show how Kant’s teleological thinking can deepen our understanding of the Neo-Confucian notion of principle – comparable to a moral purpose, revealing a deeper coherence in Neo-Confucian thinking aside from the hermeneutic one.

Kant’s Purpose

According to Kant, purpose is a notion that essentially belongs to “pure philosophy” (rather than theology or natural philosophy, namely, science). Two definitions of purpose in the *CJ* appear rather contradictory:

D1: A purpose is a concept of an object, which contains the basis for the object’s actuality.⁷⁰

D2: A purpose is an object of a concept which is regarded as the real basis of the object’s possibility.

The ambiguities⁷¹ in fact show Kant’s prudence in terminology. D2 is the definition of purpose in the transcendental sense used in very particular arguments. Here I will stick with D1 as a standard Kantian definition of purpose for further comparative re-construction of the major conceptions of Zhu Xi’s moral teleology. (For a more detailed argument on Kant’s concept of purpose, see Appendix Three, “An Analysis of Kant’s Concept of Purpose”.)

From D1:

a) Insofar as purpose contains the basis of actuality (the real basis instead of a logical basis), it indicates a sort of causal relation, and thus entails a causality – as Kant defines it,

⁶⁹ Regarding my arguments concerning the vital role of the peculiar hermeneutic mechanism for Chinese intellectual development (Chapters Seven and Eight), it is fair to say that hermeneutic coherence and convenience are never trivial or merely superficial, nor simply opposed to or irrelevant to philosophical coherence.

⁷⁰ These two definitions are revised on the basis on Kant’s four definitions (5:180,5:220,5:227,5:408) analyzed in the Appendix Two, in which I also examine other relevant concepts such as “basis” and “cause”, and argue how the seeming ambiguities and logical errors in the above definitions in fact demonstrate Kant’s prudence in terminology.

⁷¹ Purpose is “an object of a concept” or “a concept of an object”, regarding “actuality” or “possibility”.

“cause” is a sort of real basis (28:549, 28:571)⁷² that is “the ground [*Grund*, also translated as basis] of actuality” and “principle of becoming”(28:571). In brief, Kant’s concept of purpose indicates a special kind of causality, for things being or becoming as such.

b) Purpose necessitates a “concept”, which implies the presence of an understanding and will – namely, the higher cognitive powers.

From D1 and D2, purpose can be either an empirical and contingent basis for the actuality of object, or it can be transcendental, to serve as a real basis of the object’s possibility.

Zhu Xi’s Principle

Now in light of Kant’s concept of purpose, I turn to Zhu Xi’s notion of principle; Zhu Xi explains:

(i) Regarding all the things under Heaven, they must have the cause[s] (*gu* 故)⁷³ for being so [as what they are], and also the rule[s] (*ze* 则)⁷⁴ for why they ought to be so. This [*gu* and *ze* together] is called principle. (ii) No one is incapable of knowing [principle], but often cannot fully probe the subtle and the coarse, and the manifesting and the hidden [principles] without omission. (iii) If principle is not exhausted [fully probed], knowledge is still limited – in this circumstance, even if one imposes the extension of knowledge, it is impossible to achieve it. Therefore, the way of the extension of knowledge lies in approaching [daily] matters and observing principle[s] [therein], so as to investigate things. (vol. 6, *Huowen*, p. 512)⁷⁵

I divide the above quotation into three meaning units. (i) is a standard explanation of the notion of principle, (ii) is about the principle and human capacity, and (iii) emphasizes the importance of investigation of things as a method to acquire principle.

1) Principle as causality

From unit (i), principle[s] for Zhu Xi are the cause for things being so and the rule[s] for why they ought to be so. Again, another Zhu Xi’s saying: “things are merely things, while principle for things being as such is the *dao*” (Vol. 16, *Yülei*, p. 1858).⁷⁶ Therefore, insofar as Zhu Xi’s “principle” is the real basis of the actuality of things, or the principle of becoming things, it is in Kant’s terms, a causality.

2) Principle as the non-material cause, and the indication of a cognitive power

⁷² "The concept of the real ground [basis, *grund*] is a synthetic concept. That which the real ground [basis, *grund*] contains of something is called cause." (28:549) "Cause and ground [basis, *grund*] are to be distinguished... Every cause must in itself be something real, for what is the ground [basis, *grund*] of actuality is something positive." (28:571)

⁷³ Also translated as “reason”, as the reason for x.

⁷⁴ Also translated as laws or regulation

⁷⁵ MT: “至于天下之物，则必各有所以然之故，与理所当然之则，所谓理也。人莫不知，而或不能使其精粗隐显究极无余，则理所未穷，知必有弊，虽欲勉强以致之，亦不可得而致矣。故致知之道，在乎即事观理，以格夫物”。

⁷⁶ MT: “理不外物，若以物为道则不可。物只是物，所以为物之理，乃道也”。

For Zhu Xi, “principle is the *dao* beyond the form, and the essence (or root, *ben*) that generates things” (Vol.23, *Wenji*, p. 2755); it is non-material or non-sensible in Kant’s terms. From unit (ii), Zhu Xi identifies the affinity between human cognitive capacity and principle. He emphasizes that principle is cognizable (*kezhi* 可知) instead of using the term sensible (*kegan* 可感). In Zhu Xi’s re-invented fifth commentary and interpretation of The Great Learning, a similar argument is found: “since everyone’s heart-mind is intelligent and no one is incapable of knowing [the principle], while all the things under heaven do not lack principle[s], it is thus only that when the principle is not yet exhausted [fully probed], the knowledge [and wisdom] is still limited” (Vol.6, *Zhangju*, p. 21). In brief, principle in Neo-Confucianism also entails a cognitive power and it is the non-material cause (*gu*) for why things come to be. At this point I come to my preliminary finding: the Neo-Confucian notion of principle resembles Kant’s concept of purpose.

b. Kant’s Double Causality vs. Neo-Confucian *Li-Qi*

Kant on Double Causality

According to Kant, causality in general is a necessary connection⁷⁷ between cause (the real basis of actuality or existence) and effect (the consequence of such a basis). In contrast to the Aristotelian fourfold causality, Kantian causality is dichotomous: efficient cause (*causa efficiens*, or the “effective connections”⁷⁸) and its opposite. However, it is notable that the expressions of his doctrine of double causality in Kant’s major writings vary with context. In his early critical period, Kant referred to the other sort of causality (or causal connection) sometimes as final causes, *causa finalis* (28:845)⁷⁹, sometimes as formal causes, *causa formalis* (ibid.),⁸⁰ and sometimes as a “connection of usefulness”, *nexum utilitatis* (29:847).⁸¹

McLaughlin in his analysis of Kant’s concept of purpose in the *CJ*, points out that,

⁷⁷ Kant argues, “The concept of cause is a concept that contains the necessity of the connection of the existence of what is different and, specifically, insofar as it is different-so that, if A is posited, I cognize that something entirely different from it, B, must necessarily also exit. However, necessity can be attributed to a connection only insofar as the connection is cognized a priori.” (CPrR, 5:51) “The connection’s necessity... amounts to what is essential in the concept of causality.” (CPrR, 5:53)

⁷⁸ “The connection <nexus> between an efficient cause <causa efficiens> and the effect <effectus> is an effective connection <nexus effectivus>.” (29:846)

⁷⁹ In “Metaphysik Mrongovius (1782-83)”, Kant argues that cause, “be it positive or negative, material or formal”, is “either efficient <efficientes> or final <finales>”. “Efficient <efficientes> is cause through action <per actionem>... All efficient causes <causae efficientes> are thus determinations of powers” (29:845).

⁸⁰ “The efficient <efficientz> is the opposite of formal cause <opposita causa formalis>.” (ibid.)

⁸¹ “Besides the effective connection <nexu effectivo> there is yet a connection of usefulness <nexum utilitatis>, and everything is in a connection of usefulness <in nexu utilitatis>. The connection of uses <nexus usuum> depends on human beings-always; i.e. the possibility of producing the useful, that is [a matter] of providence.” (29:847)

“when Kant speaks of... a ‘purpose’ or a ‘final cause’, he usually means... not the *causa finalis* in the proper sense but the *causa formalis*... Kant does not seem to have distinguished sharply between the two conceptual possibilities [namely, the final causes and the formal causes]” (McLaughlin, 1990, p. 38).

From Kant’s perspective, the formal cause and the final cause are not disparate per se. I suggest a possible argument based on Kant’s own thinking: 1) The form is the real basis that determines a thing’s usefulness. 2) The purpose (of a thing’s usefulness) determines the basis of the thing’s actuality (which includes the thing’s form). Via the mediating idea “usefulness” (which Kant also used to express the second causality in contrast to the efficient causes (29:847)), this argument demonstrates that the two causes are essentially homogeneous rather than irreducible. In addition, a good illustration is Kant’s own interpretation of his concept of “art in general” – “we say that it is a product of art, rather than of nature, i.e., that the cause which produced it was thinking of a purpose to which this object owes its form” (CJ, 5:303). This is to say that purpose determines the form. Therefore, one can amend McLaughlin’s finding: there is no need to “distinguish sharply” between the two causalities, because for Kant, the final causes and the formal causes, despite the different emphases from the names, essentially refer to the same causality *sui generis* – let’s call it the second causality. At the end of his critical period, Kant expressed more explicitly a dichotomy between the “effective connection” and the “connection of finality” as a standard version of his double causality (28:574). To summarize, the Kantian second causality is the causality of purposes. But keep in mind, it synthesizes both the Aristotelian *causa finalis* and *causa formalis*, and has a special implication for the concept of “usefulness” or “connection of usefulness”.

I have argued (9.2) two angles of understanding the relationship between critical philosophy and Kant’s teleological thinking, respectively, in terms of the intellectual convergence of Kant’s critical writings into a moral teleology, or in the Kantian teleological incentive to a critical philosophical project. Now I suggest a third angle in light of Kant’s doctrine of double causality: the evolution of critical philosophy can be viewed as the course of the discovery and verification of Kant’s second causality – the causality of purposes or final causes (*causa finalis*). It was first a transcendental assumption according

to intelligible causes in the *CPR*, then a practical fact confirmed according to freedom or the causality of will, and finally via reflective judgment the key to bridging the two domains of human cognitive powers and therefore the thread for critical philosophy to be integrated in a moral teleology. (For a detailed argument, see Appendix Four, “An Analysis of The Second Causality in the *CPR* and *CPrR*”.)

In his metaphysical lectures (1790-91) at the end of his critical period, Kant defines his double causality more explicitly (28:572-574).⁸² Thereby, one can summarize characteristics of Kant’s double causality: 1) The two kinds of causalities are essentially irreducible. But instead of rejecting one in favor of the other, they “must be connected”. However, the effective causes are always given epistemological priority in (natural) philosophical research – merely to “call upon the principle of the connection of finality” only leads to “begging the question” (28:574). At the same time, the final causes or purposes are functional in the study of nature – as “a heuristic principle for investigating the particular laws of nature”, and necessary in the practical domain (freedom), particularly when it comes to the postulates concerning the supersensible (God, immortality);⁸³ 2) The two causalities fundamentally differentiate “in the method of philosophizing” (28:574); 3) The existence of the organism, viewed as natural purpose – i.e., as a natural product but viewed as purposive by reflective judgment – suggests the confluence of double causality. In addition, “cause and effect may not be thought tautologically, for they are wholly different matters. The proposition: ‘the effect must be similar to the cause, and vice versa’ is only applicable to the physiology of organized beings” (28:573); 4) The existence of humans as moral beings is where the confluence of double causality in this world is objectively confirmed by practical reason in light of the moral law.

Zhu Xi on *Li* and *Qi*

Zhu writes:

Between Heaven and Earth, there are principle[s] and *qi* energy. Principle is the *dao* beyond the form, and the essence [or root] that generates things. *Qi* energy is the utility within the form, and the instrument for generating things. Therefore, for human beings and things come into being, they must possess principle so as to have nature (*xing* 性), and

⁸² It echoes to a great deal Kant’s arguments in the *CJ* and is to some extent a standard narrative of double causality after the intensive reflection benefited from the *Critiques*.

⁸³ I must always seek to drive everything from causes, as much as is feasible; and then also assume a being which has arranged everything purposefully.” (28:574)

possess the *qi* energy so as to acquire form (*xing* 形). (Vol.23, *Wenji*, p. 2755)⁸⁴

Principle is never separated from *qi* energy. However, principle is that beyond the form, while *qi* energy is that within the form. (Vol. 14. *Yülei*, p. 115)⁸⁵

Instead of comparing Zhu Xi's thinking on principle and *qi* energy with form and material in ancient Greek philosophy as Chen Lai does (2011, p. 179), I think it yields more insight to appreciate it in terms of Kant's doctrine of two causalities. I classify a few aspects below:

1) A dichotomy in causal explanation:

According to Kant, "cause" is the "real basis of actuality" and the "principle of becoming", and causality in general is a necessary connection between cause and effect (the consequence of such a basis). Insofar as Zhu Xi's thinking on principle and *qi* energy offers a dichotomous account for the generation of things, it resembles Kant's doctrine of double causality (the efficient causes and the purposes). However, beneath this structural similarity, the incommensurability between the two versions of double causality informs us of the qualities more fundamental to each tradition.

Kant's "efficient cause" concerns nature's mechanism and applies to things as "appearance" or "objects of experience" (*CPR*, Bxxvii); "appearance[s] themselves, taken as objects of experience, are possible only in accordance with this law [of causality]" (*CPR* B234). Kant calls this causal connection "in the world of sense according to immutable natural laws", "the necessity of nature", which has been "established as a principle of the Transcendental Analytic and tolerates no impairment" (*ibid.*, A537-8/B565-6). Kant's efficient causes incorporate both Aristotelian efficient causes and material causes, insofar as Kant understands material as the "appearance" of "objects of experience" rather than the in-cognizable "thing in itself" or the supersensible substratum. For Zhu Xi, *qi* energy indeed refers to the sensible and material basis for the being of things (both substance and force) in Kant's terms, and might be well compared to the Kantian principle, "efficient causes". But it does not postulate anything similar to the controversial thing in itself, as a necessary supersensible substratum underneath the material appearance.

In addition, Kant's "efficient causes" are associated with "immutable natural laws" and natural necessity – the principle "tolerates no impairment". In this regard it produces and

⁸⁴ MT: "天地之间，有理有气。理也者，形而上之道也，生物之本也。气也者，形而下之器也，生物之具也。是以人物之生，必禀此理然后有性，必禀此气然后有形".

⁸⁵ MT: "理未尝离乎气，然理形而上者，气形而下者".

clings to the sense of certainty and accuracy. Zhu Xi's *qi* energy, in contrast, has a very different philosophical temperament. It is associated with change and contingency. In Zhu Xi's famous metaphor on the relation between the supreme ultimate (*taiji* 太极) and *yin-yang* (阴阳), he compares *qi* energy (*yin-yang*) to a horse, and principle to a rider: "the supreme ultimate is principle while that which moves [yang] or rests [yin] is *qi* energy... If the supreme ultimate [as principle] is like a rider, then that which moves or rests [viz. *qi* energy] is the horse"⁸⁶. I think there is a subtext that the horse is the source of change (motion), but without a rider it goes wild.⁸⁷ Moreover, Zhu Xi uses the notion of *qibing* (气禀 literally, [innate] gaining from *qi* energy, I will call it "material nature" for convenience) to explain the contingency in the following two ways:

a) as the human disposition to enact evil alongside the universal and pure good human nature in the classical Confucian (Mencius') ideology. The former is born with, but contingent (viz. differing from person to person), while the latter is innate and universal:

Human nature is good. However, some are born to be good, and some are born to be evil. This is because of the difference in their material nature (*qibing*)...when the sun and the moon are bright and the climate is harmonious, people who are born [at this moment], gain the clear and vigorous *qi* energy, and then make good persons; whereas, when the sun and the moon are dark and the climate is abnormal, if people who are born [at this moment] gain the violent *qi* energy, they will make bad persons. There is no more doubt [about this]!... education is to transform the [innate] material nature, despite its being very hard... Knowing the harm of the material nature, one must endeavor to overcome and remedy it, chopping off its excess and returning it to a balance. (Vol. 14., *Yülei*, p. 198)⁸⁸

b) as the variation in people's physical and mental ability, personality, and even personal

⁸⁶ MTS: "太极理也，动静气也。气行则理亦行，二者常相依而未尝相离也。太极犹人，动静犹马，马所以载人，人所以乘马" (Vol. 17. *Yülei*, p. 3129). The term "*taiji*" literally means the primal beginning. It comes from the *Book of Changes* – "there is *taiji* in the changes, and therefore it generates the two poles" ("易有太极，是生两仪，两仪生四象，四象生八卦") (Zhouyi zhengyi, p. 340). Chen Lai (2011, p. 55) points out, "in the philosophy of the Han and Tang dynasties, '*taiji*' was regarded as the undivided state of the original *qi* energy...the study of the *Book of Changes* in the early Song dynasty inherited this interpretation...*Taiji* indicates the original undivided chaotic substance, while *wuji* 无极 indicates the infinity of this chaotic substance. *Taiji*, as the primal substance is formless and infinite, this is why '*wuji* then [is] *taiji*'". In Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism, "*taiji*" was incorporated into the cardinal Neo-Confucian notion of principle (*li*). "*Taiji* is merely principle" ("太极只是一个理"). (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 114). "*Taiji* is not the [undivided] chaotic substance that exists before the formation of Heaven and Earth", but is "the principle of all things in Heaven and on Earth." ("太极不是未有天地之先有个浑成之物...太极只是天地万物之理.") (ibid., p. 113). Zhu Xi's recasting of *taiji* transferred its philosophical importance into the Neo-Confucian cardinal notion of principle: *Taiji* became a specific name of principle. This revision also reveals that Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian philosophical orientation is quite distinct from the naïve materialism that had been associated with the term of *taiji*.

⁸⁷ Zhu Xi's theory prevents the possibility of this hypothesis in his emphasis on the mutual dependence between principle and *qi* energy.

⁸⁸ MTS: "人之性皆善，然而有生下来善底，有生下来便恶底，此是气禀不同。且如天地之运，万端而无穷，其可见者，日月清明气候和正之时，人生而禀此气，则为清明浑厚之气，须做个好人；若是日月昏暗，寒暑反常，皆是天地之戾气，人若禀此气，则为不好底人，何疑！人之为学，却是要变化气禀，然极难变化...须知气禀之害，要力去用功克治，裁其胜而归于中乃可"。

fortune:

The variation in material nature is in terms of category, rather than merely about [the degree of] “clear or turbid” [namely, the clarity]. Some people are smart and have a comprehensive grasp of things. Their *qi* energy is clear. But their behavior might not conform to the principle, that’s because their *qi* energy is not pure. Some are moral due to their pure *qi* energy, but not [at the same time] intelligent, that’s because their *qi* energy is unclear. Extend this [logic], you will see what you are seeking for... (ibid., p. 204)⁸⁹

Although human nature is alike, the material nature cannot be without disproportion. One who gains too much *qi* energy of wood, has more sense of compassion, but then the senses of shame, modesty and right and wrong are blocked; one who gains too much *qi* energy of metal, has more sense of shame, but the senses of compassion, modesty and right and wrong are blocked... (ibid., p. 205)⁹⁰

It is in people’s material nature that wealth and honor, poverty and humbleness, and longevity and premature death lie... It is like the wood that grows in the mountain, being chopped down, made into the important beam and prop, or made into toilet paper, all defined by their innate material nature. (ibid., p. 213)⁹¹

In brief, this dichotomy between principle beyond the form and *qi* energy within the form in Zhu Xi’s account of the generation of things, is qualified in Kantian terms as two irreducible sorts of real bases of the actuality or existence of things. But Zhu Xi’s *qi* energy as the constantly changing and contingent vital force has many more theoretical functions than Kant’s “sufficient causes”. Kant’s innovative understanding of material, although very different from the predominant conception of the natural philosophers in his time, it was still influenced by the idea of matter as inert and dead. In this regard, one finds the divergence in the two versions of double causality and encounters the fundamental unique philosophical temperaments.

2) The Unity:

Kant thinks the two kinds of causality, despite being irreducible, “must be connected”, rather than rejecting one in favour of the other. This proposal in fact reveals a Kantian dilemma: his doctrine of two causalities is essentially troubled by his dualism and the assumption of the thing in itself, and suffers from an inevitable side-effect of his split of reason into two (theoretical and practical). Kant’s solution to bridge the gap (9.2), only comes at the last stage of his critical philosophical project in an integrated moral teleology brought

⁸⁹ MTS: “气稟之殊，其类不一，非但‘清浊’二字而已。今人有聪明，事事晓者，其气清矣，而所为未必皆中于理。则是其气不醇也。有谨厚忠信者，其气醇矣，而所知未必皆达于理，则是其气不清也。推此求之可见”。

⁹⁰ MT: “人性虽同，稟气不能无偏重。有得木气重者，则恻隐之心常多，而羞恶，辞逊，是非之心为其所塞而不发；有得金气重者，则羞恶之心常多，而恻隐，辞逊，是非之心为其所塞而不发...”

⁹¹ MT: “人之稟气，富贵，贫贱，长短，皆有定数寓其中...若木生于山，取之，或贵而为栋梁，或贱而为厕料，皆其生时所稟气数如此定了”。

forth by the *CJ*, where he reunites nature and freedom in the idea that human beings, as the ultimate purpose of nature, via their existence under the moral law can embody and further the highest good as the final purpose. Zhu Xi does not make such a detour from detachment to reunion, nor demands the unity provided by an integrative third (6.1.2). Zhu Xi's version of double causality prevents the dualist separation in the first place: "principle is not separated from *qi* energy" (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 115). "Under heaven there is no [where one finds] principle without *qi* energy, nor *qi* energy without principle" (ibid., p. 114).⁹² Even in the horse metaphor mentioned above, Zhu Xi particularly emphasizes that "when *qi* energy travels, so does principle. The two are mutually dependent and never separated... the horse carries the rider and the rider rides the horse. When the horse comes and goes, so does the rider" (Vol. 17, *Yülei*, p. 3129).⁹³

3) The priority between the two:

The two irreducible causalities are connected, but there is still a question regarding the priority. Zhu Xi in his later years was reluctant to answer this sort of metaphysical conjecture.

Question: Must there be principle first, and then come the *qi* energy? How do you think?

Answer: This is not an issue of priority [first or second]...If one must suppose the genesis, it ought to be that the principle comes first. However, principle is not a different thing, but indispensable from *qi* energy. Without *qi* energy, principle has nowhere to be instantiated. If the *qi* energy is metal, wood, water and fire, the principle[s] then is human-heartedness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), ritual propriety (*li*) and wisdom (*zhi*). (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, pp. 115)⁹⁴

Again:

Question: [Is it correct to say that] principle comes first and *qi* energy follows?

Answer: There is no first or second [or an issue of priority] in regarding principle and *qi* energy, but [if one has to] deduce, it might seem as if the principle comes first and *qi* follows. (ibid., pp. 115-116)⁹⁵

For Zhu Xi, the relation between the principle and *qi* energy is characterized by their mutual dependence and indispensability. In other passages, particularly in his early writings, he simply states that principle comes first. Chen Lai argues that "priority" of principle for Zhu Xi is merely logical priority rather than temporal priority (2011, p. 181).⁹⁶ In Kant's case, he

⁹² MT: "天下未有无理之气，亦未有无气之理".

⁹³ MTS: "气行则理亦行，二者常相依而未尝相离也...马所以载人，人所以乘马，马之一出一入，人亦与之一出一入，盖一动一静，而太极之妙未尝不在焉".

⁹⁴ MT: "或问：'必有是理，然后有是气，如何' 曰：'此本无先后之可言。然必欲推其所从来，则须说先有是理。然理又非别为一物，即存乎是气之中；无是气，则是理亦无挂搭处。气则为金木水火，理则为仁义礼智'".

⁹⁵ MT: "或问：理在先气在后？曰：理与气本无先后之可言，但推上去时，却如理在先气在后相似".

⁹⁶ MTS: "理与气实际上无所谓先后，但逻辑上有一种先后的关系，也就是说，理在气的'先'是指逻辑上的先，而不是时间上的先。这种逻辑在先得思想，实际上仍然是认为理是本，是体，是第一性的，气则是第二性的".

gives epistemological priority to the effective causes in (natural) philosophical research, warning that merely “call[ing] upon the principle of the connection of finality” leads to “begging the question”(28:574), while in the practical domain, he places priority to the second causality, causality of will (the faculty of purpose), the supreme form of which is freedom (“a power of absolute spontaneity”) – according to Kant, the only concept of the supersensible found in us that is approved objective reality (and thus, a moral fact). Therefore, Kant’s second causality has a moral and metaphysical priority, and more precisely, a meta-ethical priority. In light of Kant’s thinking, I suggest that the priority of principle is not only a logical one, as Chen claims, but more importantly, it is a value issue – it is about the moral priority. Both Zhu Xi’s principle and Kant’s purpose are the causality which displays moral property.

c. Principle as Moral Property and Neo-Confucian Meta-ethical ideas

Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucian notion of principle, besides being similar to Kant’s purpose as a special kind of causality for things being so (*gu*),⁹⁷ is also given a second sense – it is the rule[s] for why things ought to be so (*dangran zhi ze*). This “ought to be” adds a moral imperative and transforms the principle from a neutral causality into a moral causality. Of the two causalities, it is very clear that principle displays a moral quality. “If the *qi* energy is metal, wood, water, fire, then the principle[s] is human-heartedness, righteousness, ritual propriety and wisdom.” Again,

human-heartedness, righteousness, ritual propriety and wisdom are the main components of human nature. They are all what is beyond the form [‘principle is the *dao* beyond the form and the essence (or root) that generates things. *Qi* energy is the utility within the form and the instrument for generating things’]. How can they be divided?! (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 246).⁹⁸

In addition, principle is universally pervasive in daily life, and objectively exists in things. It is not the Kantian “immutable natural laws” for the sensible world, nor the supersensible moral law within us, but the moral rules for why all beings (humans and things alike) ought to be so. This is not a panpsychist proposal or a theological proposition. Zhu Xi’s disciple Chen Chun in his *Beixi Ziyi* further explains what is meant by the “ought to be so”:

what the ancients mean by investigation of things and exhausting principle[s], is to seek for the [moral] rule (*ze*) for [things] ought to be so. (*Ziyi*, p. 42)⁹⁹

⁹⁷ In Kant’s terms the real basis of the actuality of things or the principle of becoming.

⁹⁸ MT: “仁义礼智，性之大目，皆是形而上者，岂可分也。”

⁹⁹ MT: “古人格物穷理，就是要在事物上穷个当然之则，亦不过只是穷到那合做处，恰好处而已。”

“Principle[s]” is the rule[s] for why things ought to be so. “Rule” is norm or law. It denotes certainty without variability. What is meant by “ought to be so” (*dangran*) is what is rightly to be done in things, namely, being appropriate (*qiaohao* 恰好), without any excessiveness or deficiency. For example, the ruler rests on the virtue of human-heartedness [*ren*], since resting on the virtue of human-heartedness is the rule for how the ruler ought to be. (ibid.)¹⁰⁰

For Neo-Confucianism, “ought to be so” means “being appropriate”. The appropriateness in a thing (or human being) defines its moral property and determines its existence to be essentially moral. Things might follow various specific rules in order to be appropriate – this makes the principles diverse, but “being appropriate” is the common principle that all things “ought to be so”. Similarly, when Zhu Xi argues for the Neo-Confucian doctrine “one principle and multiple realizations”, he points out that everything embodies the specific principle that is suitable for its name or role (*ming*), namely, “each has its propriety (*dang*)”, but “principles are naturally coherent” (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, pp. 248-249). It can be inferred from this that the coherence in all principles lies in the idea of “propriety”.

Whether in the natural world or in the human domain, principle is present. As Cheng Yi says, “Grass or wood has principle; an event or an artifact has principle.”¹⁰¹ Chen Lai (2011, p. 177) points out:

The notion of principle in Neo-Confucianism has two main meanings: the laws of things and the moral principles. Although the meaning of principle is divided into these two senses, they are essentially united from the Neo-Confucian point of view – moral principles are the particular manifestation of universal laws of the universe in human society...¹⁰²

For Zhu Xi, human beings are not supreme in the Kantian sense – namely, as 1) the only moral being (with freedom) on earth, and 2) the ultimate purpose of nature that strives for the furtherance of the highest good as the final purpose of creation. Human beings and things in Neo-Confucian ideology are not differentiated because of the possibility of being moral (being appropriate), but merely due to the distinct material nature gained from *qi* energy:

In regard to *qi* energy, both humans and things are generated by it; [However,] in regard to the quality of *qi* energy (whether fine or coarse), humans get the proper and fluid *qi* energy while things get the unbalanced and stiff kind. Because of the proper *qi* energy, humans can comprehend the principle, while because of the unbalanced *qi* energy, the principle in things

¹⁰⁰ MT: “只是事物上一个当然之则便是理。‘则’是准则，法则，有个确定不易底意。只是事物上正当合做处便是‘当然’，即这恰好，无过些，亦无不及些，便是‘则’。如为君止于仁，止仁便是为君当然之则；为臣止于敬...”

¹⁰¹ MT: “程颐：一草一木皆有理，一事一物皆有理”。Here I particularly translated “wu” into “artifacts” to make the contrast in the subtext (Here, Cheng means man-made things in contrast to the natural things like a grass and a wood). “Wu” generally can mean objects or things.

¹⁰² MT: “理学中所说的‘理’，其中两个最主要的意义是指事物的规律和道德的原则。在理学看来，理虽然可以主要分析为这样两种不同意义，而这两者在本质上是统一的，即道德原则实质上是宇宙普遍法则在人类社会的特殊表现而已”。

is blocked and they cannot cognize it. (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 194)¹⁰³

Based on the idea of “appropriateness” or “propriety” that all beings possess and ought to concretize, Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism constructed its meta-ethical foundation, and justified the methodological importance of the re-invented philosophical method investigation of things. Therefore Zhu Xi proposes that “one should observe whether a thing is proper for its principle or not” right after his explanation of the coherence of principle and the propriety in things (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, pp. 248-249).

Question: [As you say,] principle is what human beings and things gain innately. But even the things that are not capable of feeling also have principle?

Answer: of course they have [principle], such as boats only travel on water while carriages travel on land. (ibid., p. 189)¹⁰⁴

By recognition of the appropriateness in things, one not only encounters the moral facts pervasive in the living world and embodied by all things, but also illuminates the coherent principle in oneself – the possibility of being appropriate and harmonious with one’s context, like boats travelling smoothly on water and carriages travelling successfully on land but not vice versa. Investigation of things calls for re-orienting the metaphysical quest for meaning, truth and ultimate value back to everyday matters and the ten thousand things that we encounter in the living world, instead of chasing the “distant, abstruse and supersensible” formless *dao* beyond “the horizon of human domain and heaven”, as with the Neo-Daoists, or digging deeply into the heart-mind for the sake of a genuine enlightenment from within as with the Buddhists.

Moreover, investigation of things also differs from modern scientific research in its explicit goal of looking for moral recognition;¹⁰⁵ thus, it is fundamentally a practical method of self-cultivation rather than a scientific method for cognition. It calls for “returning to oneself” (*fanshen* 反身) to reinforce the principle.

Question: What is meant by "returning to oneself in order to exhaust [fully probe] principle".

Answer: Returning to oneself means reinforcement. Further answer: search in one's own body and [one's own] social role. (Vol. 18, *Yülei*, p. 3766)¹⁰⁶

Returning to oneself, is returning to seek [for substantial principle] in oneself. (Vol. 16, *Yülei*,

¹⁰³ MT: “自一气而言之，则人物皆受是气而生；自精粗而言，则人得其气之正且通者，物得其气之偏且塞者。惟人得其正，故是理通而无所塞；物得其偏，故是理塞而无所知”。

¹⁰⁴ MT: “问：‘理是人物同得于天者。如物之无情者，亦有理否？’曰：‘固是有理，如舟只可行之于水，车只可行之于陆’。”

¹⁰⁵ In Chapter Seven (7.3.1), I have already given etymological explanation for why the Chinese approach of “Investigation of Things” is not a scientific method. This investigation is seeking the moral principle. In this sense, it resembles Kant’s claim that the true philosopher is the practical philosopher.

¹⁰⁶ MT: “问：‘如何是反身穷理？’曰：‘反身是著实之谓。’又曰：‘向自家体分上求’。”

p. 2107)¹⁰⁷

In this sense, Neo-Confucianism should be regarded as true philosophy (or wisdom) in Kant's terms (9.2.2), which concerns the (moral) final purpose of human cognitive powers. The genuine philosopher is the practical philosopher (28:533). Principle does not exist in a kind of alien space that transcends the domain of the human world. Investigation of things values the moment of encounter – the moment of recognition, where it is held that “either inner or outer, it is one and the same principle”;¹⁰⁸ “either in things or in me, it is one and the same principle”;¹⁰⁹ either heavenly or human, it is one and the same principle.¹¹⁰

I want to conclude this section with another quotation from Zhu Xi:

People usually regard the principle (the *dao*) as an abstract and transcendental (*xüankong* 悬空)¹¹¹ thing. [The fact that] *The Great Learning* does not talk about exhausting principle but only about investigation of things, is in order to urge people to grasp [the principle] by means of [investigating] things. In this way one can see the substantial body (or essence, *shiti* 实体). The so-called substantial body cannot be recognized except by means of [investigating] things. For instance, boats are made for travelling on water while carriages are made for travelling on land. Now even by gathering a multitude of people together to push a boat on land, it will not travel. [Thereby, one] recognizes the boat is not [appropriate] for travelling on land. This shows the so-called substantial body (or essence). (Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 469)¹¹²

Principle is not mysterious. The “substantial body” exists in things, in the appropriateness of things, or in Kant's terms, the purposiveness, i.e., the usefulness in a specific context.¹¹³ In the above passage, Zhu Xi justifies the recasting of the classical doctrine “*gewu*” as investigation of things, and the association of it with the central Neo-Confucian notion of principle. On the basis of the idea of “appropriateness” as the coherent moral principle or “substantial body” in all beings (human and things alike), Neo-Confucianism constructs a

¹⁰⁷ MT: “反身，只是反求诸己”。

¹⁰⁸ MTS: “内外只是一理，事虽见于外，而心实在内”(Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 723).

¹⁰⁹ MTS: “理与性字对说，理乃是在物上之理，性乃是在我之理。在物底便是天地人物公共底道理，在我底乃是此理己具，得为我所有者”(Ziyi, p. 42). “这道理，须是见得是如此了，验之于物，又如此；验之吾身，又如此；以至见天下道理皆端的如此了，方得”。“物我一理，自然合，不必说‘合内外’”。

¹¹⁰ MTS: “天人一理，只有一个分不同”。(Vol. 16, *Yülei*, p. 2676)“只是言人之性本无不善，而其日用之间莫不有当然之则。则，所谓天理也。人若每事做得是，则便合天理。天人本只一理。若理会得此意，则天何尝大，人何尝小也”。(Vol. 14, *Yülei*, p. 589)

¹¹¹ “*Xüankong*” literally means “suspending in the air”. Here I choose to translate it as “abstract and transcendental”, because it is to some extent comparable to Kant's definition of “transcendental”, which means without ground in the possible experience and impossible to be objectively confirmed.

¹¹² MT: “人多把这道理作一个悬空底物。大学不说穷理，只说个格物，便是要人就事物上理会，如此方见得实体。所谓实体，非就事物上见不得。且如作舟以行水，作车以行陆。今试以众人之力共推一舟于陆，必不能行，方见得舟果不能以行陆也，此之谓实体”。

¹¹³ As argued in 9.2, Kant's second causality, the causality of purpose, is also the “connection of usefulness”, *nexum utilitatis* (29:847).

meta-ethical foundation for its normative ethics and practice of moral cultivation, and successfully relocates the metaphysical *dao* back into the living world.

d. Appraisal of the Two Versions of Moral Teleology

For Zhu Xi, the innate principles in all the things investigated (natural or artificial alike) are moral properties. Neo-Confucian investigation of things finds moral purposiveness in each encounter with the “appropriateness” in things (also in oneself). Each moment of such an encounter is an occasion for self-cultivation and moral enlightenment. But for Kant, reflective judgment as a method, in its study of nature, merely finds the causality of purposes, viz. the means-end relation. Although nature is then viewed as a teleological system, it is not necessarily characterized by any moral property. Kantian moral teleological enlightenment has to make a detour: when reflective judgment in its idea of nature as a teleological system inevitably ascends to the supersensible, and conjures up the idea of an unconditioned final purpose that is essential beyond its grasp, thereby suffering from an antinomy, then reason on the basis of moral law reveals the profound moral teleological fact in us – the final purpose must be, at the same time, the highest moral good that we have to strive for.

If Zhu Xi could have read Kant, one can imagine that the Kantian approach would suffer no less criticism than Daoism and Buddhism. It is exactly what Zhu Xi would like to avoid – to hang all moral strength and certainty on the recognition of an ultimate idea – albeit the final purpose, highest good, moral law or freedom. Zhu Xi regards this as too easy an approach, one that does not lead to ultimate truth but to mere hallucinations, and shows merely human desire. Although investigation of things theoretically assumes one coherent principle (one “root”, or “substantial body”), this method itself is designed for an exactly counter usage – to engage with the “multiple realizations” of the one principle in daily life. This also explains the fact that, even if in Neo-Confucianism there is also the idea of highest good or perfect good (*zhishan* 至善),¹¹⁴ it nevertheless does not have a crucial meta-ethical and methodological role like investigation of things. Zhu Xi intentionally directs this idea to daily matters – as his disciple reports: “when he [Zhu Xi] talks about ‘highest good’, he again says: ‘what is shown in daily life, all respectively has its essential and determinative rule’” (ibid., p. 579).¹¹⁵ For

¹¹⁴ “*Zhishan*” is also an idea from *The Great Learning*.

¹¹⁵ MT: “其说至善处，又云：‘所以见于日用之间者，莫不各有本然一定之则’。”

the Neo-Confucians, there is no need to wait for the single ultimate idea for moral transformation.

Neo-Confucian investigation of things looks outwards to find the moral coherence between us and things, while Kant fundamentally rejects the natural world (as mechanical) for the sake of moral certainty in terms of freedom. Neo-Confucianism tries to reveal what is alike in the human and natural domains, while Kant seeks to prove what is unique in us. Nevertheless, both bring meaning to our living world and provide a vision of a better life. Beyond the last comparative finding of my current thesis, there are still more open questions. One might ask: Are both philosophers correct? Who holds the ultimate truth? Kant would say: “Interrogate the moral law in you! You always know.” While Zhu Xi might say: “Start to investigate things around you, and some day, you will know.”

Conclusion: Philosophy as Organism

I. Estimation of the Findings:

In this comparative ‘philosophical experiment’, I added two philosophical events as ‘research materials’ from two distinct cultural traditions into a ‘test tube’ with given experimental conditions, observed the reaction according to a few common ‘lenses’, and brought forward a trans-spatiotemporal intellectual ‘reaction’ between Zhu Xi and Kant.

My *comparanda* are not merely two theories or conceptions concerning a common philosophical issue, but two complex historical philosophical events. Therefore, instead of reducing the materials into “comparable” philosophical elements, or directly bringing them into a dialogue, I respected the integrity of each source and first of all gave them parallel explanations before carrying out the mutual interpretation. The overall comparative research findings are also a compound with different layers. To summarize:

(1) Kant’s critical philosophy and Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism both entailed a similar transition to “the supersensible”, in order to overcome their respective metaphysical crises precipitated by their opponents, to realize an integration and systematization of thinking and to achieve better explanatory power. (2) In each transition, a demand for a methodological development arose. Via a comparable hermeneutic mechanism, both philosophies came up with a new philosophical method, viz., reflective judgment and investigation of things, for dealing with the supersensible and remedying its systemic problems and/or explanatory deficiencies. (3) The two intellectual developments eventually converge into the construction of a moral teleology, in spite of disparate terminologies, unique stresses and essentially different practical implications.

Now let me further unfold my findings and evaluate them by applying Parkes’s criteria for a successful comparative study (1987, pp. 4-5) on two levels:

1. This thesis has enhanced our understanding of both philosophies and of the problems engaged by them in following points:

a. The intellectual settings of the two philosophical events resemble each other in a syncretic and critical *Zeitgeist*. This finding shows the commensurability in intellectual history in that the conditions for a possible great intellectual breakthrough are alike in different cultures.

b. Kant's reflection on "the supersensible", his classification of metaphysics, his endeavor of reconciling the two projects, viz. saving metaphysics and critical philosophy, help to reveal deep nexuses in Chinese intellectual history: (i).the unique contribution of Neo-Daoism (as "metaphysical cosmology") and Chinese Buddhism (as "metaphysical psychology") in terms of the study of "what is beyond the form" – the Chinese version of "the supersensible"; (ii). the nature of the revival of Confucianism as a transition to the formless amid a metaphysical crisis, which manifests a structural similarity to Kant's transition, again proving a commensurability in intellectual developments.

c. Kant's idea of the double obligation of philosophy (systematization of cognitions and methodological development) and his proposal of saving metaphysics shed light on why both transitions to "the supersensible" in the two cultures necessarily entail a methodological demand – Kant's coining of reflective judgment and the Neo-Confucian reforming of "*gewu*". This again reveals a commensurability between the philosophical traditions (concerning the patterns of philosophical progress).

d. The peculiarity of the Chinese thinking tradition – its deep bonding with hermeneutics, and the Neo-Confucian hermeneutic operations on *The Great Learning* and the doctrine of investigation of things – provides a new perspective for justifying the architectonics of Kant's philosophy and the validity of its systematization: (i) Kant's systematization of critical philosophy via conceptual clarification viewed as a process of hermeneutic self-exegesis; (ii) in light of the traditional Chinese hermeneutic technique, viz. the multi-layered textual arrangement, three critiques viewed as an original "text" with two hermeneutic layers rather than three parallel pillars; (iii) the coining of reflective judgment viewed as relying on Kant's crucial linguistic distinction between "to reflect" and "to

determine”, comparable to Zhu Xi’s philological strategy of re-interpreting the character “zhi”. This finding demonstrates the possibility of releasing the “hidden depth” in the subject by engaging the otherness in comparative philosophical research.

2. My thesis also helps us to deepen our understanding of ourselves, our own cultural thinking tradition, and the world with respect to the following points:

e. Both philosophies demonstrate the ineliminable need of metaphysical questioning (about the first causes, the soul [or mind, or consciousness], God or the great Dao etc.) that is determined by human nature, in Kant’s terms, by our cognitive powers, such as reason’s natural propensity. The problem does not lie in the inevitable quest for “the supersensible” (or the formless), but in whether the method engaged is proper or not. Both philosophies provide a solution to answer the metaphysical questioning without falling into fanaticism.

f. The comparison demands the elaboration of the idea of “hermeneutic mechanism” with the help of Western hermeneutic theories and Chinese hermeneutic practices. It helps us to deepen our thinking about the characteristics of philosophical “creativity” and also to distinguish it from scientific creativity. It thereby offers a justification of the peculiarity of philosophical progress.

g. The fact that both metaphysical quests converge into moral philosophy, more specifically, a moral teleology shows that: it may be not accidental that our metaphysical quest for the supersensible (facts) in a sound philosophy turns into value seeking (morality as a value system). This shows the unique contribution of philosophy in questions about “what ought to be” and in providing certainty where knowledge abandons us.

h. The two versions of moral teleology, despite similarly offering a moral *telos* for answering the metaphysical questions, nevertheless have very different practical implications: Kant looks inward in search for certainty in the moral law, while Zhu Xi looks outward, finding moral resonance between us and things. Nevertheless, both philosophies bring meaning to our living world and provide the idea of a better life. This shows the possibility of diverse solutions to common human problems and again proves the value of the comparative approach.

II. Threefold Comparison & Philosophy as Organism

My comparison is essentially threefold, constructed on the basis of three questions:

1. Why did the philosophical event happen?

-Answered by the contextual study (Chapters Three, Four, Five).

2. How did it realize?

-Answered by the study of hermeneutic mechanism for intellectual development (Chapters Six, Seven, Eight).

3. Where did it proceed to?

-Answered by the study of moral teleology (Chapter Nine).

This threefold questioning is not only to pay tribute to Kant's illuminating thrichotomous division in transcendental philosophy,¹ nor is merely to follow the prominent Chinese logicians, the Mohists' "tripartite standards of argument (*sanbiao* 三表)" (*Mozi*, p. 400)². Threeness is sacred in Chinese culture too, despite not being a reference to a divine Trinity (which is "transcendental" in Kant's terms), but due to its association to the "immanent" union of the so-called three talents (*sancai* 三才): Heaven, Human and Earth,³ and also to the power of generation and multiplication: "threeness generates the ten thousand things" (*Daodejing*, ch.42).⁴ Underlying my threefold questioning is this basic assumption: sound philosophy is organism-like and the threeness represents organism.

This assumption is not simply inspired by certain organic features of Kant's philosophy, such as the Kantian isomorphic structure between philosophy and human faculties, or Kant's idea of unity as an inner principle of all the cognitive powers. It also comes from my study of the evolution of the two philosophies from a hermeneutic perspective (in terms of "hermeneutic circle"). As argued, both Kant's critical philosophy as a whole and

¹ Kant argues that the nature of his philosophy determines the tripartite divisions frequently seen in his thinking, because "if it is analytic, then it is governed by the principle of contradiction and hence is always bipartite. If it is synthetic...[and] made on the basis of a priori concepts... [then] the division must of necessity be a trichotomy." (5:198n)

² Mohists not only have such a conception, but also embody it. Many arguments in the *Mozi* are written in rigid triple-symmetrical style.

³ See Book of Changes. It writes as 三才 in chapter "Shuogua", or 三材 in chapter "Xici". 才 originally means the sprouts of plants. So three talents can be also understood as three potentials. "There is the dao of heaven. There is the dao of human. There is the dao of earth." (Yijing.)

⁴ Translated by Moeller (2007, p. 103).

Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism manifest the nature of an organism, which, as defined by Kant, is characterized by its dynamic and mutually-dependent part-whole causality (see 8.2.3).

In my view, if twoness represents mechanism (as shown in the law of contradiction or artificial intelligence⁵), then threeness symbolizes organism. “Three” consists of the two opposites (twoness) and their unity (oneness). It stands for the dynamics within a whole. *Yin-yang* is actually not twoness but threeness. Because besides being the two contrary forces, *yin* and *yang* are also reciprocal (mutually dependent and generating) and forever united in a totality as the *taiji*. “Five agents are identical to the *yin* and *yang*; *yin* and *yang* are identical to the supreme ultimate” (*Zhoulianxi ji*, p. 10)⁶. Therefore, one can infer that the traditional Chinese view of the world, as a self organized whole (self-so), is essentially organism-like. To some extent, when Friedrich Schelling in his *Ideas for Philosophy of Nature* expounds an alternative to Newtonian conceptions of matter, stating that “matter is an equilibrium of active forces that stand in polar opposition to one another” and nature is “a balance of opposed forces of tendencies”,⁷ he also transformed the Newtonian mechanical nature into an organic one.

I regard a sound philosophy as an organism, because it manifests organization, spontaneity and purpose (in Kant’s terms). It also experiences a “life cycle”. That is why I use the biological analogy – ecology, ontogeny and anatomy – in my study of the two compared philosophies. And that is why I articulate three questions concerning the “life cycle” of the two compared philosophies: the sprouting, growth, and fruition. In light of my idea of sound philosophy being an organism, I conclude my thesis with a few open questions:

Philosophy and Logical Rigidity

Generally speaking, in Chinese-Western comparative philosophy, one often finds that the Chinese thinking tradition is not fond of intricate arguments, nor obsessed with logical correctness. One sees as many paradoxical sayings in Chinese thinking as rigorous

⁵ For example, computer binary system.

⁶ My translation of “五行一阴阳也，阴阳一太极也”.

⁷ See Robert Stern’s “introduction” for Schelling’s book (1988, p.x).

arguments in Western philosophy. Could this be because of the “side effect” of the strong organic nature of Chinese thinking? This organic nature prevents it from appreciating and observing the basic logic rule, the law of contradiction (which is mechanistic in my view), and therefore causes the Chinese tradition to lack the necessary means of logical construction.

Philosophical creativity

I have argued that the issue of “creativity” finds no place as an indigenous element in the Chinese thinking tradition that is characterized by a continuous hermeneutic development. Is this also something to do with its strong organic nature?

The “life cycle” of an organism, individual or species alike, manifests as a continuum rather than a discrete connection of segments or a mechanistic aggregation of parts. An organism never stays the same. It is a dynamic whole with a stable structure that allows inner balance via part-part and part-whole reciprocity and external communication with the environment via metabolism. Kant critical philosophy has shown this feature of organism.

“Creativity” (characterized by originality) to some extent corresponds to the mutation of an organism. It constantly happens at a micro-level, but the growth and evolution of an organism as a whole nevertheless is characterized by its synthesis of continuity and updating (adaption), which resembles the hermeneutic mechanism for intellectual development.

Philosophical Progress

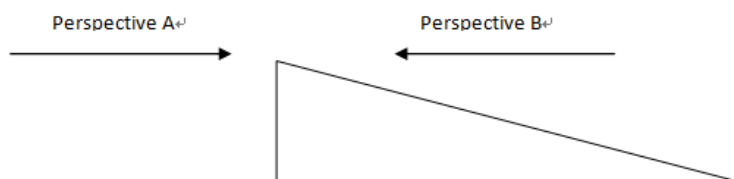
Relatedly, the sort of philosophical progress that I propose, if it is essentially organism-like, is rather distinct from the scientific progress, which is strongly characterized by “revolution” or “paradigm shift”. To make a metaphor, unlike the update of an iphone, which means one has to throw the old away, the “update” of philosophy is more like the update of the apps, which to some extent is also a hermeneutic progress.

Philosophical Achievement:

In the Western philosophical tradition, from Kant to Nietzsche, great philosophers are very often depicted as innovators who dare to break with tradition, and their thinking is regarded as bringing about “revolutions” in philosophy, whereas in China, from Confucius

to Zhu Xi, the most influential thinkers are first of all respected as the great synthesizers (*jidacheng zhe*)⁸ who facilitate and carry on tradition. In light of my idea of sound philosophy as organism, can we rethink the appraisal of philosophical achievement in a more organic way?

My current research wants to re-direct attention to the often ignored hermeneutic nature of intellectual development, which is essentially organic in my view.⁹ The overemphasis on the sort of originality and creativity parallel to that of scientific research has been causing what I call the “cliff phenomena”. People who appreciate the steepness of a cliff often ignore that the slopes leading to the cliff gradually rise up (otherwise it would properly be called a peak (?) rather than cliff). The above mentioned two general attitudes toward philosophical achievement perhaps shows the two perspectives of looking at the “cliff”(see the illustration below). Shall we adjust our expectation of philosophical fruition in light of its organic nature?



Philosophical Research vs. Scientific Research

Because of my using of scientific terms or analogy, one might take me as an adherent of scientism, which I am not. I feel sympathy toward scientific research but I also believe in the uniqueness and primacy of philosophy. I like how Karl Jaspers puts it: philosophy provides “an inner certainty” rather than “the objective, scientific sort” (1954 p. 8). The two methods that I have studied, investigation of things and reflective judgment, both are not scientific methods but provide vital meaning concerning the supersensible where objective cognition abandons us.

He Lin in his “On the Methodology of Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty” (2005,

⁸ Literally, the one who achieves the great completion. My argument on Zhu Xi’s role as the great synthesizer, see 1.1.1.1.

⁹ I call for this main because I see that a certain contemporary philosophy often ignores the other traditions. It cheers for its own innovative achievement without realizing there is no new thing under the sun. When I read Kant, I find his notion of “numero eadem” (in number the same) (“Progress”, 20:282), resembles largely the conceptual tool, “numerical identity” that often appears to me as an invention of the analytic philosophers.

pp. 60-79), points out that the Neo-Confucian philosophical methods, such as Zhu Xi's investigation of things, are essentially intuitive rather than scientific.¹⁰ He argues for the validity of using intuition as the primary method in philosophical research and also defends it against the charge of appealing to a mysterious experience. Kant thinks that, different from discursive rationality, intuition is characterized by its ability of grasping totality. In light of the idea of philosophy as organism-like, can we justify the using of intuition as an organic appealing to unity and totality?

Dao

In Chinese philosophy, the original meaning of *Dao* 道, is widely known as "the way or road for travel"(Shuowenzhu, p. 75)¹¹. But the earliest form of the character *Dao* reveals more. Found in bronze inscriptions (see illustrations below), *Dao* depicts a human (symbolized simply by a head 首 and a limb 手), who is travelling on the way (symbolized by a crossroad 行).¹² *Dao* is not merely the way. *Dao* is the journey – a human on the way.



“Philosophy means to be on the way”. (Jaspers, 1953, p. 12) For me, philosophy is essentially organism-like. If life, manifested by an organism, is compared to a journey, then philosophy is my journey, and I am on my way.

¹⁰ My summarization of He's ideas. He also points out that Kant's power of taste (*Geschmacksvermoegen*) or aesthetic reflective judgment is also an intuitive method.(He, 2005, p. 62)

¹¹ MT: “所行道也”.

¹² The characters used here are from Rong Geng's 容庚 *Jinwen Bian* 金文编, (1985, p. 105, p. 120, p. 630, p. 774). Some scholars have alternative interpretations. For example, Kang Yin 康殷 (1979, p. 358) in his *Wenzi Yuanliu Qianshuo* 文字源流浅说, argues that “*Dao*” originally means “rob”, which depicts a head hidden in clothes. My translation and summarization of “较早金文, 甲文未见. 字象藏人头于衣中之状, 意未详. 疑是杀人越货的姦盗之初文”.

Appendix One Kant's Criticism of Theological Teleology

I summarize Kant criticism of theological teleology in a few aspects:

1) Deficiency in explication power. In Kant's view, theological teleology, particularly divine design theory, is fallible not only because it asserts something beyond empirical verification, but also, even worse, it is useless as a theory since it fundamentally lacks explication power. Kant writes,

even if it were granted that a supreme architect directly created the forms of nature as they have always been, or that he predetermined the ones that in the course of nature keep developing according to the same model, still none of this advances our cognition of nature in the least; for we do not know at all how that being acts, and what its ideas are that supposed to contain the principles by which natural beings are possible, and [so] we cannot explain nature by starting from that being, i.e. , by descending (in other words, a priori) [from that being to nature].(CJ 5:410)

In other word, both divine creation and predetermination theory which based their fundamental explication on the assumption of a supreme being, achieve nothing in respect to the actual progress of the research and enrichment of the explanation. By appealing to a hypothetical supreme being, the questions are only shunned instead of solved. The theological elixir is not a valid shortcut, and thus Kant believes “without mechanism we cannot gain insight into the nature of things.”

2) Methodological problem. Kant warns that there is a methodological problem of theological teleology. It collapses into a “tautologous” dilemma when it uses the observable purposiveness in the forms of objects of experience to prove the existence of a higher intellectual being (“display the intentional unity [that characterizes] a purpose”) and again uses the existence of a supreme being to justify the possibility of the purposiveness in things.(ibid.,5:411)

3) Although theological teleology is problematic according to Kant's argument, it does not necessarily follows that teleological theory is futile. In some sense, it is indispensable because of the un-eliminable question that it deals with. Like Aristotle, Kant has a similar idea on the impossibility of elimination of telos. According to Kant, effective cause can be

reduced to the concept of powers or forces while final cause to “purpose”.¹ They are two kinds of causalities which seek for fundamentally heterogeneous answers to the same question “why”. Therefore, one approach is not going to be simply replaced by, or reduced into the other. The issue does not lie in appealing to “the principle of purposes” (*das Prinzip der Zwecke*) in study of nature, but how we use it. If it is “a heuristic principle for investigating the particular laws of nature”² used by reflective judgment, then it will be not only indispensable to the whole Kantian philosophical enterprise, namely, to serve as not merely a formal component to the unification of the structure, (as “a special kind of causality that cannot be found in nature, as it is necessary for the mechanism of natural causes to have its own causality”), but also functional as a important law for guiding the research of natural philosophy, namely science. (CJ, 5:411) Kant's attitude towards teleological explanation in a sense resonates with his idea of the immanent use of transcendental ideas.

Another possible misunderstanding is to confuse teleology with determinism or to regard that a commitment to teleology means to endorse determinism even perhaps fatalism. In fact, Kantian moral philosophy, essentially teleological, is not in favor of determinism at all. As testified by Kant's contemporary Heinrich Jung-Stilling, Kant's moral philosophy permits the possibility of freedom and also “apodictic truth and certainty” which repels the hopeless “determinism”³.

¹ “Efficient <efficients> is cause through action <per actionem> ...All efficient causes<causae efficientes> are thus determinations of powers”.(29:845)

² ein heuristisches Prinzip ist, den besondern Gesetzen der Natur nachzuforschen

³ In his letter to Kant on March 1st, 1789, Heinrich Jung-Stilling expresses his desperation because of “determinism” before enlightenment by Kant's ideas. “All the refined determinism that the great thinkers of our time dream up is nothing but *sop bulles* which finally dissolve into fatalism; there is no deliverance, no other escape.”(11:8) “Yet my reason struggled perpetually for apodictic certainty, which neither the bible nor Wolff nor mystics nor Hume nor Locke nor Swedenborg nor Helvetius could give me. Unconditional, fearful, anxious faith was thus my lot, while at the same time Determinism with all its conquering power pressed on my heart, my understanding, my reason, imprisoning me completely and gradually subduing me. No foe was ever more horrible to me than determinism.”(ibid.)

Appendix Two Beauty and Purposiveness

Kant's definition of beauty as purposiveness without a purpose or subjective formal purposiveness is well-known, but the exact Kantian argument—how he links beauty to purposiveness— still lacks enough clarification in the current research. Here I argue that Kant has a vital mediating idea of “cognition in general” (*Erkenntnisse überhaupt*) in this inference, and the argument consists of two key movements: 1) from beauty to “cognition in general”, and 2) from “cognition in general” to “purposiveness”.

a. From Cognition in General to Purposiveness

Book I, “Analytic of the Beautiful” is divided into 4 moments in terms of quality, quantity, relation and modality. Kant has two major tasks in this book: 1) to define what is “beauty” or the beautiful, and 2) to explain why an aesthetic (subjective) judgment of taste rightly demands universal validity.

In Section 9 “Investigation of the Question Whether in a Judgment of Taste the Feeling of Pleasure Precedes the Judging of the Object or the Judging Precedes the Pleasure”, Kant shows explicitly his intention in the title, which is in a question form and constituted by two contrary propositions. He calls this question “the key to the critique of taste” (5:217). A short argument (*Enthymem*) is unfolded first, concerning the premises: the aesthetic judgment of taste demands universal validity,¹ whereas the feeling of pleasure can have only private validity.

He then states the thesis to be demonstrated -

Thesis: In the aesthetic judgment of taste, the judging of the object (precisely, the judging of the presentation by which the object is given, **a**) precedes the feeling of pleasure, and **b**) constitutes the basis of the feeling of pleasure.

He tries to further establish two propositions (derived from the thesis):

¹ Kant now takes this proposition as a fact that has been “proved” by him in last Moment.

P1: The universal validity of an aesthetic judgment derives from the universal communicability of the presentation.²

P2: The universal communicability of the presentation in the aesthetic judgment of taste is the cause of the feeling of pleasure.

Kant derives the universal communicability of the presentation from the subject's mental state. He argues that the universal communicability of the presentation in the judgment of taste has its subjective determinate basis in the mental state (rather than an objective determinate basis in the concepts of understanding), in which the cognitive powers (or precisely presentational powers, namely, imagination and understanding) of the subject are brought by the very presentation into free play (thus restricted by no determinate concept) and harmonize with each other insofar as they refer to cognition in general (rather than a determinate and concrete cognition). About this subjective mental state, two points are worthy of note: (a) the mental state is a universally communicable feeling of a harmony, of a reciprocal subjective harmony between the cognitive powers (in particular, the presentational powers) in a free play, and (b) in this feeling of harmony, the given presentation is referred to as universally communicable cognition in general.

In brief, the universality demanded by the judgment of taste is based on the universal communicability of this harmonious mental state and the universality of "cognition in general" reached by the cognitive powers (understanding and imagination) in free play.

Now we come to this very important idea of Kant concerning judgment of taste: "cognition in general". From Kant's obscure and repetitious argument related to this concept, I make a clarification as below:

First Finding: According to Kant, all human beings are constituted so as to judge by means of understanding and senses in combination. (In other words, cognitions come from the reciprocal labor of understanding and sensations).

Now cognition in general is not a specific determinate cognition. Thus it attaches to no cognitive content or concepts. 1) "Cognition in general" is better understood as an a priori

² *"Allgemeine Mitteilbarkeit der Vorstellung".*

pattern or structure of the cognitive powers in a certain “proportioned attunement”. 2) This pattern or structure of the cognitive powers in a certain proportioned attunement is a pure condition for all cognitions, thus valid for all rational beings so constituted (namely, who combine understanding and sensations to form cognitions in a judgment). Hence, in this sense Kant talks about “a power of cognition in general” (5:219). Cognition in general is like a “power” rather than a specific cognition, for example, a concept or certain knowledge. If the universality demanded by judgment of taste based on the universal communicability of this harmonious mental states and the universality of “cognition in general” is reached by the cognitive powers (understanding and imagination) in free play, we understand why Kant mentioned rather subtly in “Section 1” that in a judgment of taste “the subject feels himself” (5:204) or “the mind...feels its own state”(ibid.).

Second Finding: In the judgment of taste, the subject reveals in himself/herself, “cognition in general”, viz., the a priori pattern or structure of the cognitive powers in certain “proportioned attunement”.

Although Kant does not make this point in this section, one can make up the argument with other parts of the book. Awareness arouses the pleasant feeling of harmony, a special sort of feeling of pleasure. The idea of beauty manifests itself in this mental state and is attributed to an object as if it is an objective characteristic of the very object being presented. Therefore, “beauty is nothing by itself”(5:218):

To say, this flower is beautiful, is tantamount to a mere repetition of the flower’s own claim to everyone’s liking...Yet beauty is not a property of the flower itself. For a judgment of taste consists precisely in this, that it calls a thing beautiful only by virtue of that characteristic in which it adapts itself to the way we apprehend it. (5:282)

By now, Kant has actually answered the question of why an aesthetic (subjective) judgment of taste rightly demands universal validity and has embarked on the task of defining what is “beauty” or the beautiful. But so far, he has not yet associated those ideas with the teleological concept of purposiveness. From “Section 10” on, Kant shifts his reflection on judgment of taste and orientates it to his concepts of purpose and purposiveness.

b. From Cognition in General to Purposiveness

In “Section 11”, Kant reintroduces the major concepts elucidated in the first moment, namely, “liking” and “interest”, and associates them with the newly introduced concept of “purpose”.

He writes, “whenever a purpose is regarded as the basis of a liking, it always carries with it an interest, as the basis that determines the judgment about the object of the pleasure.”(5:221) Here two propositions can be abstracted: 1) a purpose can be the basis of a liking, and 2) a purpose always carries with it an interest to be the basis of a liking. What he wants to demonstrate is that this particular liking as the basis of a judgment of taste comes from nothing else but the subjective purposiveness in the presentation of an object without any actual purpose, and hence rests on the mere form of purposiveness³.

Kant has already argued in former sections about liking and interest. He thinks that “all liking (so it is said or thought) is itself sensation of a pleasure” (5:205)⁴, and there are two sorts of liking: free liking and unfree liking. When a liking is based on an interest, it’s not free, because the “interest” requests the existence of the object, rather than merely a formal presentation of it. It also demands a factual effect on my own existence⁵ (my mental state and my action, etc). These effects usually gratify the subject’s senses (seeking for the agreeable) or will (seeking for the good). Only the beautiful produces free liking, because it is only contemplative and has no interest in the existence of the object. The liking in a judgment of taste is merely due to the harmony between imagination and understanding in a given intuition.

Until now, Kant still only uses the newly developed concept purpose to replace the old concept “interest” in the same framework. He then brings teleological thinking onto the stage, trying to integrate the teleological terminology into the former. He explains: “the very consciousness of a merely formal purposiveness in the play of the subjective powers,

³ “Therefore the liking that, without a concept, we judge to be universally communicable and hence to be the basis that determines a judgments of taste, can be nothing but the subjective purposiveness in the presentation of an object, without any purpose, and hence mere form of purposiveness.”(5:221)

⁴ “All liking (so it is said or thought) is itself sensation (of a pleasure)”(5:205).

⁵ “Interest is what we call the liking we connect with the presentation of an object's existence. Hence such a liking always refers at once to our power of desire” (5:204).

accompanying a presentation by which an object is given, is that pleasure” (5:217). If one compares this definition with the findings from the section 9 (where he defined the pleasure in a judgment of taste as due to the subject’s cognitive power to reach “cognition in general” in a free play, and a reciprocal subjective harmony between each other), it is fair to say that, this “formal purposiveness” and “cognition in general” have a certain unique affinity. Kant continues to argue,

For this consciousness [of a merely formal purposiveness in the play of the subject’s cognitive powers] in an aesthetic judgment contains a basis... hence an inner causality (which is purposive) concerning cognition in general, which however is not restricted to a determinate cognition. (5:222)

Kant refers the idea of “formal purposiveness” to the idea of “cognition in general” established in former sections, on which the universal validity of judgment of taste is grounded. This formal purposiveness is the unique quality of cognition in general. It indicates the specific “relation of the presentational powers” in free play. Further, it can be inferred that it is this purposiveness that is considered as basis of beauty and universal validity of judgment of taste. As Kant later points out “a pure judgment[‘s]...determining basis is therefore merely the purposiveness of form.” (5:223)

Now Kant has succeeded in realizing the transition from cognition in general to the idea of purposiveness. To some extent, by relocating his thinking of judgment of taste with the help of concepts such as purpose and purposiveness, he not only unifies the terminology of the whole book, but also eventually places it into an integrated teleological thinking. The “inner causality (which is purposive)” in judgment of taste will lead to the argument for the special causality of reflective judgment.

Appendix Three An Analysis of Kant's Concept of purpose

There are two popular English translations of the German word *Zweck* : James Greed Meredith(1952), Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews(2000) choose to render *Zweck* into “end”, while Werner S. Pluhar uses the term “purpose”, though the major translators do not differ in translating *Zweckmäßigkeit* into purposiveness. For the sake of textual coherence, I will mainly use Pluhar's terminology.

Kant defined “purpose” in various places, but not always in exactly the same way. Here I am going to make a comparison among a few texts so as to come up with a tidy and clear definition of this vital concept of the third *Critique*, and also to explore the use and implication of it.

Definition One:

Now insofar as **the concept of an object** also contains the basis for the object's actuality, the concept is called the thing's *purpose*.

(Weil nun der **Begriff von einem Objekt**, sofern er zugleich den Grund der Wirklichkeit dieses Objekts enthält, **der Zweck**.) (CJ, Introduction, [IV On Judgment as a Power That Legislates A Priori,] **5:180**)

From this we have Proposition One(P1): *If, a concept of an object (der Begriff von einem Objekt) contains the basis (Grund) for the object's actuality(Wirklichkeit), then, the concept [of the object](Begriff) is a purpose (Zweck).*

Further, the reconstructed Definition One (D1) is: **A purpose is a concept of an object, which contains the basis for the object's actuality.**

Definition Two

“What is a **purpose**? If we try to explicate in terms of **its transcendental attributes** (without presupposing anything empirical, such as the feeling of pleasure), then a **purpose** is **the object of a concept** insofar as we regard this concept as the object's cause (the real

basis of its possibility).(CJ, [section 10,] 5:220)¹

(Wenn man, was ein Zweck sei, nach seinen transzendentalen Bestimmungen (ohne etwas Empirisches, dergleichen das Gefühl der Lust ist, vorauszusetzen) erklären will: so ist Zweck der Gegenstand eines Begriffs, sofern **dieser** als die Ursache von jenem (der reale Grund seiner Möglichkeit) angesehen wird.)

From this we have Proposition Two (P2): *If*, a Concept is regarded as an Object's cause (*Ursache*)-the real basis (*der reale Grund*) of such an object's possibility (*Möglichkeit*), *then*, the Object of the Concept (*der Gegenstand eines Begriffs*) is a Purpose (*Zweck*).

The reconstructed Definition Two (D2) is: **A purpose is the object of the concept which is regarded as an object's cause, namely, the real basis of such an object's possibility.**

Definition Three

Definition Three (D3) is rather tidy:

A purpose...is something whose concept can be regarded as the basis of the possibility of the object itself. (5:227)²

(So wie nun **Zweck** überhaupt dasjenige ist, dessen Begriff als der Grund der Möglichkeit **des Gegenstandes** selbst angesehen werden kann: so wird, um sich eine objektive Zweckmäßigkeit an einem Dinge vorzustellen, der Begriff von diesem, was er für ein Ding sein solle, voran gehen.)

Definition Four

Hence such a whole would be an effect (a product) the presentation of which is regarded as the cause that makes the product possible. But the product [effect] of a cause that determines its effect merely on the basis of the presentation of that effect is called a purpose.(CJ, [Section77], 5:408)³

¹ If one would define what an end is in accordance with its transcendental determinations (without presupposing anything empirical, such as the feeling of pleasure), then an end is **the object of a concept** insofar as the latter is regarded as the cause of the former (the real ground of its possibility); and the causality of a concept with regard to its object is purposiveness (forma finalis[Guyer: purposive form])

² an end in general is that the concept of which can be regarded as the ground of the possibility of the object itself,

³ "But now since the whole would in that case be an effect(product) the representation of which would be regarded as the cause of its possibility, but the product of a cause whose determining ground is merely the representation of its effect

(Da das Ganze nun aber alsdann eine Wirkung (Produkt) sein würde, dessen Vorstellung als die Ursache seiner Möglichkeit angesehen wird, das Produkt aber einer Ursache, deren Bestimmungsgrund bloß die Vorstellung seiner Wirkung ist, ein Zweck heißt.)

Proposition Four(P4): If a cause determines⁴ its effect merely on the basis of the presentation(*Vorstellung*) of the effect, then, the effect (or the product) of the cause is called a purpose.

The reconstructed Definition Four (D4) is :

A purpose is the effect (product) of a cause which determines its effect merely on the basis of the presentation of the effect

Now we have four versions which are not exactly the same:

D1: A purpose is a concept of an object, which contains the basis for the object's actuality.

D2: A purpose is the object of the concept which is regarded as an object's cause, namely, the real basis of such an object's possibility.

D3: A purpose is something whose concept can be regarded as the basis of the possibility of the object itself.

D4: A purpose is the effect (product) of a cause which determines its effect merely on the basis of the presentation of the effect

Two **major ambiguities** occur among those four definitions:

1. "Concept of an object" vs. "Object of the concept"

D1 holds that a purpose is a concept (of an object), while D2, D3, and D4 share a similar view that a purpose is not a mere concept, but an object (something/product) of it. There seems to be a logical error if "purpose" is a concept of an object (D1) and at the same time also an object of a concept (D2).

2. Possibility vs. Actually

is called an end."

⁴ Pluhar's translation renders the German word "Bestimmungsgrund", which literally means "determining-ground", into "that determines...on the basis of..".

In all 4 definitions, “purpose” entails a **causal relation** between a “concept”⁵ and an object⁶, but they differ in whether the determining basis/ground is for the actuality (D1,D4) or the possibility(D2,D3) of the object. In Kant’s transcendental philosophy, the concepts of “possibility” and “actuality” do not have the same connotation. Possibility does not entail actual existence. Possibility can be either absolute or hypothetical. This causes the second logical puzzle.

From the above one can derive two archetypical definitions of “purpose”, and D1 and D2 can serve as the respective standard version.

D1’: A purpose is a concept of an object, which **contains the basis for the object’s actuality**.

D2’: A purpose is an object of a concept which is regarded as **the real basis of the object’s possibility**.

To overcome the ambiguities and possible logical errors, I propose the following interpretation:

Firstly, In D1’, “the concept of an object” is translated from “*der Begriff von einem Objekt*”, while in D2’(same as D2,D3), the English term “object” is translated from “*Gegenstand*”, thus “the Object of the Concept” is actually “*der Gegenstand eines Begriffs*”. “*Objekt*” does not simply equate to “*Gegenstand*” in transcendental philosophy, insofar as “*Gegenstand*” can specifically mean a transcendental object, which does not entail actual existence of the object.

Secondly, according to Kant’s *Lectures on metaphysics*, “basis”, also translated into “ground”, (*Grund*) is a concept borrowed from logic. Kant defines *Grund* as, "ground is that by which something else is posited. The concept of ground is a concept of relation". (28:548) The opposite of ground or basis is consequence, which Kant defines as, “consequence is that which is not posited unless something else is posited.”(29:808, 28:548) He distinguishes two basic kinds of ground or basis, either logical or real. "A logical

⁵ The “presentation” (*Vorstellung*, also translated into representation) in D4, in Kant’s philosophy can be either a concept or an intuition. Here I prefer to understand the “presentation” (*Vorstellung*) as a concept.

⁶ D1: concept as basis for object’s actuality, D2: concept as real basis of object’s possibility, D3: concept as the basis of the possibility of the object itself, D4: the presentation of the effect (product) as the basis of the determination of the effect (product)

ground is that by which something is posited or canceled according to the principle of identity. But a real ground is that by which something is posited or canceled according to **the principle of causality**. The first is analytic, and the other synthetic"(28:549). "Cause" is a special kind of real ground or basis (28:549,28:571)⁷. It is "the ground of actuality" and "principle of becoming" (28:571). It "contains the **ground of existence of something**"(29:843)⁸. The consequence that it determines is called "effect" (causatum)⁹. Kant emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing cause from ground in a narrow sense which is "the ground of possibility" or "the principle of being"(28:571,29:844).¹⁰ Kant stresses that "cause and effect are things. Cause is that out of which the existence of another follows." (Metaphysik Mrongovius 29:809) In D2, Kant defines the concept of a purpose in a transcendental sense as the real basis or ground of an object's possibility, while he also refers the real basis or ground of the object's possibility as the object's "**cause**". In the clarification above, the concept of "cause" already contains the meaning of "the principle of becoming" and "the ground of actuality". Therefore, the "possibility"-**"actuality"** ambiguity can be understood as definitions applied in different senses, since in a transcendental sense, the actuality of an object is not required, but only the ground of actuality. The ambiguities in fact show Kant's prudence of terminology. One finds that in D1 "**der Wirklichkeit dieses Objekts**" corresponds to "**der Begriff von einem Objekt**", while in D2, "**der Möglichkeit des Gegenstandes**" corresponds to "**der Gegenstand eines Begriffs**".

To conclude this section, purpose (Zweck) is a notion which belongs to Kantian pure philosophy. It indicates a **causal relation** (involves a real ground, not a logical ground),

⁷ "The concept of the real ground is a synthetic concept. That which the real ground contains of something is called cause." (28:549) "Cause and ground are to be distinguished... Every cause must in itself be something real, for what is the ground of actuality is something positive." (28:571)

⁸ "That which contains the ground of the existence of something is cause...The effect corresponds to the cause"(29:843)

⁹ Kant on cause and effect: "cause and ground are to be distinguished. What contains the ground of possibility is ground<ratio>, or the principle of being<principium essendi>. The ground of actuality is the principle of becoming <principium fiendi>, cause<causa>... The cause is that which contains the ground of the actuality of the determination or of the substance.The three lines in a triangle are indeed the ground, but not the cause... Every cause must in itself be something real, for what is the ground of actuality is something positive. The consequence <rationatum> of the cause is the effect <causatum>."(28:571)

¹⁰ "Cause and ground are to be distinguished": "that which contains the ground of something is called a principle <principium>. What contains the ground of actuality is called cause or principle of becoming<principium fiendi>; what contains the ground of possibility is called the principle of being<principium essendi>. What contains the ground of cognition is called the principle of cognizing <principium cognoscendi>."(28:571)

thus entails a **causality**. Purpose necessitates a concept, which implies an understanding (and also will-footnote). Moreover, it is can be either an empirical and contingent basis for the actuality of object, or it can be transcendental, to serve as real basis of the object's possibility. As argued in previous section, a transcendental idea can also have immanent use in terms of the power of reflective judgment.

Technic & Art & Purpose

As argued in Chapter Six, the new spontaneous and autonomous kind of power of judgment, updated by Kant in order to complete the critical philosophy and accomplish its systematicity, is not merely instrumental but also can legislate “the universal” a priori principles. It is attributed to the ability “to reflect”. As is often understood, in the *CJ* Kant has designated two fields for the “experiment” of this power of judgment, namely, art and nature. Correspondingly, the reflective power of judgment dealing with the respective objects is specified into the aesthetic (reflective) judgment and the teleological (reflective) judgment¹¹.

There is an often ignored point by contemporary interpreters which nevertheless offers a vital angle of understanding the coherence of the seemingly distinct two fields of the *CJ*. It is the mediating concept of “technic”(Technik). Kant defines it as follows:

But I shall henceforth use the term technic in other cases too, namely, where we merely judge [certain] objects of nature as if they were made possible through art. In those cases the judgments are neither theoretical nor practical (in the [proper] sense just discussed), because they determine nothing about the character of the object, nor about how to produce it; rather, in them we judge nature itself, though merely by analogy with an art, in its subjective relation to our cognitive power, rather than in its objective [objektiv] relation to objects [*Gegenstände*]. (*CJ*, “First Introduction” 20:200)

The notion “technic” and its subjective application defined by Kant sheds light on the

¹¹ The two are not essentially different in kind. They are the same reflective judgment but applied in different fields. The different names indicate only the distinct particular subject matter. For an accurate terminology, they would be named as aesthetic reflective power of judgment and teleological reflective power of judgment. For convenience, Kant seldom use the long term like “aesthetic reflective power of judgment (Die ästhetische reflektierende Urteilskraft)”(*CJ*, Section 24,p.100).

art–nature relation: “[certain] objects of nature” (“*Gegenstände der Natur*”) also even “nature itself” (“*die Natur selbst*”) as a whole when viewed via the power of reflective judgment, are analogous to “art” (“*Kunst*”) and can be named “technic”¹². In a sense, **the whole CJ is a study devoted to “technic”, or art by analogy** - something being made according to certain purpose, (comparing the first *Critique*, to knowledge, the second to morality). The common tendency to split the *CJ* into a work part on aesthetics, part on philosophy of biology might stem from a projection which reflects our unchecked predisposition in favour of the contemporary discipline classification.

According to Kant art in general (*Kunst überhaupt*) must be based on a “rational deliberation[Vernunft überlegung]” rather than mechanical instinct. It has to be “a production through freedom, i.e. through a power of choice [Willkür] that based its acts on reason”. Precisely, “we say that it is a product of art, rather than of nature, i.e., that the cause which produced it was thinking of **a purpose** to which this object owes its form.” Therefore, 1) the concept of art in general postulates the concept of “purpose” and implies “a power of choice”, viz., **a will**. 2) The concept of art in general entails, instead of a mere logical and formal ground (merely knowing how to do), a real ground which serves as the cause of its actuality with also “a need for ...a mechanism”, (*CJ*, 5:303-4,)¹³. This “real ground” as the cause of its actuality is the concept of “purpose” - “Art always presupposes a purpose in the cause (and its causality)”(*CJ*, 5:311). Therefore, “Art” is not simply synonymous with “artificial”. Man made “certain lifting devices-e.g. a lever or an inclined plane...can produce their purpose-directed effect...can be used for purpose” but are not considered as “works of art” if **“their [own] possibility does not require a reference to purposes”**. (*CJ*, first introduction, 219) 3) Coherently, technic or by analogy art in general leads to the core concepts of **purpose and purposiveness** which pertain to the very faculty of reflective judgment. Insofar as the concepts of purpose and purposiveness are used for explanation, the *CJ* is a work engaging with **teleological explanation**. Thus,

¹² Art and nature (nature itself/certain objects of nature) are connected in the notion of “technic”, a concept provided by reflective judgment.

¹³ Kant reiterates the relevant idea when he analyse “fine art”, which has “as its essential condition something mechanical” and entails the concept of “purpose”. “for something must be thought, as purpose, since otherwise the product cannot be ascribed to any art at all, but would be a mere product of chance.”(*CJ*, 5:310)

Kantian philosophical teleology distinguish itself from theological teleology in a fundamental assumption - It is first of all a theory devoted to the study of a peculiar higher cognitive power the use of which is immanent rather than a transcendental entity. More argument on “purpose” as a “cause” (a “real ground”) and necessitate a second causality will be given in below sections.

So far, I have justified an angle of viewing the consistency in the two parts of the CJ)-the whole CJ can be deemed as a study devoted to “art” in a general sense and its peculiar causality in terms of purpose/purposiveness through the newly coined power of reflective judgment. As Kant defines it, “purposiveness” as “a priori principle” legitimated by the power of reflective judgment is applied to both the fields of art (in a narrow sense) and nature. The latter via the mediate concept “technic” is also deemed as “art”. Based on this, Kant accomplishes the symmetry of his tripartite isomorphic structure between higher cognitive powers and divisions of critical philosophy (20:245-246, 5:198). See below an example of the Kantian (pernumeric not logical) argument from the idea of symmetry (one aspect of systematicity).(20:208)

Appendix Four An Analysis of the Second Causality in the *CPR* and the *CPrR*

The Second Causality as the Postulate of Transcendental Freedom

According to the *CPR*, “the principle of causality”, when understood as governed by “nature’s mechanism” is only concerning “efficient causes”, and applied to things as “appearance” or “objects of experience” (*CPR*, Bxxvii); moreover, “appearance themselves, taken as objects of experience, are possible only in accordance with this law[of causality].” (*CPR* B234) Kant calls this causal connection “in the world of sense according to immutable natural laws” “the necessity of nature”, which has been “established as a principle of the Transcendental Analytic and tolerates no impairment.”(A537-8/B565-6) Nevertheless, Kant asserts that besides the causality according to immutable natural laws or “the necessity of nature”, there must coexist a second causality parallel to the “efficient causes” which functions simultaneously according to intelligible causes.(A537/B565) Otherwise, the idea of “transcendental freedom”,¹ or “the basis of the practical concept of freedom” would be annulled/impossible(A533/B561). He writes,

We must assume two kinds of causality and their rule, viz., nature and freedom. (A632/B660)
Only two kinds of causality can be conceived in regard to what occurs, viz., either a causality according to nature or one from freedom. (A533/B561)
If, on the other hand, appearance count ...not as things in themselves but as mere presentation connected according to empirical laws, then they must themselves still have bases that are not appearances. But such an intelligible cause is not, as regards its causality, determined by appearances, although its effects appear and thus can be determined by other appearances. Hence this cause, along with its causality, is outside the series of empirical conditions, whereas its effects are encountered within the series. Hence the effect can be considered as free with regard to its intelligible cause, and yet with regard to appearances be considered simultaneously as resulting from these according to the necessity of nature. This distinction,

¹ "By freedom, on the other hand, in the cosmological sense of the term, I mean the power to begin a state on one's own. Thus the causality of freedom is not in turn subject, according to the law of nature, to another causes that determines it as regards time. Freedom, in this meaning of the term, is a pure transcendental idea. This idea, first, contains nothing borrowed from experience. Moreover, second, the object of this idea cannot be given determinately in any experience, because there is a universal law of the very possibility of all experience whereby what ever occurs must have a cause...." (A533/B561)

when set forth in a universal way and quite abstractly, must appear extremely subtle and obscure, but it will become clear in its application. (A537/B565)

“The annulment of transcendental freedom would simultaneously eliminate all practical freedom”(A534/B562), so this “subtle and obscure” distinction secures the idea of “transcendental freedom” according to intelligible causes, which then in its concrete and practical application is secured and in returned demonstrated by practical freedom, namely freedom of choice.

Reason creates for itself the idea of a spontaneity that can , on its own, start to act-without, i.e., needing to be preceded by another cause by means of which it is determined to action in turn, according to the law of causal connection.(A533/B561)

For practical freedom presuppose that although something did not occur, it yet ought to have occurred, and hence the cause of this something in [the realm of] appearance was not completely determinative... and hence a causality whereby we can begin a series of events entirely on our own. (A534/B562)

According to Kant, the second causality according to intelligible causes is theoretically necessary for the idea of transcendental freedom but it is also factual for practical freedom. “In the practical idea pure reason even has a causality for actually producing what its concept contains.” (CPR, B385)² This is a causality of reason in the determination of the will, namely the ability to initiate a series of cause and effect, or a new causal chain (CPR, A803/B831)³. This causality of reason in the practical determination of the will leads to the idea of freedom, as “moral principles of reason can give rise to free actions”, and gains objective reality in its practical use. However, in the *CPR*, Kant also reminds us that these principles of the second causality cannot give rise to natural laws⁴. Thus, the two causalities are essentially parallel. The causal regression in the world of sense-“the chain of effect and

² “in the practical idea pure reason even has a causality for actually producing what its concept contains. wisdom is the idea of the necessary unity of all possible purpose, it must, as an original and at least limiting condition, serve everything practical as a rule.”

³ The causality of reason in the determination of the will: “Hence we cognize practical freedom through experience; we cognize it as one of the natural causes, viz. , as causality of reason [that is operative] in the determination of the will. Transcendental freedom, on the other hand, demands an independence of this reason itself (as regards reason's causality whereby it is able to begin a series of appearances) from all determining causes of the world of sense; and to this extent transcendental freedom seems to be contrary to the law of nature and hence to all possible experience, and therefore remains a problem. But this problem does not pertain to reason in its practical use; and hence in a canon of pure reason we deal with only two questions, which concern the practical interest of pure reason and with regard to which a canon of this reason's use must be possible, viz.: is there a God? Is there a future life? ”(CPR, A 803/B831)

⁴ “By contrast, the systematic unity of nature according to speculative principles of reason was incapable of being proved; for although reason has causality with regard to freedom as such, it does not have causality with regard to all of nature; and although moral principles of reason can give rise to free actions, they cannot give rise to natural laws. Accordingly, the principles of pure reason in its practical use- but specially in its moral use- have objective reality.”(*CPR*, A807-8/B835-6)

their causes”- only ascend “from appearance to appearance”(A522/B550); whereas the effect from intelligible cause can interfere into the appearance or the world of senses⁵. Now these two causalities, if to be put in the terms of “condition”, then, “the condition of what occurs is called the cause, and the cause's unconditioned causality in [the realm of] appearance is called freedom, whereas the conditioned causality is called natural cause- in the narrower meaning.”(A419/B447)

Practical Confirmation of The Second Causality: Causality of Will

Kant further reinforced the distinction of two paralleled causality in the *CPrR*. Slightly different, instead of arguing the impossibility and incomprehensibility of negating transcendental freedom, as he calls it now “an analytic principle of pure speculative reason”(5:48), Kant positively secures this once problematic concept of freedom “as a power of absolute spontaneity” or “a causality that determines itself entirely on its own”(5:48-9) with a priori and apodeictical certainty in practical reference. He states that “with this pure practical power of reason, transcendental freedom is now also established” (5:3). However, the resort of above argument to an indisputable fact⁶ instead of a transcendental reduction might leave him a logical burden. He confirms that in moral practice pure reason can sufficiently determine the will to the deed merely by its autonomy (without consulting speculative reason and empirical determinants). Reason on its own can be practical, namely, initiate an action (5:42). In this process of determination, it provides by itself a peculiar kind of “reality”⁷ to the supersensible via the causality of freedom⁸.

⁵ However, Kant regards the particular mechanism of the intelligible cause or how the noumenal affects the phenomenal as transcendent as fundamentally beyond human cognition, thus can not be known from a theoretical point of review.

⁶ Beside the certainty of this moral fact, Kant also emphasize it is “absolutely **inexplicable** from any data of the world of sense and from the entire range of our theoretical use of reason- a fact that points to a pure world of understanding, and indeed even positively determines that world and allows us to cognize something of it, viz. law” (*CPrR*, 5:43) Again, “how this **consciousness of the moral law** or, what is the same thing, the consciousness of freedom is possible **cannot be further explained**, but the admissibility of freedom can readily be defended in the theoretical critique.”(4:46) This suspension of further explanation of the moral fact is a hard problem of Kant’s moral philosophy. “Moreover, the moral law is given as a fact, as it were, of pure reason of which we are conscious a priori and which is apodeictically certain, even supposing that in experience no example could be hunted up where it is complied with exactly. Therefore the objective reality of the moral law cannot be proved through any deduction, through any endeavor of theoretical reason, speculative or empirically supported, and hence could not, even if one wanted to forgo apodeictic certainty, be confirmed through experience and thus proved a posteriori, and yet is-on its own-established.”(5:47)

⁷ Kant explains this peculiar kind of reality which distinguish from “objective reality”-“here the reality at issue does not aim at any determination of the categories and expansion of cognition to the supersensible, but that what is meant by this reality is only that in this [practical] reference an object belongs to them at all”(5:6). However, he also simply calls

Freedom is not a causality in the sense of *causa noumenon*, but a mediating causality which stems from the noumenal and reaches to the phenomenal. The two “parallel” causalities-“causality as freedom”(“established through the moral law”) and “causality as natural mechanism” (“established...through the law of nature”) eventually converge in the very existence of human being, which can be “as a being in itself”⁹ as well as “appearance”(5:6n)¹⁰.

So far, on the one hand, Kant “do[es] justice to the mechanism of natural necessity by going back from the conditioned to the condition *ad infinitum*,” cognized by theoretical reason and on the other hand, he also established “a determinate law of causality in an intelligible world(causality through freedom),viz., the moral law “via pure practical reason. (5:49)

These two causalities converges in the very being of human but nevertheless split the higher cognitive power reason into two which coherently correspond to Kant’s two senses of nature (that I have looked into in Chapter two). According to Kant, the supersensible is different from the supernatural, first of all insofar as nature in general, either the sensible or supersensible nature is lawful. (5:43)¹¹.

The moral law is in fact a law of the causality through freedom and hence a law of the possibility of a supersensible nature, just as the metaphysical law of the events in the world of sense was a law of the causality of sensible nature. Thus the moral law determines that which speculative philosophy had to leave undetermined, viz., the law for a causality the concept of which was only negative in speculative philosophy; and it thus first provides this concept with objective reality.(5:47)

In the *CPR*, Kant warns that the principles of the second causality cannot give rise to natural laws, there he uses “natural laws” in a narrow sense, namely the mechanism of nature. But now in the *CPrR* he describes two causalities indicate two kinds of causal laws

this reality objective, viz. “objective reality” “in a practical reference...since we regard it as an object of the will of ourselves as pure rational beings.” (5:44)

⁸ Practical reason on its own “provides a suprasensible [übersinnliche, or supersensible] object of the category of causality, namely freedom, with reality(a practical concept...only for practical use)”(5:6)

⁹ Kant also use “as a noumenon”(5:48).

¹⁰ The reconciliation of causality as freedom with causality as natural mechanism - the first of which is established through the moral law, the second through the law of nature, and indeed in one and the same subject, the human being-is impossible without presenting the human being in reference to the first as a being in itself but in reference to the second as an appearance, the former in pure and the later in empirical consciousness. Otherwise the contradiction of reason with itself is unavoidable. (5:6n)

¹¹ “Nature in the most general meaning is the existence of things under laws.”

of nature - distinguished by whether will is or functions as the effect (to be determined) or the cause (to determine)¹². In a sense both are natural and lawful. Kant calls the second “the will’s causality” (5:44) or “causality of will” (5:50). Regarding the different stresses, Kant addresses this “will’s causality” in other different names as “the causality from freedom”(5:16), “the empirically unconditioned causality”, “a causality in the rational being”(5:46), “a causality of pure reason”(5:65), etc..¹³

Kant defines will as “a power to produce objects corresponding to one’s presentations or...to determine itself to bring about these objects (whether or not one's physical power is sufficient), i.e., to determine its causality”(, 5:15) Kant also defines in his lectures on Metaphysics that “will is the faculty (with power of free choice) for acting with consciousness according to rules-one can also say-it is the faculty of ends[purposes]. End[purpose] is in general: concept with which the rule of my action is in agreement”.(Metaphysik Dohna, 1792093, 28:677) Comparing with the two definitions, one can come to an important point concerning Kant’s philosophical teleology: will is a power or faculty to initiate its own causality according to “purpose”. The second *Critique* devoted to practical reason thus is in a certain sense a study of this “will’s causality”, insofar as the will’s causality “has its determining basis solely in the pure power of reason, a power that can therefore also be called a pure practical reason”.¹⁴ The fact that Kantian second causality of will in the rational being is a causality of purpose then necessarily constitutes a vital part of the larger picture of Kantian philosophical teleology.

¹² “the former nature the object must be causes of the presentations that determine the will, but in the latter nature the will is to be the cause of the objects, so that **the will’s causality** has its determining basis solely in the pure power of reason, a power that can therefore also be called a pure practical reason.”(5:44)

¹³ Their connotation is opposite to the causality as “pure concepts of understanding or categories of reason used theoretically”(5:65)

¹⁴ “Through this consciousness of its freedom the will of a rational being that, as belonging to the world of sense, cognizes itself as necessarily subject to the law of causality like other efficient causes, is yet in the practical [sphere] at the same time conscious-on another side, viz, as a being in itself-of its existence [as] determinable in an intelligible order of things...freedom, if it is attributed to us, transfers us into an intelligible order of things has been proved sufficiently elsewhere”(5:42)

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