

# Michigan Philosophy News

for friends, alumni, and alumnae of the Department of Philosophy,  
The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

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Dear Friends of the Department:

I am pleased, as new chairman, to have the chance to greet friends of the department, and to bring you up to date on how things have been going for us. Some of you I know, and many of you I do not. Many of you were students of philosophy here at Michigan, and I hope we share a love of philosophy, and a tie to philosophical life at Michigan.

Jaegwon Kim has finished a long and successful term as chairman. Alas for us, he has also taken a position at Brown University. Brown's gain is our loss; we wish him happiness and continued philosophical achievement.

We are excited that Crispin Wright, Professor of Philosophy at St. Andrews University, has agreed to join our department. Wright is a distinguished philosopher, the author of three important books and many articles. He specializes in epistemology and metaphysics, philosophy of logic, philosophy of mathematics, and philosophy of language. His books are *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*, *Frege's Conception of Numbers as Objects*, and *Realism: Meaning and Truth*.

Although Kim's departure is sad for us, he leaves our department in good condition. Over the decade I have spent in the department, we have made strong appointments, and we have done well at keeping our faculty in the face of enticing offers from elsewhere. With our faculty so avidly pursued by other universities, we find it a constant struggle to maintain our stature. It is gratifying that we still have a distinguished faculty of superb philosophers.

Philosophical life here continues to be exciting and rewarding. Our Undergraduate Philosophy Club was especially active this past year. The credit goes to many people, but especially to Michael Cone and Ted Stamatakos for their fine leadership. Graduate students have continued with their own symposia, and the faculty colloquium thrives. Occasionally we have brown bag lunches, with a graduate student or faculty member giving a presentation and leading off discussion. With these events added to our seminars, classes, discussion groups, and impromptu conversations, we keep each other

thinking. Our three emeritus faculty, Bill Frankena, Dick Brandt, and Art Burks are all here and all contributing to philosophical discussion in the department. We are happy to be able to share with you a taste of our current philosophical life, in the form of a fascinating article by Don Munro, later in this newsletter.

In addition, we have had fine help from outside. Annette Baier of the University of Pittsburgh was here for the fall term as our first Nelson Visiting Professor. She conducted a seminar on emotion, and along with other faculty and graduate students, I was privileged to attend it. I can attest we all learned much, and the chance to talk extensively and informally with Baier affected the philosophical thinking of many of us here.

Three years ago, we instituted occasional week-long visits by leading philosophers as Nelson Philosophers in Residence. This spring we had Tyler Burge of UCLA, who gave an intensive set of lectures and seminars on thought and language. In addition, he talked informally with graduate students and faculty. As with previous visits in the series, we had an exciting week and we learned much. Both the Nelson Visiting Professor and the Nelson Philosopher in Residence are funded by a bequest from James B. (LL.B., '93) and Grace J. Nelson.

Our Tanner Lecturer was Daniel Dennett, Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University. Dennett spoke on "A Moral First Aid Manual: What to do Before the Doctor of Philosophy Arrives". We follow our annual Tanner Lecture with a symposium the next day, and this year as in others, the symposium proved fascinating and provocative. The commentators were Drew McDermott (Computer Science, Yale), Richard Thaler (Economics, Cornell), and Judith Thompson (Philosophy, MIT).

For the past few years we have staged a Spring Colloquium, and this year it was on Hobbes. Hobbes studies have flowered recently, along with new attempts to use Hobbesian ideas in moral theory. We had the principal figures gathered together: papers were presented by David Gauthier (Pittsburgh) with commentary by Daniel Farrell (Ohio State), and by Jean Hampton

(UCLA) with commentary by Don Herzog (Michigan, Political Science). We were sad that Gregory Kavka (UC Irvine) was not able to come for reasons of health. Don Regan read Kavka's paper and Bill Frankena commented. Hampton and Kavka have just published impressive books on Hobbes, and Gauthier, who has also written on Hobbes, has just published a book length development of a broadly Hobbesian moral theory. As you can imagine, there was plenty to interest us and excite us in the colloquium.

In addition to all this we have had our regular program of visiting speakers, delivering lectures, responding to questions, and sometimes debating philosophical points. This year we had Robert Cummins (Colorado/MIT), Robert Eno (Indiana), John Haugeland (Pittsburgh), Alison McIntyre (Harvard), Christopher Peacocke (London), and Alvin Plantinga (Notre Dame).

I was gratified to read the notes many of you sent in last year in response to our first newsletter. In response to the appeal we sent later, we received many gifts, some small and some substantial. These enabled us to add current books to the collection in Tanner Library. We are grateful for all these gifts, which help us maintain especially favorable conditions for philosophical research. Obert Tanner generously funded the original library, its expansion, and many of its books and journals. He has now given us a large endowment which we can use for major acquisitions in the Library.

A large gift from Malcolm Denise will fund a new program of research support for junior faculty. Junior faculty are modestly paid, as many of you must realize, and our faculty have to pay many of their research expenses from their own pockets. Now each junior faculty member will be able to draw some money from a research account, to help pay for such things as books and journal subscriptions, offprints of their articles to send to interested readers, attending philosophical meetings, and special supplies. We hope the program will enhance the research of this bright and promising group of young philosophers, and that it will do a little to mitigate the hard financial choices they face. We are grateful to Dr. Denise for the generosity that makes this program possible.

The university and the department have greatly improved our support for graduate students in the Ph.D. program. We are able to offer Regents Fellowships to a few of our

entering students each year. These provide good financial support with a reasonable amount of teaching. For most of our remaining Ph.D. students things are better than they were a few years ago: we require less teaching, with better financial support. Still, for these students, the combination is less than satisfactory. To be able to afford decent living conditions, these students still need to teach so much that it impedes their progress toward the degree. That is a real worry for us; it impinges on our whole program: an important part of our undergraduate teaching, after all, is done by graduate students, and we need to be able to attract the most able budding philosophers, and to give them good teaching conditions. Then too, first rate graduate students are part of what attracts a first rate faculty. We need to look for ways of improving conditions for Ph.D. students further.

So in short, philosophical life is exciting here at Michigan, as always, but we are not without our collective worries. We are accomplishing much, we struggle to live up to our past, and we hope to do more. We keep thinking about philosophy; we read philosophy and we write. We talk philosophy as well, students with students, faculty with faculty, and faculty and students together. There lies the great reward of life with this special group of thinkers, brought together by our common fascination with basic, far-reaching questions. I appreciate this chance to write to you--you who have contributed to this life, and who have left your marks on our lives, our thinking, and our ways. We value your continued interest and support.

*Allan Gibbard*

Allan Gibbard  
Chairman

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**Root Metaphors in Philosophy:  
Picturing the Mind in China and Europe**

In formulating theories about nature, society and mankind, Chinese philosophers, like their Western counterparts, have used a limited number of metaphors or pictorial images. Among the images already familiar to readers of Western philosophy are the human organism, used to explain both nature and society, and the machine. For example, the clock was the

favorite machine metaphor employed by Renaissance figures: God fashioned the universe in the manner of a clock, which, once set in motion, continues to run of its own accord. In 1605 Johannes Kepler said, "My aim is to show that the celestial machine is to be likened not to a divine organism but rather to a clockwork." In my own work on Chinese philosophy, the study of images has proved a particularly useful method for untangling the doctrines of the Confucian Chu Hsi (1130-1200), one of China's most influential thinkers. In the process, some interesting contrasts with Western perspectives have emerged.

Chu Hsi is historically important because his ideas became orthodoxy in China after his death and remained so until this century. His doctrines, as expressed in commentaries on Confucian classics of the Chou period (1122 or 1270-256 B.C.), in effect comprised the basis of the curriculum studied by all candidates for the civil service bureaucracy that ran the empire. Mastery of this subject matter was the primary requirement for appointment to positions of political power for close to six centuries (1313 to 1905).

One of the reasons Chu's doctrines require untangling is that many of his key technical terms cut across ethics, psychology, metaphysics, and theory of knowledge. It is often difficult to detect the organization of the facts to which Chu's discussions of ethics or psychology or some other area pertain. Terms that should form solid pillars of a theoretical structure behave unpredictably for us because they are called upon simultaneously to perform different functions in other theoretical areas. By contrast, Chu generally uses one image to explain a specific theory.

Chu's images perform two functions, structural and emotive. Theories purport to explain the relation between facts. Structural images are brought into play to make sense of the facts in ways in which the theories are deficient. They are explanatory devices that clarify the integration among facts by giving an example of a familiar structure in which the parts are clearly related. The choice of the word "explanatory" is deliberate, to indicate that Chu's structural images serve purposes well beyond the mere illustration of a point. At the same time that they exhibit something about the world--namely, that phenomena are related in certain ways--the familiarity of these images

within the culture also elicits an emotional response to the facts, thereby revealing values that Chu wishes to affirm.

Although many illustrative images appear in Chu's writings, several stand out from the group as a whole. These "root" metaphors occur countless times and in philosophically significant contexts, and they are employed in all of his theories. Moreover, they spin off related, subsidiary images. While the images help Chu call attention to facets of a topic that his readers might otherwise miss, employing them is not without risk. Misunderstandings about the nature of the image easily transform themselves into erroneous claims about the real world. For example, like many Western philosophers, Chu uses the image of light in discussing cognition. Those who use the image of light often automatically assume that light always clarifies. Yet we all have personal experience of light's capacity to distort as well as clarify (e.g., the light of the sun obscures the stars, making the sky appear blue), and so we must acknowledge that visual evidence is not necessarily an accurate reflection of reality. In the same way, our mental assessment of the world around us can be erroneous, too, even when everything seems logically clear.

My recent work on Chu Hsi has left me convinced that focusing on a philosopher's structural images and their psychological impact is a way of understanding theories that has applications far beyond a single philosopher or culture. For example, Western studies of social contract theory (using the commercial contract as metaphor) get bogged down when they go the usual Western route of seeking to derive state authority from a citizen's contractual agreement. There is no generally accepted way to verify such claims. As Margaret MacDonald has shown, the real importance of such statements lies in the psychological impact of the contract image. The statements encourage the attitude that social institutions are man-made and can be changed, that citizens should be critical rather than reverential of rules, and that rulers are supposed to be responsible to the governed. I would add that one of the psychological effects of such statements is the strengthening of the political values of independence and flexibility.

One of the philosophical achievements for which Chinese literati have traditionally respected Chu Hsi is his formulation of theories

of the mind that effectively challenged the domination of that subject matter by Buddhists. I will focus here on three of the images Chu employed to explain some facet of the mind: the mirror (light source), the plant, and the enthroned political ruler in relation to his subjects. Each is a useful tool both for clarifying how the thinker claimed that phenomena are interrelated and for promoting a value that he was trying, perhaps implicitly, to persuade his audience to accept.

### The Light Source

The theme of psychological separation is a pervasive background concern both in the thought of Confucians like Chu and in that of medieval and early modern Westerners, from Augustine to Descartes. Yet the philosophical traditions of East and West differ in the objects from which it is claimed that humans may become separated. For the Confucians, the separation was seen as a kind of horizontal distancing—that is, the individual becoming removed from the realm of human affairs. This condition was encouraged, they believed, by the Buddhist belief that the physical world and institutionalized human relations (such as those obtaining in the family) have no enduring traits but are, rather, merely temporary constructs of individual minds. In the Confucian critiques, monasticism and the abandonment of prince and family are unfortunate concrete acts to which such beliefs lead. In contrast, in the particular Western philosophical tradition referred to above, the individual's estrangement is vertical, that is, from God. The more involved humans become in studying mere empirical matters, the more they lose touch with Him.

Chu's metaphysics attempts to demonstrate that human affairs and physical objects do have permanent features not assigned to them by human minds. These traits, specific to classes of things, are the patterns of change (li) through which all members of each class of objects will, unless obstructed, naturally progress. His epistemology is a transparent attempt to establish the plausibility and the duty of close relations between minds and things.

The theory is that each individual's mind innately possesses analogues of the principles of change in all objective things. Though different, the principles in minds and in things

resemble each other. We fail to comprehend the innate principles because of a preoccupation with satisfying mundane desires. But through empirical study or the study of texts, they can be understood. Here enters the image of a light source, which functions both structurally and emotively in clarifying this theory.

Many Chinese treated the mirror as both a reflector and a light source. Chu says that the mind is like a mirror, or lamp, while the principles in it are its brightness: "The mirror has always been self-bright. It is only because of some obstructions that it loses its brightness." The mirror fits his needs well. It retains in itself a picture (the innate principle) while illuminating through projected light the external object on which its rays fall. The commonplace image of a light ray striking its object makes intelligible the concept of subjective-objective union: light projected from a source establishes verifiable contact between source and object. The metaphor also suggests the desirability of study: you already understand/see with partial clarity and your mind can project its light. Study the object in order to clarify further its counterpart in your mind. The projected light will be reflected back, brightening the picture already in your mind. Bridge the self-thing gap through empirical study. Turn away from Buddhist monastic withdrawal.

Theories of knowledge thus reveal value commitments. This is no less true of Western thought. A look at how the metaphor of light is used to explain these theories will help to uncover the values they imply. Consider the legacy of Aristotelean theoria (contemplation or intuitive reason, from the verb theorein, meaning "to look"). We are advised to look at first-principles if we want to know anything. Chu's theory of the mind's light projecting itself out to "touch" objects reveals the value of overcoming horizontal separation. In the same way, Augustine's emphasis on the contemplation of first-principles reveals the value of overcoming vertical separation. Man's noblest possession is a light within the mind capable of illuminating truths that are counterparts in man of the rationes aeternae, "divine ideas," that exist in the mind of God. Through intellection (intellectus), man moves toward God:

But we ought rather to believe that the intellectual mind is so formed in

its nature as to see these things, which by disposition of the Creator are subjoined to things intelligible in a natural order, by a sort of incorporeal light of a unique kind; as the eye of the flesh sees things adjacent to itself in this bodily light, of which light it is made to be receptive, and adapted to it.

The same reasoning reappears in Descartes, for whom light is a property of the mind (the "natural light of reason") as well as of true ideas ("clear and distinct"). Through focusing the light on these ideas, we bridge the gap between ourselves and God:

For it is certain that God is the Author of the essence no less than the existence of creatures; and this essence is nothing else than these eternal truths . . . . I say that I know Him . . . for knowing a thing it suffices that we touch it in thought.

As long as the Western rationalists focused on breaching the man-God gap through the illumination of "divine" ideas within the individual's mind, they were leaving the door open to the charge of creating another gap--this one between the self and the external world. Nowhere is this problem more apparent than in Cartesianism. Descartes dropped a veritable curtain between the individual's mind with its ideas, on the one hand, and the physical objects making up the external world (including the eye, the brain, and their images) on the other. Man's mind never directly makes contact with external things. It knows them only indirectly, through copies of them in the mind, a fact of which it is aware. This curtain thus enforces a firm separation of the private, subjective world and the external, objective one. Thus, knowledge requires that our ideas adequately represent things, and the only guarantee of that happening is the soundness of one's proofs that God exists. This issue of adequate representation is then added to intuition of eternal truths and deductions from them in Descartes' conception of knowledge. In bridging the gap between the human and the divine, the Cartesian rationalists in effect laid the groundwork for a new chasm, between the self and the external world from which it had been curtained off.

This new separation of man from things generated in Europe a response remarkably similar in nature, if not in historical significance, to that of the Confucians vis-à-vis what they regarded as Buddhist withdrawal from the phenomenal world. The instruments of that response were the Cambridge Platonists and romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, such as Wordsworth and Coleridge. They maintained that the mind can project life and feeling into external things and thereby transform the world of dead matter, whose only Cartesian qualities were quantifiable extension and motion, into a living universe. The use of the light metaphor in their epistemological claims again reveals the value they stressed. They explained the mind by using the image of the lamp projecting light. In *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature*, Cambridge Platonist Nathanael Culverwel wrote, "Now the Spirit of man is the 'Candle of the Lord', he says, for the Creator, Himself 'the fountain of Light', furnished and beautified this lower part of the World with Intellectual Lamps, that should shine forth to praise and honor in his Name." As Meyer H. Abrams explains it, the motivation of these thinkers was to end the estrangement between the self and the external world created by the Cartesian curtain between the mind and things:

The reason for this common concern of the early nineteenth century philosophy of nature and of art is not hard to find. It was an essential part of the attempt to revitalize the material and mechanical universe which had emerged from the philosophy of Descartes and Hobbes. . . . It was at the same time an attempt to overcome the sense of man's alienation from the world by healing the cleavage between subject and object, between the vital, purposeful, value-full world of private experience and the dead postulated world of extension, quantity, and motion. To establish that man shares his own life with nature was to reanimate the dead universe of the materialists, and at the same time most effectively to tie man back into his milieu.

The image of light reveals with considerable drama the shifting concerns about the dangers of human alienation. We find different concerns

on this issue between Chinese and European cultures, and between writers within a single culture.

#### The Plant

One of the most influential Western interpreters of Chinese science and thought is the British biologist Joseph Needham. His lasting contributions are contained in *Science and Civilisation in China* (six volumes to date). He spotted the organicism in Chu's work, as seen in the holistic metaphysics and the hylozoism, or vitalism. Needham wrote:

But I am prepared to suggest, in view of the fact that the term *Li* [principle] always contained the notion of pattern, and that Chu Hsi himself consciously applied it so as to include the most living and vital patterns known to man, that something of the idea of 'organism' was what was really at the back of the minds of the Neo-Confucians.

But Needham did not systematically study the root metaphors used in Chu's thought, and so he erroneously applied to Chu's theories the features of Western organicism. A scholar who does this may end up looking for services performed by the animal organism in Western theories, that are simply absent in Chu's work. And he may miss the significant points that Chu's actual "organic" metaphor, the plant, illuminates. These include the categories of action informed by the images of seed dormancy and budding.

The image of the human organism served classical and medieval Western theorists who were looking for an account of nature in which there is a predictable source of intelligible order. Mind rules body in the human organism. In nature, mind (*nous*) accounts for the mathematically precise order according to which matter is composed and moves. In the *Timaeus* Plato described the world as "a living creature with soul and reason." Life and mind exist in the organism and in nature. Soul gives life to organism and to nature. In medieval Europe, more complex correspondences appeared. Distinguishing in the organism and in society the head that rules and the body that obeys, John of Salisbury (twelfth century) spoke of the prince as head, the senate as heart, the soldiers and officials as hands, the financial officers as stomach, and the peasants as feet.

Plato's organic image was partially descriptive: the universe is an organism. John's was entirely functional and normative: the state should be organized like a human body.

The most dramatic convergence with Chu Hsi's organic plant image, however, is provided by Aristotle, in the theories worked out in the *Physics*. In terms of relative influence, these theories overshadowed Platonic physics through the Middle Ages. Early in the *Physics*, Aristotle takes as his theme the "nature" (*physis*) of things. He says, "For those things are natural which, by a continuous movement originated from an internal principle, arrive at some completion." His account, he says, pertains to animals, plants, and the elements earth, air, fire, and water and their inorganic compounds. "Each of them," he says, "has within itself a principle of motion or of stationariness (in respect of place) or of growth and decrease, or by way of alternation." That principle of motion can also be called the thing's nature. Motion is the fulfillment of what exists potentially, the process by which the thing's end or incipient form is realized. The key ideas in Aristotle's account of the nature of things are growth, an internal principle of motion, and teleology. The whole theory is inspired by the picture of something material that grows, probably living animals as things that move themselves and grow to a point of completion.

However, there are crucial differences between the organicistic theories of the two philosophers, which rely on different visions of living things. Chu Hsi's theory includes a heavy stress on the stages of growth (suggested by the four seasons), an idea relatively absent in Aristotle. Thus, when the concept is applied to humans, the emphasis for Chu is on continued cyclical growth, on movement from one stage to another. Second, Aristotle treats *full* actualization as the goal or end (*telos*), and it is intrinsically more valuable than any earlier point in the process. This concept tends to diminish the intrinsic worth of activities leading to the end, reducing them to mere means. In Chu's doctrines, early stages have intrinsic worth, as exemplified in the contention that the early stage of compassion-love of family-is in itself valuable; that is, it is not merely a way-station to altruism. Both of these emphases have important political implications.

For Chu Hsi, there is a principle for every class of things. The principle that accounts

for the changes through which humans will pass manifests itself, among other ways, as specific emotions. Of these, the most important is compassion, treated by Confucians as the essential feature of humans. This fact explains part of the standard Confucian answer to the question: What kind of person do I want to be? The answer is, someone with compassion extending to groups beyond the family, in which such affection first appears. Influenced by the Aristotelean claim that reason is divine and unique to us, many Western thinkers would answer otherwise. Their reply to the question about the kind of person they want to be might well include references to leading an examined life, avoiding dogmatism, and accepting beliefs only with justification.

The root metaphor that Chu employs to explain this affective aspect of the mind is the plant. Its use is an aspect of Confucian metaphysical organicism, suggestive of the organicistic images already mentioned in Western thought, although the latter derive mainly from the animal kingdom. Chu's explanations involving the plant provide detail that is lacking in his abstract theories. Through studying the plant images, we discover something special about how a Confucian analytically divides up humans and their world.

Chu's plant organicism is a theory of cosmic movement, of which its application to humans is only a small part of the overall scheme. There are two central claims. One is that change occurs in a cyclical process with stages that follow a sequence. The other is that the initiation of the process is a transition from a state in which the future changes are present but hidden from view, to a state in which they reveal themselves. Chu uses the structural image of the plant to explain both aspects of his theory. The stages of the cyclical process are linked to each other in the same manner as the four seasons in the cycle of plant growth. The relation between a dormant seed in winter and a budding sprout in spring explains for all the cosmos the connection between the states of being hidden and revealed. The plant image thus clarifies an aspect of the meaning of "hidden" that the wording of the abstract theory of movement had obscured, that is, that the term refers also to that which is static or not moving, whereas "revealed" denotes activity or movement. Chu describes winter dormancy as static, and budding as the beginning of action.

As applied to humans, this theory leads Chu to describe the mind in language that may surprise a foreigner: "The mind is like a seed of grain." Among other things, he means that its growth consists in passing through stages and that, in various ways, it alternates between tranquil dormancy and activity. Thus dormancy and activity are among the principal categories to explain the psychological life of humans. Chu associates these, respectively, with the states prior to the intrusion of stimuli and after we respond to stimuli. Uninstructed, the principle of humanity is dormant. When activated by stimuli it reveals itself, if unobstructed by certain desires, as the sentiments to which I referred.

What becomes clear from this approach is that Chu is not using anything like our categories of private/subjective and public/objective to capture the essence of human behavior. Instead, he speaks of tranquility (sleep, day-dreaming, meditation) and activity. Accordingly, all psychological reactions, such as feeling, knowing, and having motives, belong to the category of activity; they are differentiated from overt conduct only in that they are its beginnings, the beginnings or sprouts of action. Thus, "action" includes what we traditionally have considered both subjective and objective dimensions. It is a division that is plausible and defensible, and we would have missed it had we not examined the contribution of the plant image to Chu's concept of action.

Practically speaking, this line of reasoning leads Chu to the position that both self-cultivation and the educational efforts of others must focus on attitudinal transformation, transforming attitudes, which are the beginnings of action. Penal law would be appropriate if the "action" to be controlled were only overt action, controllable through punishment of the completed acts, though this would not be preferred in his scheme. Focusing on beginnings, he is more interested in the prevention of improper acts which attitudinal transformation is intended to secure. Chu made a concrete and lasting contribution to Chinese culture by building model schools and developing curricular materials used throughout China for centuries. When we look at what he wrote about the aims of the schools and teaching materials, we find that they have much more to do with the transformation of students' attitudes than with behavior modification.

### Enthroned Rulers

Confucians have been writing about ethics for more than two thousand years without discussing anything comparable to free will. A whole cluster of ideas that are associated with free will in the West is simply absent: a God free of blame, individual human responsibility and blaming, and a thing called a "will." These ideas have a rich history in the West. In the thought of Chu Hsi, other concerns take their place. The explanatory image of a political ruler used in Chu's theory of mind helps account for the absence of at least one item in the cluster, namely, what we would call a will.

According to Chu, the principle of humanity not only manifests itself in the emotions but also steers humans into relationships that they cannot escape. The more they pursue certain forms of study and self-examination, the clearer their minds will become, with the result that they will automatically act consistently with these relations. The emphasis here is on clearing the mind, not on making choices. According to Chu, the inevitability of entering such relations can be illustrated by the case of monks who leave their families and retreat to monasteries, where they invariably end up re-creating familial relations. Abbots are treated as fathers and new monks as younger brothers. Chu implies that if the obstacles (selfish desires) to their minds were eliminated, they would maintain proper familial relations at home in the first place and never go off to the monastery.

One of the sources of the European doctrines of free will is the Epicurean reaction against the materialism of the Greek Stoic, Zeno (366-264 B.C.). Lucretius proposed that rather than being controlled by fate, or, more precisely, by the random state of environmental and personal atoms prior to any act, the individual can initiate action from his will (a distinct material organ). Another source is the Christian need to free an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God (the "three-o" God) of blame for evil. In replying to the Manichees, who said that God cannot be both omnipotent and perfectly good, Augustine wrote *De Libero Arbitrio Voluntatis (On the Free Choice of the Will)*, wherein he argued that it is free will in man and angels that is the origin of evil, not God.

In Chu's philosophy, there is no God to be disgraced by evil. Evil always has existed

because of the material "dust" that darkens the self-bright light in our minds and the material obstructions that impede our entering the social relations for which we are inherently destined. So the issue facing humans is how to remove the existing dust and obstructions (through study), not how to assign blame.

But why does a thing called a will play no central role in Chu's ethics? Consider the political metaphor used by many Western thinkers to explain the "faculties" of the mind. In both cultures, the facts for which the relevant theories of the mind seek to give an account pertain to the conflict of motives. Chu's metaphor of the ruler illuminates the relations between motives.

For Augustine, the will mediates between reason and desire, ideally choosing to affirm the alternative identified by reason, not the one demanded by desire. Once the free will of the individual had emerged as savior of God's goodness and locus of the individual's responsibility, there was already a place in the mind to locate it commensurate with its independent status (although this did not happen with Augustine). The Platonic political image had provided a tripartite structure to describe the mind: ruler, soldiers (imperial guards who aid kings in implementing laws), and ruled/producers. In this tripartition of the psyche, High Spirit, akin to anger or courage (depending on the context), generally aids reason in its struggle against the appetites or emotions. The essential point, however, is the preexistence of tripartition, (found in Platonism) which provides a place for a third faculty in addition to reason and desire/emotion. This place was eventually taken by free will, which edged out High Spirit in the process. The "will" then came to be thought of as a thing with a place of its own, in contrast to Chu's term *i* (intention, volition), which refers to the "outthrust of the mind," not a separate thing or faculty.

In contrast to the Platonic tripartition, Chu Hsi's construct of the mind has only two aspects (Tao mind and human mind, the former as ruler and the latter as ruled). The former refers to intuition of the innate principles, the latter to awareness of desires. Not only was there no three-o God external to man to require that Chu Hsi highlight the free choice of the will; there was also no legacy of a three-tier political structure to use as a structural image.



Confucian hierarchical social sets come in pairs. Furthermore, third parties do not intervene in the idealized relations between the two parties. There is no need for a middleman between a father (the emperor) and his children (the ministers or the people, depending on the context). Officials are extensions of the emperor's person, not a separate entity with different motives. Furthermore, proper rulers do not use force against the ruled, as Plato's High Spirit/soldiers do against the desires/ruled. Thus, to the degree that the political image helps to partition the mind, Chu Hsi predictably employs bi- and not tri-partition. There is no important place for any counterpart of the conative will or High Spirit as the individual solves an ethical problem involving a conflict of motives.

The structural image of ruling helps us to understand how certain factual matters, for example competing motives, are interrelated, as parts of a hierarchical whole. At the same time, the image conveys a value. This is single-minded obedience to the intuitive principles that constitute our inner rulers. The highly cultivated person is one who automatically acts in accordance with principles intuited by the ruling aspect of mind. Because the content of the mind is essentially the same for all persons, the doctrine idealizes uniformity on the matter of goals and moral judgment. Of course, such a view is also consistent with the prevailing doctrine in pre-modern Western ethics. In Europe it was not until the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the idea emerged, especially among the German Romantics, that uniqueness was desirable in matters of value judgment and life goals. As Arthur Danto has noted, Kant, whose glorification of autonomy has influenced so many thoughtful Europeans, expected that all rational people would come to the same conclusion in judging a single moral situation.

#### Conclusion

In clarifying the theories of original philosophical and scientific thinkers, the study of their pictorial images is a useful tool. We can learn something about how they claim certain facts are integrated and about values in their theories that they may or may not explicitly reveal to us. I do not see any signs that the Chinese writers will stop using root metaphors. Among their other advantages, they encourage psychological tranquility in people

by providing phenomena with a structure that seems to explain how they are related. Images provide understanding, not truth. Further, many are aesthetically pleasing. And they are useful in persuading people to accept values. In China, with respect to the mind, a central question is which ones will dominate in the future. Surely one will be the now internationally popular, computer-based explanations of the mind: cognitive development viewed as akin to increasingly sophisticated information processing by a machine. But the centrality of the emotions in Chinese accounts of the mind will mean that other images that can explain them, as the machine cannot, will continue to find a place in the future portrait of human beings in that culture.

What have I learned that will affect how I react to root metaphors in philosophy in the future? First, I have learned not to waste time worrying about the term metaphor. I prefer the expression "structural image." Different writers have tampered with the term "metaphor" so often that other than referring to an explanatory pictorial image it is practically meaningless. I used it in the title because it is commonplace, and I believed philosophers would know what I was about to discuss. I don't want to make a technical issue out of "analogy" either. The use of images may be thought of as analogical in the ordinary sense. But images also have properties that analogies do not. They may link or pattern themselves in ways different from the objects to which they refer. And they persuade.

Second, I will rely on images to help me not simply understand how a thinker structures the world but also to identify nuances in how the facts to which a theory refers are integrated. Theorists often use abstractions that cloud detail. In the case of Chu Hsi, I made no progress trying to understand one aspect of his theory of mind as long as I focused on the abstract terms movement and action. Only when I started thinking in terms of dormancy, budding and sprouting did I realize how Chu conceptualized man's conscious life.

Third, when I am thinking about cultural differences, I will study structural images in order to avoid making simplistic comparisons between two cultures. For years some Westerners have referred to "Chu Hsi's rationalism", aligning him with European advocates of the claim that knowledge proceeds

from the intuition of innate ideas. But study of the differing way in which Chu Hsi and European rationalists used the image of light told me enough about their value differences that the comparison now appears facile and truncated. Chu's outward projecting ray is matched by his claims that knowledge is increased by the active investigation of concrete things, including texts, and is confirmed only in social practice. The Chinese and European conceptions of knowledge here are quite different. Chu would never write a *Posterior Analytics* or find knowledge by following intellectual rules.

Fourth, though I am mindful of the positive uses of structural images, I will remain alert for their abuses in any theoretical literature. One of these is to apply the theorist's view of an image's dominant features, without qualification, to nature, society, or humans. The most familiar attribute associated with an image may not be the only one worthy of attention in the entity which the image is explaining. Confucians have always explained most social organizations with the family image. In so doing, they leaped to thinking that stability should be the chief characteristic not just of the family but also of the weaving mill or military unit. Another abuse is that a structural image can facilitate the theorist's failure to probe characteristics of the world simply because they do not conform to those of the image. This is a phenomenon that recalls Thomas Kuhn's insights about how some scientific paradigms can inhibit the acquisition of new knowledge. A good example would be the use of the balance scale to explain the decision making process ("weighing alternatives"). It prevents us from realizing that alternative choices are constantly undergoing revision and do not have constant weights.

In the end, I will remain interested in Chinese structural images because like every other aspect of studying a foreign culture it is the best way I know to probe my own. It flags my assumptions about how things in the world fit together and starts me thinking about the structural images I reflexively invoke.

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#### Notes and Acknowledgments

This essay draws on material in my recently completed manuscript, *Images of Human Nature: A Sung Portrait*, which will be published by Princeton University Press. In an earlier form, I presented part of the material as the Gilbert Ryle Lectures, Trent University (Ontario), 1983. For more detail on Chu Hsi's use of images, see my "The Family, the Stream, and the Plant," in Donald J. Munro ed., *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1985). Earlier uses of the Chinese mirror image appear in Paul Demièville, "Le Miroir Spirituel," *Sinologica* (Basel) vol. 1, no. 1, 1948. A collection of articles on Chu Hsi appears in W.T. Chan, ed., *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

The classic early study of some root metaphors in Western thought is Stephen Pepper's *World Hypotheses, A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948). Some recent works by Western philosophers on metaphors include Max Black, *Models and Metaphor: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), and Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). A little known but stimulating book from which I learned a good deal is Donald A. Schon, *Displacement of Concepts* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1963). There is a good summary of some anthropological perspectives and a bibliography in James Fernandez, "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture," *Current Anthropology* vol. 15, no. 2, (June 1974): 123-124. My friend Professor Bruce Mannheim of the Anthropology Department at the University of Michigan clarified for me the debate within Anthropology, recommended texts, and indicated how particularly important is Jacques Derrida's "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy." This is in *Jacques Derrida, Margins in Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

The contemporary authors cited in the text include, Meyer H. Abrams, who wrote the major work on the image of light in the West, especially with reference to the early modern period. It is *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York:

Oxford University Press, 1953). Arthur Danto's comments can be found in his "Postscript: Philosophical Individualism in Chinese and Western Thought," appearing in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1985). Margaret Macdonald discusses the social contract in "The Language of Political Theory," in *Logic and Language*, edited by Anthony Flew (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955). James MacAdam of Trent University brought this to my attention.

I am grateful to Louis Loeb and Nicholas White for helping to clarify over the years issues in Aristotelean and Cartesian image use. My thanks also go to Barbara Congelosi and Carl Cohen for suggestions about fine tuning my prose.

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Donald J. Munro holds an A.B. in Philosophy from Harvard College, and a Ph.D. in Chinese and Japanese from Columbia University, with additional work in Western philosophy. He has been a member of the Department of Philosophy at Michigan, and an Associate in the University's Center for Chinese Studies, since 1964. He is currently a member of the Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. He has published the first two volumes in his trilogy, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (1969) and *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China* (1977), and completed the third, to be entitled *Images of Human Nature: A Sung Portrait*. He has also edited *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values* (1985), and published numerous articles in *China Quarterly* and other journals. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Committees of *Chinese Studies in Philosophy* and *The Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. Professor Munro is a former Ford Foundation Fellow, Social Science Research Foundation Fellow, Guggenheim Fellow, and American Council of Learned Societies Fellow. He has served as Chairman of the ACLS Subcommittee on Chinese Thought and Religion and the ACLS Committee on Studies of Chinese Civilization. He has been Visiting Research Philosopher at the Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, Berkeley, and Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in Peking.

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## ERRATA

We regret the following mistakes in William Frankena's article, "Ethics Today," in our June, 1986 issue. Page 6, column 2, line 29 should read: "worth only if one's act is beneficent, say, 'not from'". Page 9, column 1, line 16 should read: "to give up its being necessarily rational for a person to live by. For Kant morality was both necessarily impartial and".

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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