

East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory

Michael A. Peters
Tina Besley
Huajun Zhang *Editors*

Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation

Chinese and Western Perspectives

 Springer

East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory

Series Editors

Michael A. Peters, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Chuanbao Tan, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Tina Besley, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

This series, published by Beijing Normal University, is geared toward developing approaches to intercultural philosophy in education, especially in the Chinese and Western cultures. The first series of its kind produced by a Chinese university, it addresses open problems in the analysis and structure of the ethics of self-cultivation, clarifies the differences between respective cultures' approaches to philosophy, and equips readers to handle complex ideas in the context of moral education.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/16303>

Michael A. Peters · Tina Besley · Huajun Zhang
Editors

Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-Cultivation

Chinese and Western Perspectives



Springer

Editors

Michael A. Peters
Faculty of Education
Beijing Normal University
Beijing, China

Tina Besley
Faculty of Education
Beijing Normal University
Beijing, China

Huajun Zhang
Faculty of Education
Beijing Normal University
Beijing, China

ISSN 2661-8753

ISSN 2661-8761 (electronic)

East-West Dialogues in Educational Philosophy and Theory

ISBN 978-981-13-8026-6

ISBN 978-981-13-8027-3 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8027-3>

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2021

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Contents

Pedagogies and Philosophies of Self-cultivation	1
Michael A. Peters, Huajun Zhang, and Tina Besley	
Integrating Chinese with Western Philosophy	13
Michael Slote	
Self-Cultivation as Moral Education in Chinese Philosophy	31
Ronnie Littlejohn and Qingjun Li	
The Confucian Revival and Self-Cultivation: A Critical Inquiry into the <i>Dújing</i> Movement (讀經運動) and <i>Rules for Youngsters</i> (弟子規)	47
Ruyu Hung	
Self-cultivation in Japanese Traditions: Shugyo, Keiko, Yojo, and Shuyo in Dialogue	61
Tadashi Nishihira	
Confucian Self-cultivation and the Paradox of Moral Education	79
Charlene Tan	
A Life Worth Pursuing: Confucian Ritual Propriety (禮) in Self-cultivation	93
Jin Li	
Wang Yang-Ming's Theory of Aesthetic Experience: Beauty in the Extension of Innate Knowledge and Its Implications for Moral Education	109
Zhuran You and Yingzi Hu	
Cultivating an Inclusive Individuality: Critical Reflections on the Idea of Quality Education in Contemporary China	123
Huajun Zhang	

Three Characteristics and Advantages of Confucian Moral Education	139
Chuanbao Tan	
Self-Cultivation and the Concept of German <i>Bildung</i>	151
Michaela Vogt and Till Neuhaus	
Experience, Growth, Habit, and Community: The Keys to Understanding Self-cultivation in the Works of John Dewey	169
Chengbing Wang and Ming Dong	
Democratic Self-cultivation	181
Leonard J. Waks	
Pluralism and the “Happiness” of the Present: On Strangers and the Ideal of Education for Life	197
Babette Babich	
Ways of Performing and Regarding Practices of Silence in Classrooms: Reflections with Wittgenstein and Foucault	219
Jeff Stickney	
Foucault, Truth-Telling and Technologies of the Self in Schools	241
Tina Besley	
Subjectivity, Truth and the Historical Ontology of Ourselves: The Hermeneutics of the Self-Foucault’s Lectures at the College de France, 1981–82	255
Michael A. Peters	
Postscript	269
Michael A. Peters	

Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Michael A. Peters (PhD, FNZAH, FRSA, FRSNZ, FPESA) is a distinguished professor of Education at Beijing Normal University Faculty of Education PRC and an emeritus professor in Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. He is also a senior research fellow at the University of Auckland. He is the editor-in-chief of the journal, *Educational Philosophy and Theory* and *The Beijing International Review of Education* (with Prof. Xudong ZHU). He is also the founding editor of eight international journals. His interests are in education and philosophy, and he has written over one hundred books, including several books on Wittgenstein. He has acted as an advisor to governments in the USA, Scotland, NZ, South Africa, UNESCO, and the EU. He was made an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2008 and awarded honorary doctorates by the State University of New York (SUNY at Empire State) in 2012 and the University of Aalborg in 2015. He was made an hon fellow of the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) in 2010. His recently published books include: *Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality* (2021), *Wittgenstein, Antifoundationalism, Technoscience and Philosophy of Education* (2020), *The Chinese Dream: Educating the Future* (2019), *The Companion to Wittgenstein and Education: Pedagogical Investigations* (2017).

Tina Besley is a distinguished professor at the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University. She was previously a professor and an associate dean international, in the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand; a research professor, the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign; a full professor, California State University San Bernardino; and a research fellow at the University of Glasgow where she began her academic career in late 2000, after 16 years a secondary school teacher, the head of guidance, and a counsellor in New Zealand. She is the founding president of the Association for Visual Pedagogies and past president of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia and honoured as a fellow of both learned societies. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, UK. In Philosophy of Education, she uses the later

work of Michel Foucault on subjectivity, free speech, and governmentality. In global studies in education, she explores policy, identities and cultures and interculturalism. She works closely with Prof. Michael A. Peters and with a wide international network of scholars in editorial roles for many journals and books. She has published over 30 books and monographs and numerous journal articles. Currently, she is a editor and project manager for *PESA Agora*, an associate editor of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, and the *Beijing International Review of Education*.

Huajun Zhang (Ph.D.) is an associate professor at the Faculty of Education at Beijing Normal University. Her research areas are history of thoughts of education and China's modern educational transformation and how teachers play the role. She is the author of the book *John Dewey, Liang Shuming and China's Education Reform: Cultivating Individuality* (2013). She is the guest editor of the special issue *John Dewey and Chinese Education: A Centennial Reflection at Beijing International Review of Education* (Vol. 1, No. 4, 2019). She also serves as an associate editor of the English academic journal *Beijing International Review of Education* and *Frontiers of Education in China*.

Contributors

Babette Babich Department of Philosophy, Fordham University, New York, NY, USA;
University of Winchester, Winchester, UK

Tina Besley Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Ming Dong School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Yingzi Hu School of Teacher Education, Shaoxing University, Yuecheng District, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, China

Ruyu Hung Department of Education, National Chiayi University, Chiayi, Taiwan

Jin Li Education Department, Brown University, Providence, RI, US

Qingjun Li Belmont University, Nashville, TN, USA

Ronnie Littlejohn Belmont University, Nashville, TN, USA

Till Neuhaus Faculty of Education, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany

Tadashi Nishihira Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

Michael A. Peters Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Michael Slote University of Miami, Miami, USA

Jeff Stickney Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Department, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada;
Richmond Hill, ON, Canada

Charlene Tan Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

Chuanbao Tan Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal Education, Beijing, China

Michaela Vogt Faculty of Education, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany

Leonard J. Waks Hangzhou Normal University, Hangzhou, China

Chengbing Wang School of Philosophy and Sociology, Shanxi University, Taiyuan, China

Zhuran You School of Teacher Education, Shaoxing University, Yuecheng District, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, China

Huajun Zhang Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Pedagogies and Philosophies of Self-cultivation



Michael A. Peters, Huajun Zhang, and Tina Besley 

1 Philosophies of Self-cultivation

Educational philosophies of self-cultivation as the cultural foundation and philosophical ethos for education have a strong and historically effective tradition stretching back to antiquity in the classical ‘cradle’ civilizations of China and East Asia, India and Pakistan, Greece and Anatolia, focussed on the cultural traditions in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in the East and Hellenistic philosophy in the West.¹ Traditions of religious practices of self-cultivation also can be found also in Ancient Egypt, and the other Ancient Near Eastern cultures including Ancient Iran and especially Persia. The philosophical ideal of self-cultivation has been the practical ground for a diverse range of notions and practices of human development, spirituality and transcendence that most often embrace an essentially moral dimension based on the active cultivation of virtue or its equivalent as the basis for the good life and how one ought to live.

In broad terms, self-cultivation is the development of oneself, both mind and body, throughout life, conceived as an endless transformation of the self, often based on stages from novice to master, and on rituals and socio-psychological processes that are claimed to enhance our moral capacities. This process often involves music,

¹ This introduction draws on aspects of ‘Educational philosophies of self-cultivation: Chinese Humanism’, Peters (2020)

M. A. Peters (✉) · H. Zhang · T. Besley
Beijing Normal University, Beijing, PR China
e-mail: mpeters@bnu.edu.cn

H. Zhang
e-mail: zhanghj@bnu.edu.cn

T. Besley
e-mail: tbesley@bnu.edu.cn

poetry, art, sayings and recorded conversations, historical annals and various spiritual and ascetic exercises that are meant to lead to a kind of spirituality and moral perfectibility. In these schemas, moral development takes place through a staged and ritual processes through self-knowledge, care of the self and others, self-realization of one's unique potential, aimed at self-fulfilment and directed at the acquisition and attainment of an ideal state of being, often seen as transcendent or indicating as something beyond a normal state of being. This spiritual tendency towards wholeness, organicity and cosmological harmony, largely undertaken through practices and exercises designed to enhance and extend self-reflexivity and self-reflection, was seen to culminate in a form of self-overcoming to signify a transcendent state beyond the self (no-self), especially in Eastern cultures like Buddhism. A major distinction between Confucianism and Buddhism is the meaning of self. In Confucianism, a transcendental state is not beyond self (no-self) but extension of the self.

Another spiritual tendency towards self-cultivation took place based in both East and West on self-control, self-discipline, self-denial expressed through ascetic (Gk. *askēsis*) practices of the self, directed at various forms of abstinence from sensual pleasures, including dieting, silence, solitude and study. In these examples, it is easy to see how various monastic school traditions taught these virtues, often accompanied through a disciple-master relationship with 'severe' rules. These ascetic practices as a pathway to purification of the self to reach a state of holiness and/or closeness to God have a strong role in both Abrahamic and Indian religions, often associated with monks and nuns in the establishment of the early monastic way of life in the third to fifth centuries and much earlier with yogis and *bhikṣuṇī* (monastics) in Buddhism. The renunciation of the world has been a significant tradition in Hinduism by *Sannyasi* and Jainism that included self-mortification or the subjugation of appetites or desires by self-denial. In Jainism, monks and nuns take ascetic vows with very strict prohibitions on diet, eating only vegetables and other forms of the abandonment of the body. Islam, Sufism, Judaism and Japanese religions also have minor ascetic traditions. In this collection, really only part of a much larger study, we focus mainly Chinese and Western perspectives. Clearly, much remains to be done. This volume explores Chinese (with a chapter on the Japanese perspective) and Western views, with an accent on Foucault, of virtue and character derived from self-cultivation practices that are today important not only as historical models and but also as living embodiment of ethical traditions of thought of Western and Confucian perspectives. Foucault's work represents a departure from the predominant Aristotlean view.

2 Chinese Self-cultivation

Self-cultivation (xiū yǎng '修养') in Chinese is an abbreviation of xiū-xīn yǎng-xìng ('修心养性'), which literally translates 'to cultivate the heart and nurture the character (idiom); to improve oneself by meditation' and the term applies to cultural traditions in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism to describe, correspondingly, the

relational self, the authentic self and the nonself. The moral ideal of self-cultivation in Confucianism, a tradition that stretches back four thousand years, is depicted as a humanism represented in Chinese philosophy as the unity of man and heaven (Chan, 1963: 3). As Lau and Ames (1998) indicate Confucius (551–479 BC).

is arguably the most influential philosopher in human history – “is” because, taking Chinese philosophy on its own terms, he is still very much alive. Recognized as China’s first teacher both chronologically and in importance, his ideas have been the rich soil in which the Chinese cultural tradition has grown and flourished. In fact, whatever we might mean by ‘Chineseness’ today, some two and a half millennia after his death, is inseparable from the example of personal character that Confucius provided for posterity. <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/biographical/confucius-551-479-bc/v-1>

Phillip Ivanhoe’s (1993) *Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation* follows the concept of self-cultivation through three classical Confucius formations—Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi—and three Neo-Confucians, Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200), Wang Yang-ming (王陽明, 1472–1529), and Dai Zhen (戴震, 1724–1777) who believed that a transformation of self ‘fulfilled a larger design, inherent in the universe itself, which the cultivated person could come to discern, and that a peaceful and flourishing society could only arise by realizing this grand design’ (p. 7). Ivanhoe’s book was derived from The Rockwell Lecture Series, a series of three talks delivered by the author at Rice University in 1992. Ivanhoe describes in idyllic terms the emergence of the Confucian emphasis on the moral education of the individual at the beginning (eleventh century BC) suggesting it achieved primacy without any conflicting alternatives. Ivanhoe contends that Confucius promoted an acquisition model of moral self-cultivation that nurtures only the tendencies that are already incipient in human nature and substitutes an acquired and largely external nature for the one received at birth. Mencius proposes a developmental model based on the fundamental quality of human nature, while Xunzi proffered the classic re-formation model of self-cultivation based the essential contribution of learning to the overall process. Beyond the classical age of Confucianism, the program in moral self-cultivation of Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was presented as ‘recovery’ because he contended that bad thoughts and bad deeds are by no means natural and, therefore, they are not products of the ‘original’ or good nature of human beings first proposed by Mencius. Zhu Xi’s program more than any other results in a canon of texts that provide students with clear steps and procedures in following the Way. Ivanhoe’s analysis of analysis of the program of Wang Yangming (1472–1529) focuses on the question of whether moral self-cultivation should be pursued through inner reflection or through a program of learning. The program of moral self-cultivation of Dai Zhen was uniquely intellectual promoting the realization model.

In ‘The Ethics of Self: Another Version of Confucian Ethics’, Chen (2014) writes:

Confucian ethics is about how to realize a self in line with inner sagehood and outer kingdom (内圣外王); it is about how to realize a self as fully self-conscious being-for-itself of definite character, substance, and personality. Confucian ethics does not start with the assumption that there is a given self that should be made virtuous, rule-abiding, or dutiful, but starts from the assumption that a self needs to be created, developed, and realized in the ethical life while the potentiality of building a self is given.

Self-cultivation in Chinese philosophy provides a lens for viewing the contributions of ancient Chinese philosophy with its strong focus on practical ethics in the world here and now and produces differences with Western orientations. Wei-Ming (1998) explains:

This concern for the concreteness of the life-world gives the impression that the social dimension of the human condition features so prominently in the Chinese world of thought that the idea of the group takes precedence over conceptions of the individual self. The anthropological studies that contrast the Chinese sense of shame with the Western sense of guilt further enhance the impression that external social approval, rather than internal psychological sanction, defines the moral fabric of Chinese society...Chinese philosophy as social philosophy seems exclusively immersed in issues of correct behaviour, familial harmony, political order and world peace. Even strands of thought that emphasize the aesthetic experience of the self are all intimately bound up with the highly ritualized world of human-relatedness.

There are grounds for thinking that there is room for philosophical discussion of these different traditions in relation to virtue ethics and in particular, differently to the ethics of self-cultivation that will provides a set of useful intercultural comparisons and differences while respecting the incommensurability of the traditions (Shun & Wong, 2004). Wang (2011) provides a virtue ethics orientation rather than the usual social-political interpretation, which shifts attention from the external to the internal in terms of how ‘moral cultivation’ should be understood in the *Xunzi*. Also, it presents not only a discussion of *xing* (性, human nature) and the relation between *li* (禮, ritual) and *yi* (義, moral) but a thorough investigation of Xunzi’s moral philosophy.

3 The Contemporary Revival of Virtue Ethics

In Western philosophy, there has been strong interest in the ethical ideal of self-cultivation after a revival of virtue ethics that gave central importance to the development of moral character after the publication of Anscombe’s (1958: 1) seminal article ‘Modern Moral Philosophy’, where she argues that we should put moral philosophy to one side before we develop a suitable philosophy of psychology, and that we ought to jettison concepts of moral obligation and moral duty from earlier conceptions of ethics, and ignore what has been written on moral philosophy since Sedgewick (that is, the two major traditions, Kantianism and utilitarianism). As Homiak (2016) expresses Anscombe’s argument:

To do ethics properly, ... one must start with what it is for a human being to flourish or live well. That meant returning to some questions that mattered deeply to the ancient Greek moralists. These questions focussed on the nature of “virtue” (or what we might think of as admirable moral character), of how one becomes virtuous (is it taught? does it arise naturally? are we responsible for its development?), and of what relationships and institutions may be necessary to make becoming virtuous possible.

Actually, what it meant for Anscombe was a return to Aristotle’s ethics and his notion of virtue as furnishing the substance for a moral psychology in providing an account of the type of characteristic virtue is and how it relates to human action. She

charges that secular approaches to moral theory do not have foundation because they use concepts such as ‘morally ought’, ‘morally obligated’, ‘morally right’, that are based on Christianity’s law conception of ethics that derived its ethical notion from the Torah, and thus require a divine source of moral authority and the concepts of this law conception became deeply embedded in our language. Instead of ‘morally wrong’, we should use concepts like ‘untruthful’, ‘unchaste’, and ‘unjust’ that leads naturally to virtue ethics. Whether or not one reads Anscombe as recommending that we jettison the legalistic conception the paper impacted negatively on utilitarianism and Kantian ethics and positively on virtue ethics.

As Hursthouse and Pettigrove (2016) confidently assert that virtue ethics that emphasizes moral character is one of the three major approaches in normative ethics in contrast to deontology and consequentialism. And they go on to write: ‘In the West, virtue ethics’ founding fathers are Plato and Aristotle, and in the East it can be traced back to Mencius and Confucius’. It suffered an eclipse during the nineteenth century when forms of deontology and utilitarianism developed but then experienced a revival in the 1950s because neither attended to the practical issues always as part of the virtue ethics tradition:

virtues and vices, motives and moral character, moral education, moral wisdom or discernment, friendship and family relationships, a deep concept of happiness, the role of the emotions in our moral life and the fundamentally important questions of what sorts of persons we should be and how we should live....

And they remark:

Although modern virtue ethics does not have to take a “neo-Aristotelian” or eudaimonist form..., almost any modern version still shows that its roots are in ancient Greek philosophy by the employment of three concepts derived from it. These are *arête* (excellence or virtue), *phronesis* (practical or moral wisdom) and *eudaimonia* (usually translated as happiness or flourishing)

The ‘aretaic’ (*arête* = virtue) turn in moral philosophy that followed Anscombe’s (1958) paper included contributions by Stocker (1976), Foot (1978), MacIntyre (1981), Ricoeur (1996), Hursthouse (1997), Crisp and Slote (1997), Becker (1998), Swanton (2003) and Russell (2013). Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen have also employed virtue theory. The fact is that it is the ethical tradition with the longest history in the West with Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and the Epicureans and the ancient Confucian virtue ethics, represented by Mencius and Wang Yangming, in the East, who focus on harmonious social interaction.

The analysis of all three classical traditions—Aristotelian, Confucian and Buddhist—reveals a remarkably similar conception and emphasis on *moral self-cultivation* as a practical answer of how humans become virtuous, even if each tradition provides its own distinct figure of the virtuous person.

4 Foucault and the Hellenistic Cultivation of Virtue

Hellenistic philosophy (Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism) sought to attain a state of calmness and peace of mind by ‘rooting out pathological emotions’, ‘eliminating irrational fears of the afterlife and unnatural desires in the present life’ and ‘removing the anxiety produced by the futile search for certain knowledge’ (Kraye, 2007). Eudaimonia (happiness or human flourishing) is a central concept in Aristotle and Hellenistic philosophy based on the self-cultivation of virtue (*arete*) of character and the attainment of happiness. *Askēsis* is a form of training aimed at a transformation of the self by the self, involving various practices of self-discipline of body and mind through fasting, contemplation, athletic training, dialectics and communing with the divine that encouraged philosophy as a way of life and self-mastery aimed at ethical self-constitution. Our modern understanding of Western forms of *askēsis* has been transformed by Pierre Hadot’s and Michel Foucault’s work that demonstrated *askēsis* as ‘a spiritual exercise that results in a transformation of perception through the cultivation of a certain mode of being’ (Robbert, 2019).

We should also remember that the philosophical attention has been directed at various forms of self-consciousness, self-recognition and self-alienation in both the Hegelian and Marxist traditions that have resulted in associated analyses of economic and class self-alienation under capitalism as standing in the way of achieving our essential human nature or thwarting and distorting our essential human nature. The historical meaning of the German ideal of self-cultivation (*Bildung*), beginning in the Middle Ages and institutionalized in the German school system in the nineteenth century, bears an historical trace to Hegel and pedagogy as ‘the disciplined effort directed at the formation of interiority and the spiritual self-development of the individual’ (Alves, 2019).

Virtue ethics as it has developed in the West, going back to the Ancient Greeks, places emphasis on virtue or moral character centrally concerned with the key concepts of virtue (*aretē*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and the ‘good life’ (*eudaimonia*). Virtue ethics experienced the so-called aretaic turn with a contemporary emphasis on Aristotle. Following new work on Nietzsche, philosophers in the modern European tradition have been influenced by other notions of self-cultivation that were brought to light during the Hellenistic period. Subsequently, there was a turn to modern philosophers influenced by Hellenistic conceptions of self-cultivation, including Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and, more recently, both Hadot and Foucault. Recently, there has been a recognition of non-Aristotelian accounts of self-cultivation and of the differences between moral and ethical self-cultivation, especially in the work of Michel Foucault who in his late work places a great deal of emphasis on ethical and aesthetic self-constitution. While Foucault might be seen in this light, it is clear that he does not understand ethics as moral philosophy, metaethics or normative ethics, preferring to define ethics as a relation of the self to itself that demands work on the individual as a basis for self-forming activity that constitutes its own moral being. His interviews ‘On the Genealogy of Ethics’ and ‘The Ethics for the Concern of Self as a Practice of Freedom’ provides a

set of useful insights into his approach and his lecture course ‘The Hermeneutics of the Subject’ and others analyse ancient ethics of caring for the self and the ancient ethical practice of *parrhesia* (free speech) central not only to ancient ethics but also his own philosophical practice.

As Mitcheson (2018) aptly expresses the matter:

For Foucault, the Stoics offered an example of cultivating a relationship of the self to the self in terms of self-mastery and therefore offered a resource for constructing a non-subjugated self. I argue that non-subjugation is not sufficient to determine a practice of self-cultivation, though it must inform these practices if a non-subjugated self is to emerge from them. I demonstrate the importance for Foucault of critical self-awareness in a process of loosening the ties we have to ourselves, which can find inspiration in Stoic self-examination, but also the need for trying out new forms of subjectivity.

5 The Claims of Moral Education

As Slote (2018) recently argues in a Preface to a new and important volume *Ethics and Self-Cultivation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Matthew Dennis and Sander Werkhoven: ‘Self-cultivation can not only include trying to find a way towards a morally better or happier life for oneself, but can also be a matter of seeking to develop certain non-moral excellences in oneself’ and he goes on to say ‘Even if most of us ethicists are mainly interested in moral issues, we have to acknowledge that there are important ethical issues beyond the moral as well’. He is talking about the ‘differences between moral development and the development of non-moral excellences and of the capacity for a happy life’ (p. vii). While moral educators are keen on virtue ethics and insist on recommending moral self-cultivation claiming that virtue is like a skill that can be taught, Slote is more sanguine and less sure. Elsewhere, Slote (2016: 126) argues that philosophers like Aristotle and Kant who represent a tradition that holds ‘that moral self-cultivation or self-shaping is possible and morally imperative’ ‘are psychologically unrealistic in what they say about the possibilities of moral self-cultivation’. And he goes on to argue ‘We cannot shape ourselves in the substantial and overall ways that Confucianism, Aristotle, and Kant say we can, and our best psychological data on moral education and development indicate strongly that these phenomena depend crucially on the intervention of others and, more generally, on external factors individuals don’t control’.

At a seminar in Hong Kong in October 2014, titled ‘The Philosophical Reset Button: A Manifesto’, Slote argued for a manifesto addressed to Chinese scholars.

This talk is very different from other philosophy talks: it really is a manifesto addressed to Chinese philosophers and to intellectuals and academics in China more generally. On the whole Western thought has been exceedingly intellectualistic and rationalistic, and the talk outlines some of the ways in which these deep one-sided tendencies need to be corrected or rebalanced. But it is also claimed that the Chinese are in the best position to correct and rebalance philosophy as a discipline. Chinese thought has never gone to the extremes of Western rationalism, and there is every reason to think that as China gains in power and

prestige throughout the world, Chinese philosophers and thinkers will be in a position to correct or reset Western philosophy through drawing on their own deepest historical traditions, traditions which have recognized the value of emotion and sane ordinary living much more than has been typical in the West. You Chinese should realize that you have much to offer the West and not be too modest with your self-image or reticent with your philosophical ambitions. (https://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&UEID=33261)

Given this challenge to moral education by Michael Slote and others, it behoves us to investigate this problem, the traditions to which he refers and to make an honest and searching assessment of his arguments. Given also his comments about Chinese philosophy, it is an ideal time to follow through with his suggestion. This book provides an approach to the ethics of self-cultivation in Chinese (and Japanese) and Western perspectives that encourages the beginning of East–West perspectives with an emphasis of the significance of this approach for the philosophy of education that has since its rebirth in the analytic tradition has languished in the ground that Peters (1996) first tilled in the 1960s with his *Ethics and Education* that attempted to provide an ethical foundation for education in a democratic society, examining traditional theories of justification, equality, worthwhile activities, interests, freedom, respect for persons, fraternity and the concept of man. Peters’ work is still the stable of courses in philosophy of education, as though nothing has changed since 1966, and it appears that it is taught along with conceptual analysis without the flicker of doubt or reflection. Certainly, there is little by way of recognition of the possibility of Eastern and particularly Chinese moral traditions. This collection in philosophy of education is designed to begin to address this imbalance and to demonstrate not only the engagement of East–West perspectives but also its possibilities, so far only embraced by a handful of Western scholars, some of whom we have included in this book.

I invited Michael Slote to add to his provocative views on integrating Western and Chinese philosophy that he provides in the opening chapter. Ronnie Littlejohn and Qingjun Li provide a very informative chapter as the basis for ‘Self-Cultivation as Moral Education in Chinese Philosophy’ commenting on the difficulties of trying to harmonize all voices. They offer what they call a ‘constructivist project’. In Chapter “[Moral Education and the Ethics of Self-cultivation in Chinese Philosophy](#)”, Ruyun Hung considers the Confucian revival by examining the *Dǎjīng* Movement and the *Rules for Youngsters*. Tadashi Nishihira examines self-cultivation in Japanese traditions and Charlene Tan, the paradox of moral education in relation to Confucian self-cultivation, in Chapters “[Self-cultivation in Japanese Traditions: Shugyo, Keiko, Yojo, and Shuyo in Dialogue](#)” and “[Confucian Self-cultivation and the Paradox of Moral Education](#)”. In Chapter “[A Life Worth Pursuing: Confucian Ritual Propriety \(禮\) in Self-cultivation](#)”, Jin Li considers Confucian ritual propriety (禮) in self-cultivation while Zhuran You in Chapter “[Wang Yang-Ming’s Theory of Aesthetic Experience: Beauty in the Extension of Innate Knowledge and Its Implications for Moral Education](#)”, provides the reader with an introduction to Wang Yang-Ming’s Theory of Aesthetic Experience and its implications for moral education. Huajun Zhang and her senior colleague Chuanbao Tan, both from Beijing Normal University, examine the cultivation of ‘inclusive individuality’, and ‘three characteristics

and advantages of confucian moral education', in Chapters "Cultivating an Inclusive Individuality: Critical Reflections on the Idea of Quality Education in Contemporary China" and "Three Characteristics and Advantages of Confucian Moral Education Thoughts", respectively.

With Chapter "The Evolution of *Bildung* in Germany", Michaela Vogt and Till Neuhaus consider the evolution of the *Bildung* tradition in Germany. In Chapter "Experience, Growth, Habit, and Community: The Keys to Understanding Self-cultivation in the Works of John Dewey", Wang Chengbing and Dong Ming survey the keys to 'Understanding Self-cultivation in the Works of John Dewey', and Leonard Waks writes of 'Democratic Self-Cultivation' in Chapter "Democratic Self-cultivation". In Chapter "Hadot, Foucault and Nietzsche on the 'Happiness' of the Present: On Education for Life", Babette Babich provides an introduction to Hadot, Foucault and Nietzsche on 'education for life' and Jeff Stickney (Chapter "Ways of Performing, Regarding, and Cultivating Practices of Silence in the Classroom") 'ways of performing' in the classroom in relation to silence. Tina Besley in her chapter examines the relations between 'Foucault, truth telling and technologies of the self in schools' and in Chapter "Subjectivity, Truth and the Historical Ontology of Ourselves: The Hermeneutics of the Self-Foucault's Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82", Michael Peters examines Foucault's 'The Hermeneutics of the Self' his Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82.

In the Postscript, Peters writes on 'Pedagogies of Self-Cultivation and the Philosophy of Gardens' as a means of unpacking the central metaphor of self-cultivation, a deep spiritual and educational metaphor that trades on the notion of gardens and gardening.

'Go to Epicurus' Garden'

Go to his Garden some time and read the motto carved there: "Dear Guest, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure." The caretaker of that abode, a friendly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with barley-meal, and serve you water also in abundance, with these words: "Have you not been well entertained? This garden does not whet your appetite; but quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst with a natural cure – a cure that requires no fee. It is with this type of pleasure that I have grown old."

Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* (21.10), cited [http://wiki.epicurism.info/Epicurus%27_Garden/#:~:text=From%20Epicurus%20Wiki&text=At%20age%2035%20\(306%20or,Garden%20continuously%20until%20his%20death.](http://wiki.epicurism.info/Epicurus%27_Garden/#:~:text=From%20Epicurus%20Wiki&text=At%20age%2035%20(306%20or,Garden%20continuously%20until%20his%20death.)

I am aware that Epicurus around 306 BC bought a house and garden established a garden school among the groves not far from the academy that quickly became known as 'Epicurus' Garden'. It was symbolic of his hedonistic and materialistic philosophy known as Epicureanism. His philosophy was thus both therapeutic and humanistic designed to alleviate suffering and cultivate the positive arts of living. It reflected the two great intellectual currents of the day: 'the atomist school founded by Leucippus and Democritus... which concerned itself with the need for scientific and empirical certainly about the nature of things' and 'the Cyrenaic school of hedonism, which is the first Greek philosophy that posited that pleasure was the aim of life'.

The first stream led to Epicurean physics, the second, to Epicurean ethics.² Epicurean philosophy names pleasure as the highest good, as a form of *ataraxia*—a state of serene calmness characterized by freedom from everyday cares, fears and anxieties. Mental pleasure rather than physical pleasure was the most highly valued because it lasts longest and comes about from the absence of pain. Ataraxia as an ethical concept has somehow been lost to the modern world but its pedagogical importance has remained as the absence of mental disturbance or trauma. I think there are some parallels to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a kind of therapy that aims at clarity as a moral vision and the banishment of conceptual confusion. The Epicurean element of self-cultivation has led Ansell-Pearson (2018) to explore, against the grain, Kant and Nietzsche as ethicists of self-cultivation. In this conception, pedagogy emerges as a force from freeing of the mind from fears and anxieties, a kind of 'philosophical therapeutics' as Ansell-Pearson (2018) comments citing Hadot, a therapeutics that heals us so that we might return 'to the joy of existing'. I can think of no higher educational value.

MP

Tairua, NZ, 10 March, 2021

References

- Alves, A. (2019). The German tradition of self-cultivation (Bildung) and its historical meaning. *Educação & Realidade, Porto Alegre*, 44(2), e83003.
- Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958) Modern moral philosophy. *Philosophy*, 33(124), 1–19. Reprinted in [ERP], 26–42.
- Ansell-Pearson, C. (2018) Nietzsche and Kant on Epicurus and self-cultivation. In M. Dennis, & S. Werkhoven (Eds.), *Ethical self-cultivation: Historical and contemporary perspectives*. Routledge.
- Becker, L. (1998). *A new stoicism*. Princeton University Press.
- Chan, W.-T. (1963). *A source book in Chinese philosophy*. Translated and compiled. Princeton University Press.
- Chen, X. (2014). The ethics of self: Another version of Confucian ethics. *Asian Philosophy: an International Journal of the Philosophical Traditions of the East*, 24(1), 67–81.
- Crisp, R., & Slote, M. (1997). *Virtue ethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Foot, P. (1978). *Virtues and vices and other essays in moral philosophy*. Oxford University Press.
- Homiak, M. (2016). Moral character. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/moral-character/>
- Hursthouse, R. (1997). *On virtue ethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R., & Pettigrove, G. (2016). Virtue ethics. In E.N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Stanford University.
- Ivanhoe, P. (1993). *Confucian moral self-cultivation*. Hackett.
- Kraye, J. (2007). The revival of hellenistic philosophies. In J. Hankins (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to renaissance philosophy* (pp. 97–112). Cambridge University Press.
- Lau, D.C., & Ames, R. T. (1998). Confucius (551–479 BC). In *Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-G045-1>. <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/biographical/confucius-551-479-bc/v-1>

² <http://societyofepicurus.com/cyrenaic-reasonings/>

- MacIntyre, A. (1981). *The nature of the virtues*. The Hasting Center Report.
- Mitcheson, K. (2018). Foucault, stoicism and self-mastery. In D. Mathew, & S. Werkhoven (Eds.), *Ethics and self-cultivation historical and contemporary perspectives, part I*. Routledge.
- Peters, M. A. (1996). *Poststructuralism, politics and education*. Bergin & Garvey
- Peters, M. A. (2020). Educational philosophies of self-cultivation: Chinese humanism. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1811679>
- Ricoeur, P. (1996). *The hermeneutics of action*. Sage.
- Robbert, A. (2019). Modes of Askēsis. <https://knowledgeecology.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/modes-of-askecc84sis.pdf>
- Russell, D. C. (2013). *The Cambridge companion to virtue ethics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shun, K., & Wong, D. (2004). Self and self-cultivation. In K. Shun & D. Wong (Eds.), *Confucian ethics: A comparative study of self, autonomy, and community* (pp. 101–102). Cambridge University Press.
- Slote, M. (2016). Moral self-cultivation East and West: A critique. *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(2), 192–206.
- Slote, M. (2018). Preface. In D. Mathew, & S. Werkhoven (Eds.), *Ethics and self-cultivation historical and contemporary perspectives, Part I*. Routledge.
- Stocker, M. (1976). The schizophrenia of modern ethical theories. *Journal of Philosophy*, 73(14), 453–466.
- Swanton, C. (2003). *Virtue ethics: A pluralistic view*. Oxford University Press.
- Wang, K. (2011). *Tianran yü Xiuwei: Xunzi Daode Zhexue de Jingshen* (Human nature and self-cultivation: The spirit of moral philosophy of Xunzi). Beijing Daxue Chubanshe.
- Wei-Ming, T. (1998). Self-cultivation in Chinese philosophy. In *Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-G014-1>. <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/self-cultivation-in-chinese-philosophy/v-1>

Michael A. Peters (Ph.D., FNZAH, FRSA, FRSNZ, FPESA) is Distinguished Professor of Education at Beijing Normal University Faculty of Education PRC, and Emeritus Professor in Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. He is also Senior Research Fellow at the University of Auckland. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, *Educational Philosophy and Theory* and *The Beijing International Review of Education* (with Professor Xudong ZHU). He is also the founding editor of eight international journals. His interests are in education and philosophy and he has written over one hundred books, including several books on Wittgenstein. He has acted as an advisor to governments in the USA, Scotland, NZ, South Africa, UNESCO and the EU. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2008 and awarded honorary doctorates by State University of New York (SUNY at Empire State) in 2012 and University of Aalborg in 2015. He was made an Hon Fellow of the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) in 2010. His recently published books include: *Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality* (2021), *Wittgenstein, Antifoundationalism, Technoscience and Philosophy of Education* (2020), *The Chinese Dream: Educating the Future* (2019), *The Companion to Wittgenstein and Education: Pedagogical Investigations* (2017).

Huajun Zhang (Ph.D.) is an Associate Professor at Faculty of Education at Beijing Normal University. Her research areas are history of thoughts of education and China's modern educational transformation and how teachers play the role. She is the author of the book *John Dewey, Liang Shuming and China's Education Reform: Cultivating Individuality* (2013). She is the guest editor of the special issue *John Dewey and Chinese Education: A Centennial Reflection at Beijing International Review of Education* (Vol. 1, No. 4, 2019). She also serve as the Associate Editor of the English academic journal *Beijing International Review of Education* and *Frontiers of Education in China*.

Tina Besley is a Distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University. She was previously Professor and Associate Dean International, in the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand; Research Professor, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign; Full Professor, California State University San Bernardino; and Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow where she began her academic career in late 2000, after 16 years a secondary school teacher, Head of Guidance, and Counsellor in New Zealand. She is the founding president of the Association for Visual Pedagogies and Past President of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia and honoured as a Fellow of both learned societies. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, UK. In Philosophy of Education, she uses the later work of Michel Foucault on subjectivity, free speech, governmentality. In global studies in education she explores policy, identities and cultures and interculturalism. Tina works closely with Prof. Michael A. Peters and with a wide international network of scholars in editorial roles for many journals and books. She has published over 30 books and monographs and numerous journal articles. Currently she is Editor and Project manager for *PESA Agora*, associate editor of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, and the *Beijing International Review of Education*.

Integrating Chinese with Western Philosophy



Michael Slote

This volume contains essays that discuss and/or involve dialogue between East and West, and the editors clearly have sought to encourage this sort of dialogue through the essays collected here. But such encouragement seems ultimately directed to a larger goal: some kind of integration between Western and Eastern philosophy, a process or development that reaches beyond long-separate traditions toward a genuine “world philosophy.” My own recent work has definitely been striving or working in that direction. My *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang: A Contemporary Approach* (the Commercial Press, Beijing, 2018, offering side-by-side Chinese language and English language texts) seeks to accomplish this, and my more recent *A Larger Yin/Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* (now being translated into Chinese by Li Jialian) attempts (as its subtitle indicates) to extend my analysis from ethical and epistemological phenomena involving the mind to a larger picture that takes in both the mind and nature outside the mind. As the main titles of both books also indicate, the chief tool of foundation-level integration is (an updated and philosophically purified version of) the ancient Chinese notions of yin, yang, and yin/yang. The emphasis is on Chinese philosophy and on what it can teach the West about the perennial problems it has focused on in epistemology, ethics, philosophy of mind, and other areas of philosophy that Western thought has been engaging with over the centuries. India and other philosophical traditions of the East have been mainly, but not exclusively, left to one side, but my conviction has been that progress in contemporary terms depends more on traditional ideas from China than on these other traditions. (However, see footnote 4).

I am here going to summarize the ideas and general approach I have taken in the two just-mentioned volumes and in many articles that have appeared separately both in English and in Chinese translation. And the first thing I need to do is to explain the

M. Slote (✉)
University of Miami, Miami, USA
e-mail: msslote@miami.edu

concepts of yin and yang as I propose to deploy them for present-day philosophical purposes.

There are two main ancient Chinese traditions concerning yin and yang. Perhaps most familiarly, they are seen as contraries or opposites, as when yin is conceived as dark, wet, and cold and yang as bright, dry, and warm, respectively. Such a contrast was originally used for purposes of natural explanation, for example, of why the sun warms one side of a hill but leaves the other side cold. But such proto-scientific explanations have largely been discarded in favor of modern-day largely Western scientific explanations, and present-day Chinese philosophers widely reject or ignore the categories of yin and yang because they seem dated and lacking in contemporary relevance. Worse still, these categories are involved in feng shui and macrobiotic dietetics, and these latter traditional practices now seem outdated or even superstitious to many or most philosophers both East and West.

However, there is another tradition of thinking about yin and yang that sees them not as mutually opposed but, rather, as complementary. This way of viewing them goes all the way back to the *I Ching* and is visible, for example, in the idea that Heaven (Tian) is yang and Earth (Di) is yin. In Chinese thought, Heaven and Earth are not seen as contraries, but rather as in some sense needing and complementing one another: without the order of Heaven, Earth and what happens on the Earth is left blind or rudderless, and without Earth, Heaven is empty of all purpose and action. (Shades of Kant on percepts and concepts.) The idea of yin and yang as mutually friendly and necessary complements is also visible in the traditional visual depiction of yin and yang as curvy half-circles within a larger circle, with the yin half-circle containing an element of yang and the yang half-circle containing an element of yin—all very peaceably. It is this complementarity tradition of yin and yang that I make central use of in my attempt to bring together Chinese and Western thought at a foundational level.

I shall be more specific in a moment, but let me first point out that my attempt to integrate Western and Chinese thought is not without precedent. Toward the end of the last century, Mou Zongsan sought to bring together Western thinking with Chinese and even Indian philosophy. But this integration of East and West mainly involved borrowing from Kant and, to a lesser extent, Hegel, and was pursued despite the fact that Western philosophy now largely rejects Kant's distinction between noumena (things in themselves) and phenomena (things as they appear to us). My own attempt at integration differs from Mou's because it brings in current Western philosophical thinking, and I believe that the use of Chinese categories in aid of *present-day* Western philosophy is without precedent.

Many contemporary Chinese philosophers look mainly to Western philosophy for inspiration and guidance, but it is my contention that this sells the Chinese tradition short. The West has, in fact and as I shall argue, a lot to learn from traditional Chinese thought, but in the first instance, and before the West can be persuaded of this, the Chinese themselves have to recover a sense of the importance of their own traditional thinking. So my books and articles and the present essay are primarily directed toward those Chinese who think we have nothing important to learn philosophically from age-old Chinese ideas. Once or if China can be convinced of its own philosophical

importance, it will be easier (especially given the ever-increasing influence of China in the world) to persuade the West to finally look at and take seriously what China has philosophically on offer.

Let me now say more about how I propose to understand yin and yang. That understanding has deep roots in Chinese thought and culture, but it also involves a kind of philosophical updating or purification of ancient ideas. Yin has been variously equated with passivity, receptivity, and pliancy/pliability (*rou*), and I think receptivity (for which there is no exact term in Chinese) is probably our best candidate for philosophical updating. If yang contains the idea of activity of some sort, then passivity is the polar opposite of yang, whereas receptivity seems to involve at least a minimally active element (when one is receptive, one is motivated to *take things in*), and conceiving yin as receptivity would allow us to theorize yin and yang as mutually involved and perhaps even friendly. Further, the idea of pliancy is relatively narrow, whereas, as I shall hope to show you, receptivity can apply not only to psychological phenomena but outside the mind or *xin* as well. Conceiving yin as receptivity thus allows it to function very widely and, as I shall argue, as a necessary complement of yang factors. Yang, then, can be understood as directed active purpose inside the mind or *xin* and as directed impulsion outside mind/*xin*, and we shall see that this allows yin and yang to function as mutually necessitating mutually friendly elements in the cosmos—rather than as mutually opposed contraries. Let me illustrate this way of thinking about the world with an example.

Compassion is today widely viewed as involving empathy with the distress or suffering of others together with motivation to relieve that distress or suffering. Most psychologists view these elements as only contingently related: empathy leads to altruistic motivation, but this is a merely contingent causal fact. I think this is a mistake. Empathy with suffering and altruistic motivation are on conceptual grounds necessarily connected. Consider a father who is infected with his daughter's enthusiasm for stamp collecting. This is an empathic process that can occur without the empathic father being consciously aware that it is happening, but the empathy clearly involves him in more than sheer enthusiasm; it involves his acquiring enthusiasm *for stamp collecting*. Empathy standardly involves sharing both a feeling/attitude and its intentional object, and the same holds true for the empathy that is integral to compassion. Imagine someone who is distressed by the intense throbbing pain in their arm. Distress at something by its very definition involves a desire to eliminate or lessen what one is distressed about, so the person in question desires or is motivated to alleviate the pain in their arm. But then someone who empathizes with that person will not only feel distress, but feel distress at what distresses that other person. So the empathizer feels distress at the pain *in the other person's arm*, and we have already seen and said that distress at something involves a desire to eliminate or lessen it. So by its very concept, empathy with another person's distress necessitates a desire to eliminate or lessen the object of that distress: in this case, the intense pain the other person feels in their arm. And it follows that in such a case, empathy involves motivation to help the other person, the object of one's empathic compassion.

In compassion, then, empathy necessitates altruistic motivation, but it is obvious, too, that there cannot be such a thing as altruistic compassionate motivation without

empathy with the person one is motivated to help. To help someone because it is one's duty to do so or because the world will be a better place if one does is not to help them out of *compassion*. Compassion needs to be based in empathy; so in the phenomenon of compassion, empathy entails altruistic helping motivation and vice versa.

Does this remind you of anything? Well, it eventually reminded me of yin and yang. Empathy is a form of receptivity to the reality of another person (or animal) and can easily be seen as yin, and altruistic motivation is clearly a matter of directed purpose or impulsion and so can be viewed as yang. Moreover, and more importantly, these two sides of compassion necessitate one another in just the way yin and yang viewed as compatible and friendly complementaries are supposed to. The same points and arguments apply to other moral sentiments like benevolence and gratitude, and this means that the feelingful motives that the moral sentimentalist tradition mainly focuses on also instantiate yin and yang as I am understanding and updating them here. In effect, yin and yang allow us to firmly and accurately characterize the (conceptual) structure of the motives that lie at the heart (sic) of moral sentimentalism.

This means that if one can defend moral sentimentalism in present-day philosophical circumstances, one can deepen what that tradition tells us by bringing in yin and yang. Not only because doing so allows us to conceptually bare the structure of the various moral sentiments, but also because, as I will explain below, yin and yang are also useful for conceptually baring the structure of epistemically justified belief and of the functioning mind as a whole. But I am not going to try to justify moral sentimentalism here as against other influential contemporary ethical traditions like Kantian rationalism, Aristotelian virtue ethics, and consequentialism. I have attempted to do that at considerable length in my 2010 Oxford University Press book *Moral Sentimentalism* and also more sketchily in chapter 2 of *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*. I ask the reader to simply join me here in presupposing moral sentimentalism as a normative ethics. The question I am asking and attempting to answer positively is whether yin and yang can philosophically clarify and offer foundations for such sentimentalism, and our example of compassion together with its extrapolation to others of the moral sentiments gives us some basis for thinking yin and yang or, as we can now say, yin/yang does philosophically do what I am arguing it can do. (If yin/yang can undergird moral sentimentalism, it can also be used to defend a sentimentalist form of political/legal philosophy, but I will not take up that issue any further here.) Let me now proceed to epistemology.

I am going to be fairly brief about epistemology because this essay has bigger fish to fry, and my space is limited. Chinese thought has largely stayed clear of the theory of knowledge, but I think the categories of yin and yang can actually help Western philosophy or emerging world philosophy to a better understanding of traditional issues in that area. Western epistemology has been divided among foundationalists, coherentists, and virtue epistemologists. Foundationalists hold that the epistemic justification of our beliefs requires there to be basic beliefs that stand in no need of (further) justification. Coherentists believe that beliefs can be justified via mutual coherence and consilience and in the absence of a special category of

foundational beliefs. Virtue epistemologists think that beliefs are rational or justified if their acquisition exemplifies some epistemic virtue. But none of these schools or approaches ever mentions the possibility of inborn or natural epistemic virtues that run parallel to the natural moral virtues that Hume and other sentimentalists theorize about.

Hume thought that moral virtues like benevolence and gratitude did not have to be taught, and he called such virtues natural. But there are epistemic virtues that likewise do not have to be taught, and these give yin and yang an excellent justificatory foothold. For example, epistemologists of all stripes do not think of inquisitiveness or curiosity as an inborn epistemic virtue—no, not even the virtue epistemologists—but children do not have to be taught to be inquisitive or curious, and their curiosity plays a major role in their acquisition of knowledge and justified beliefs about the world. So, I think inquisitiveness is a natural epistemic virtue in the same way that, according to Hume, benevolence is a natural moral virtue.

Another natural epistemic virtue is epistemic decisiveness. This trait has (to the best of my knowledge) never been mentioned or focused on in the literature of epistemology, so let me briefly explain what I am referring to here. Hume held that our inductive beliefs or generalizations were based on the constant conjunction of experienced traits: other things being equal, if we see a's followed by b's, we infer that the next a will probably be b or even that all a's probably are. But people and even children do not think this way. As we say, there is no education in the second kick of a mule. We do not need a constant conjunction of a given mule and kicks in our direction to make an empirical inference about that mule. Similarly, a child burned by a stove does not need constant conjunction in order to come to some sort of belief about the dangerousness of stoves. If after once being burned, the child spoke, in Humean fashion, of needing more instances of being burned before being able to decide anything about stoves or a given stove, we would regard that child as abnormally or pathologically *indecisive* regarding the acquisition of beliefs.

The same point can be made about science. When Einstein devised the theory of general relativity, he did not hesitate to accept it on the grounds that other theories incompatible with general relativity might eventually be brought forward to intellectually compete with his own theory. Philosophers are always accusing scientists of leaping irrationally (though creatively) to conclusions, but this is gratuitously disrespectful to scientists and in my opinion also involves an inflated opinion of the role of philosophers on the part of those who make such criticisms. Rather, it is a virtue of scientists like Einstein and Galileo (when he supposedly leaped to the conclusion that there are craters on the moon) that they are willing to accept a view of things in a decisive way. They can grant that a better theory might eventually come along, but this typically does not make them hesitate to accept a theory they have devised when it does sufficient justice to their empirical observations and mathematical reasonings. They are epistemically decisive, and that is a good trait for scientists to have, and the fact that children in their more intellectually limited way are also epistemically decisive indicates that such decisiveness is a natural epistemic virtue.

There are other important natural epistemic virtues I could discuss further and have discussed elsewhere (e.g., in *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang*). But now, it is time to

see how yin/yang can play a foundational role in our understanding of such virtues. Inquisitiveness or curiosity involves a certain yin receptiveness to the world, a desire to take in facts about the world or some corner of the world. But such receptiveness or receptivity is necessarily connected with a factor of yang. One is not receptive to the world if one does not pay attention to and focus on things in the world. Paying attention and focusing usually occur without our being self-consciously aware of what we are doing, but they always exemplify a desire to know particular facts. One hears a funny noise to one's left, one is curious about what is happening there, and so one focuses one's attention to the left. This sort of thing shows an epistemic decisiveness that exemplifies yang as directed (even if non-self-conscious) purpose, and the yin and yang sides of curiosity cannot be separated. A receptive curious person has to focus and pay attention, and focusing or paying attention in the name of curiosity shows receptivity.

I could go on, but at this point, I would like to generalize the discussion. Ethics and epistemology make us think about certain functions of the mind that can be productively understood in terms of yin and yang. But yin/yang can also help us to a better understanding of functioning human psychology generally, and I would like to explain how this is possible.

Kant saw the mind in typical Western fashion as capable of "pure reason" unalloyed with emotion; but in the Far East, our psychology is not thought of in this way. It is assumed that reason(ing) and emotion cannot fundamentally be separated. The terms "xin" in Chinese, "maum" in Korean, and "kokoro" in Japanese all reflect this assumption, and that is why, it has seemed so natural to translate all these terms into English as "heart-mind," not "mind." The latter word connotes at the very least the possibility of purely rational and non-emotional psychological functioning, and that is what Eastern thought does not subscribe to. I want to show you as briefly as is decently possible why I think pure reason is not possible and why, therefore, "heart-mind" characterizes our psychology better than "mind" does. This will give yin and yang a foundational entry point.

I have been saying that the West—most notably Kant but also Plato and Aristotle—has seen the mind in an overly pure way, but someone might object that the West allows emotion into the mind just as the East does. However, there is a difference. For the West, minds can contain emotions but *need not*. This means that our minds are not heart-minds, for the idea of a heart-mind clearly connotes or suggests that mind and emotion cannot be separated in the way the West supposes. With the exception of certain German Romantics (most notably, Johann Herder and Max Scheler), Western philosophers suppose that the mind or a mind can function on a purely intellectual basis, with inferences, proofs, intuitions, criticisms, and reasoning—whether valid or invalid—all potentially occurring in the absence of any emotion. This is precisely what talk of xin, kokoro, and maum does not suppose or presuppose. So, I want to show you why I think Western ideas are mistaken on these points about our human (or any) functioning psychology.

From the standpoint of Western analytic philosophy, there are two basic contents or building blocks of the mind: desire and belief. Certain other contents of the mind (e.g., dreams, idle imaginings, drug-induced hallucinations, obsessive thoughts, and