# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND A POSSIBLE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND NEO-CONFUCIANISM

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The phenomenon of evil is the more complicated as it is, fundmentally speaking, a mystery. All the same, every succeeding generation in every cultural tradition is obliged, not only to experience its effects, but also to query the reasons for its presence, hoping thereby better to understand the problem, and to be able to control it for the common good.

As a Christian convert from a Chinese society, the writer of this paper impressed by the dominant trend in traditional Chinese thought, has long been upholding the basic goodness of human nature, and the contrast presented by Christian missionary teaching—pre-Conciliar teaching, at any rate—emphasizing the presence of evil in man.[1] Without attempting to probe the mystery or explain it away, I hope, in this paper, to present a discussion of evil as a possible Neo-Confucian dialogue with

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1. Matthew Ricci taught that human nature is essentially good, but that it can be used to do either good or evil, evil arising especially on account of the presence of concupiscence in man. Cf. T'ien-chu shih-i 天主実義 (The True Idea of God), Part 7. Later catechisms, of lesser calibre, said that human nature is essentially evil. The writer of this paper has often heard it taught by missionaries among the Chinese that while Mencius upheld the essential goodness of human nature, Christian teaching says the contrary.

Christianity, both Protestant and Roman Catholic.[2]

Let it first be said that "evil", as discussed here, refers less to ontological imperfections in the universe—"inequality" in things —or even to the evils connected with human suffering, which come in the train of sickness, old age and death, than to the problem of evil in the human heart: moral perversion in its individual or collective manifestations, which bring about so much suffering and havoc, usually to the innocent.

What is moral evil? Where does it come from? And, if there is a good God, why does He permit its existence? These are some of the chief questions that have been posed. Evil seems greater and more powerful than man: so often beyond his grasp and control. Its presence has been attributed to a superhuman power, in a dualistic system admitting two primordial principles in standing conflict, or as tension and division in the one Godhead.[3] While duality of divinity is not allowed in orthodox Christianity, evil is also attributed to the intervention of Satan, a superhuman being, in an originally good world. In monistic Hinduism, on the other hand, evil—as well as good—is con-

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2. The writer is aware of important divergences between Protestant and Catholic teachings on human nature, especially regarding the depth and extent of the effects of original sin, as well as the nature of "justification" in Christ. The fact, however, that both Protestants and Catholics are undertaking evangelization work among the peoples of the Far East makes it important and useful to suggest points of dialogue with both Protestant and Catholic thinkers, provided that it be understood that the writer is a Catholic.

3. "Dualism" may be variously interpreted. See Eberhard Simons, "Dualism", in *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, edited by Karl Rahner, II, p. 112—p. 115. Gnosticism and Manicheism have generally been considered dualistic. See also J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958); Robert Haardt, "Gnosis", and "Manicheism", both in *Sacramentum Mundi*, II, p. 374—378; III, p. 372—376. See also Klaus Hemmerle, "Evil", *ibid.*, I, p. 279—-283.

sidered as belonging to the phenomenal world of *māyā*, and not to ultimate reality.[4]   This is also the position, generally speaking, of Buddhism.[5]   Evil, therefore, seems to be either *above* man—originating in some higher power—or *beyond* man—because it isn't, man isn't, and—to take the radical view of Hinayana Buddhism—nothing is.

In his famous book *Tung-hsi wen-hua yü chi che-hsüeh* 東西文化与之哲学,[6] Liang Su-ming 梁漱溟 differentiates between European culture, with its early predominance of religion, later supplanted by the rise of rationalism and science, both now still holding sway; the Indian culture, which has always been and still is pre-occupied with religion or other-wordliness, and the contrasting example of Chinese culture, with its central interest in man and in the harmonious relation between man and nature, to the near exclusion of any talk of God or the after life.   This

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4.   *Māyā*, creative "illusion" of the Brahman.   See *Bhagavad-Gita* VII, 14 (in R.C. Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, London: Dutton, 1968, p. 280).   Also see Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of the Indian Tradition*(New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 201. It is a common view that Hindu mysticism is "supra-ethical" and removed from distinctions of good and evil. S. Radhakrishnan, however, argues against this.   See *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 102 f.

5.   The difficulty with Buddhism is its inner diversity.   The various sects of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism manifest many doctrinal divergences, often to an extreme degree.   In general, the world of phenomena is regarded as illusory, although certain sects might admit that a kind of "basic reality" is present in it.   In *What the Buddha Taught* (London: G. Fraser, 1967), the author, Walpola Rahula, a monk from Ceylon, purports to give the original teaching of Buddha, which he claims is preserved by the extreme Hinayana sect.

6.   *The Civilizations of the East and the West and their Philosophies* (1922).   This book is only available in Chinese.   The fact that the Chinese have been preoccupied with the problems of man and of his role in society, does not prevent Chinese humanism from having always been profoundly religious.

characteristic Chinese attitude is also reflected in its theory of good and evil. Instead of ascribing evil to a superhuman principle, or of relegating it to a basically unreal phenomenal world, the Chinese theory of evil is inseparable from its theory of human nature.   Evil exists; it is either inherent in human nature—which, however, can learn to control it by education—or the product of contact between an originally good nature and its wicked environment. We know these to be the teachings of Hsün-tzu 荀子 (313—138 BC) and of Mencius 孟子 (372—289 BC?) respectively. They began the Great Debate in Chinese philosophy, on a topic where East meets West, since the subject contains metaphysical as well as ethical and psychological implications.

Speaking superficially, one might say that while Mencius won the debate in China, Hsün-tzu won it in the West.   Such expressions, as "man's corrupt nature" and "human depravity", come to our mind, loaded with meaning and pathos, and standing in stark contrast to the serenity of most Chinese theorists of human nature.   The truth, however, is less obvious and much more complicated.   In both East and Wext, the debate was not over the 'same' human nature, but its several 'states', hypothetical or experienced.   For Mencius and Hsün-tzu, these were the 'original' nature: man as he was born, and the 'existential' state: man as he found himself in society.   In the Christian West, human nature can be said to have 'three moments': 'integral' nature, as it was in Adam before original sin, 'fallen' nature, the result of Adam's 'unhappy' legacy, and 'redeemed' nature, as renewed by the grace of Christ.   Within this conceptual framework, we can see how, through the triumph of Mencius, East and West concur in agreeing on an 'originally good' human

nature, with the difference that Mencius saw this in the infant yet untouched by social culture while Christians attribute it to Adam before the Fall. Hsün-tzu's 'originally wicked man' could never have known a pre-culture state of goodness, be that at birth or in the person of Adam.

The depths and extent of the ravages of the primordial Fall, as well as the depths and extent of the effects of redeeming grace on man, have been the subjects of much theological controversy in the West. Differing interpretations have especially been offered concerning the fallibility of human nature—troubled by "concupiscence"—and about the moral "newness" and power accorded by "justification". Both these doctrines—which represent realities that are not mutually exclusive—are especially contained in the Epistle to the Romans, and the controversies waged over it reflect a continual tension between two contrary attitudes: Pelagianism and anti-Pelagianism, a tension still being felt today. Both sides admit original sin and the need of grace, but the exact depth and meaning of each has been matter for hot debate. The problem has become more complicated with the discovery of non-Christian cultures and religious philosophies, and the recognition that many "non-Christians" might very well be "anonymous Christians" who have experienced grace. The dividing line between the pagan in the "fallen state" yet untouched by grace, and the Christian himself, a friend of God, has become very difficult to draw, and that, at a time when increasing secularization has made the world more alike in unbelief than in any one faith. The development has therefore been paradoxical. For, at the very moment when theologians are becoming more aware of the

permeating interplay of sin and grace in the whole human race, both in and out of Christianity, as well as of the deeply spiritual and religious bases of all cultures, many individuals and groups seem to be drifting towards religious indifference, a "neopaganism" more pagan than any hitherto-known historic paganism.

The task, therefore, has become very urgent, that all men preoccupied with ultimate concerns should understand one another better, especially since, granted the universal operation of grace, one can hardly label any genuine religious philosophy as belonging merely to the oft-disdained category of "natural theology".[7] In this perspective, non-Christian insights into human nature can be very valuable to Christian thinkers of today, who are growing conscious of the Hellenic biases of much doctrinal formulation, and anxious, first to return to the Semitic expressions of Christian revelation, and then to re-interpret it meaningfully to the non-Christian world. This is the motive that prompted the reviewer of Leslie Dewart's *The Future of Belief*, to insist:

> It should be a major task of Christian thinkers both solidly knowledgeable in and skeptic with regard to traditional theology to engage in large-scale religious research in at least some of the great number of

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7. In our own day, Karl Barth especially, by insisting that Christianity see all reality which is not God in the light of His Word, stands in opposition against any kind of "natural theology", including Aquinas' Aristotelianism, Schleiermacher's pietism and Bultmann's existentialism, as "usurpers" of God's Word. Yet, Barth commends Confucius, Feuerbach and M. Buber on their insights into human nature in *Church Dogmatics* III, p. 277 f. On this contradictory position of Barth, see Hugo A. Meynell, *Grace versus Nature: Studies in Karl Barth's "Church Dogmatics"* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), p. 172—3.

cultures we have been too long expecting to come to the Church on our
own Western terms.[8]

Just as medieval Scholasticism was an attempt to discuss
revealed dogmas by the light of newly discovered Aristotelian
principles, so today Christians are faced with this task of re-
interpreting the mysteries of faith to Asian nations conscious
of their own religious traditions, and yet quite unopposed, in
principle, to true dialogue. But the present-day encounter is
all the more difficult to Western Christians who must also inte-
grate into their religious *Weltanschauung* the findings of contem-
porary experience, be these of the historic kind or as enunciated
through the ever-expanding natural, social and psychological
sciences, and as reflected upon by our twentieth century philoso-
phers. Now, Chinese Neo-Confucianism, especially of the Sung
dynasty, fulfilled very much the same role as did medieval Scho-
lasticism in Europe, by its successful encounter with Buddhism,
accomplished through skilful "exegesis" of Confucian scriptures.
And today, any possible revival of Chinese thought necessarily
requires the development of a "neo", Neo-Confucianism
broad enough to account for Western, including Christian,
thinking. It is thus the proposed task of this paper to present
the discussions of evil in later Chinese thought, in Neo-Con-
fucianism specifically, as represented by several of its greatest
names: Chou Tun-i 周敦頤, Chang Tsai 張載, the Ch'eng

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8. John W.M. Verhaar, SJ, "Theism Today and Tomorrow", *Philippine Studies*
   15 (1967), 686. In this penetrating review, Verhaar concludes by saying
   that *The Future of Belief* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), an attempt at
   re-appreciation of the Catholic faith, is conducive to the ecumenical spirit as
   it lays bare anachronisms and fixations typical of both the Reformation and
   Catholic theology. Besides, it "holds great potential for dialogue with non-
   Christians" (p. 698).

brothers Hao 程顥, and Yi 程頤, Chu Hsi 朱熹 and Wang Shou-jen 王守仁, and then to suggest certain points for possible dialogue with Christian thinkers.

As is well known, after the time of Mencius and Hsün-tzu, Confucian scholars tried to harmonize their teachings, by saying that while human nature possesses the beginnings of virtue, it is not really completely good, and awaits the transforming influence of education. Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒 (176—104 BC) especially, correlated the *yin-yang* 陰陽 theory with Confucian ethics, paralleling *hsing* 性 (human nature) with *yang*, the active or positive cosmic principle, and *ch'ing* 情 (feelings) with *yin*, the passive or negative cosmic principle, making nature the source of goodness and feelings the source of evil.[9] This categorisation seems arbitrary. But moralists have seldom been sympathetic to feelings as such, and while Thomas Aquinas describes the "passions" as a-moral, he too tends to regard them with disfavour.[10]

In the Han 漢 (202 BC—220 AD) and Wei-Chin 魏—晉 (220 —420 AD) dynasties, the prevalent tendency was to divide human beings into three "grades". Wang Ch'ung 王充 (27—100 AD?) offers the opinion that Mencius was referring to people above the average when he spoke of human nature as originally good,

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9.  *Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals*). Parts of this book have been translated into English by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). The section on Tung's teaching on human nature and feelings is from p. 275—276.

10.  Aquinas treats of the passions in *Summa Theologica*, I—II, Q. 22—48. He considers them as sense appetites, belonging to the irrational part of the soul, in a human person whose chief characteristic is reason. See Jacques Leclercque, *La Philosophie Morale de Saint Thomas devant la Pensée Contemporaine* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1955), p. 433.

Hsün-tzu was referring to people under the average when speaking of human nature as originally evil, while Yang Hsiung 揚雄 (53 BC—18 AD) was thinking of the average person when he asserted that human nature was mixed with both good and evil.[11] Such a theory is fraught with fatalistic consequences regarding man's natural moral destiny, just as certain predestination theories, for example of Calvinism, imply for man's supernatural destiny. Wang Ch'ung, however, following in the steps of Hsün-tzu, considered even the "born wicked" capable of becoming good, through the influence of education.[12]

The theory of "grades" reached its climax with the advent of Han Yü 韓愈 (768—824 AD), the great T'ang prose-writer, who applied it to both human nature and to feelings. He advocated a return to the way of sages, of Confucius and Mencius, which had been obscured by the predominance of Taoism and Buddhism during the time of chaos stretching from the third to the eighth centuries. For this, he has been acclaimed the fore-runner of Neo-Confucianism.[13] Han's friend and pupil,

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11. *Lun-heng* 論衡 (*Balanced Inquiries*). For an Enslish translaion, see Chan, *Source Book*, p. 293—296. Wang's ideas might have played an important role in the subsequent "nine-grade ranking system" inaugurated by Emperor Wen 文 (220—227 AD) of the Wei dynasty, which led to many abuses, since it was presumed that the scions of the important families belonged to the "higher grades". As to the "grade theory" itself, Wang might have received it from his teacher Pan Piao 班彪, one of the historians responsible for the *Han Shu* 漢書 (*History of the Han Dynasty*), which includes a "three-nine" grading classification for legendary and historical figures.
12. For a discussion on this point, see Li Shi Yi, "Wang Ch'ung", in *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, 5 (October, 1937), 299—302. As to Hsün-tzu, he definitely maintains that even the born wicked can attain sagehood, an idea which, irrespective of its logic, saved his system from fatalism and also illustrates the "democratic" nature of his thinking, in spite of his insistence on laws for the government of men.
13. For Han's ideas on human nature, see *Yüan-hsing* 原性 (*Inquiry on Human Nature*), English translation in Chan, *Source Book*, 451—453, and *Yüan-tao* 原道 (*Inquiry on the Way*), also in Chan, 454—456.

Li Ao 李翱 (fl. 798) also claimed that nature enables man to become a sage and feelings lead him astray. He offers as remedy, through the control of feelings, the "recovery" of man's originally good nature.[14] This will continue to be a recurring theme in Neo-Confucian "methodology". Hence, it is interesting to note that in a system of thought which has no doctrine of primordial Fall, so much attention should have been given to the possibility of "recovering" an originally good nature. Underlying this is an unexplicit recognition of human freedom and an optimistic estimate of man's moral powers with no conscious reference to the world of grace. To all appearances, the Chinese sage is a "self-redeemed" man, a second Adam, who has recovered his state of original justice, from which he had earlier fallen, not through hereditary, but through personal "sin", to which his fallibility—more precisely, his "concupiscence", natural but not inherited—has kept him open. Still, granted all the doctrinal differences, or rather, the absence of certain doctrinal assumptions in Chinese thought, the recovery of a relative degree of "integrity" remains characteristic of Christian spirituality also:

> ...in a certain respect the goal of Christian moral maturity consists in a return to Adam's state in Paradise, not certainly in the sense of a return to some possibility still prior to moral decision, but as to a goal which is itself already the fruit and prize of moral concern. In this sense it may be allowed that the ascetic strives for the blessed ἀπαθεία possessed by Adam in Paradise, as the Greek Fathers often say.[15]

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14. See *Fu-hsing* 復性 (*Recovery of Nature*), in Chan, *ibid.*, 456—458. The idea of recovering one's nature—as well as that of "fasting of the heart or mind"—come originally from Chuang-tzu, but Li Ao gave it clearer expression.

15. Karl Rahner, "The Theological Concept of Concupiscentia", *Theological Investigations*, I, 374.

Before embarking upon a full-scale discussion of the Neo-Confucian contribution to the understanding of evil, a word can be said about the schools of thought which the Neo-Confucians sought to combat: Neo-Taoism and Chinese Buddhism, both of which coloured the thinking of the Neo-Confucians themselves. Unlike Confucius and Mencius, both earlier and later Taoists avoided discussions of good and evil. "How much difference is there between 'good' and 'evil'?", says the cryptic *Lao-tzu* 老子.[16] And into the mouth of Confucius himself, did Chuang-tzu 莊子 (c. 399—c. 295 BC) put words of the Taoist ideal of the sage, who was not—as was the Confucian—a man of virtue, but the man who "transcended" the practice of virtues in mystical self-forgetfulness.[17] On the other hand, the popular movement of religious Taoism, which arose under the Han dynasty and spread among the masses during the Six Dynasties (222—589 AD), considered every kind of physical evil as punishment for sin, and held public penitential ceremonies for the sake of effacement and relief.[18] Its adherents did not develop an explicit theory of moral evil, which they apparently sought to avoid, for the sake of personal gain in attaining physical immortality. The intellectual Neo-Taoist movement, however, went beyond both Lao-

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16. *Lao Tzu* (*Tao-te Ching*) 20, in Chan, *op. cit.*, 149.

17. *Chuang Tzu* 6, *ibid.*, 201. Neo-Confucians were to unite this mysticism with the practice of virtues.

18. Henri Maspero, *Le Taoisme* (Paris: Civilisations du Sud, 1950), p. 157. The Chinese use the same word for "sin" and "crime" (*tsui* 罪). It has been put forward that Western society is a "guilt-conscious" society pre-occupied with sin and man's moral responsibility, whereas Chinese society is a "shamec-onscious" society where the sense of wrong is not internalized. In *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), Wolfram Eberhard dismisses this theory with a thorough analysis of sociological evidence.

tzu and Chuang-tzu in metaphysical speculations. Wang Pi
王弼 (226—249 AD) spoke of *Wu* 無 (non-being) as ultimate,
undifferentiated, pure being[19]—resembling the "One" of Plo-
tinus, while Kuo Hsiang 郭象 (d. 312 AD) identified *T'ien* 天
with *Tzu-jan* 自然, the physical cosmos or Nature, which was
but another name for the self-generating myriad things,[20] the
"Many" in the mechanical system of Epicurus. Good and evil
have little meaning in strict, ontological monism or pluralism.
With the given ideal of sagehood as "harmony with Nature",
the violation of, or interference with, one's human nature
becomes an "ontological" rather than "moral" evil. Besides,
in Kuo's system, there was no place for free will.

Buddhism developed in China through interactions with
Taoism, both on the intellectual and popular levels. The
seven early Buddhist schools were pre-occupied with the ques-
tion of whether *dharma* had any ultimate reality, in other words,
with the meaning of the Taoist "non-being".[21] Their meta-
physical discussions remind one of the medieval European con-
troversy over the reality of "Universals".[22] The Chinese re-

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19.   *Lao Tzu chu* 老子註 (Commentary on Lao Tzu), in Chan, *op. cit.*, 321. By
     his concern with metaphysics, Wang Pi also prepared the ground for Neo-
     Confucianism.

20.   *Chuang Tzu chu* 莊子言 (Commentary on Chuang Tzu), in Chan, *op. cit.*,
     326. By saying that everything has its own nature and each nature has
     its own ultimate, Kuo anticipated the Neo-Confucians.

21.   *Dharma* here refers to "all things", or "elements of existence". The con-
     troversy, basically, was whether there was an "objective reality" in things,
     or in anything at all. This doubt resembles more the tendency of modern
     European philosophers since the time of Descartes, with the philosophical
     postion of Hume—concerning the mind and reality—closest to that of
     Hinayana Buddhism.

22.   As such, the problem of universals came up in Chinese thought in the pre-
     Ch'in "school of names" associated with Kung-sun Lung 公孫龍 (c. 380 BC?),
     in Hsün-tzu (fl. 298—238 BC), in the Buddhist Seng-chao 僧肇 (384—414

fusal to regard the world as illusory, as well as the preference for ethics to metaphysics, prepared the way for the eventual successful re-assertion of Confucian morality in the face of Buddhist "indifference". Besides, by the end of T'ang (9th cent. AD), a series of religious persecutions had reduced Buddhism to near impotency. It survived, roughly speaking, under two forms: the *Ch'an* 禅 (Zen) sect of artists and intellectuals and the popular *Ching-t'u* 浄土 (Pure Land) sect or Amidism. The goal of *Ch'an* was the attainment of Buddhahood through direct insight beyond processes of thought or volition. Everything else, be it the reading of Scriptures, prayer or good works, was in principle unnecessary. It has therefore been called "Protestant" Buddhism.[23] The Pure Land sect was a religion of faith in Amida's saving grace. At its best, it bore the most resemblance to Christianity. Basic Buddhist ambivalence towards the problem of moral, however, together with provisions for atonement and purification founded on mechanistic causality, gave rise to many abuses.[24]

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AD)—whose discussion of things and names especially approached the medieval European discussion of the universals. In general, the importance occupied by discussions on the mind and reality in Chinese Buddhism matched the importance occupied by the European scholastic discussion on universals.

23. Hu Shih 胡適 called the Ch'an movement a "reformation or revolution in Buddhism". See his article, "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China: its History and Method", *Philosophy East and West*, 3 (1953), p. 12. It represented certainly a great departure from original Buddhism, so that one may say that the triumph of Ch'an implied also the failure of Indian Buddhism to establish itself in China or Japan.

24. For a discussion of both Ch'an and Amidism, see Edward Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1957), 200—207. W. Eberhard also remarks on the "irrelevance of moral life" in Chinese Buddhism, including Amidism, even though it was a "salvation" religion, since the extreme conclusion of belief in grace as being sufficient was thaa no repentance for sin was required. Cf. *op. cit.*, 20—23.

Human nature and the human heart or mind, the central interest of the *Ch'an* Buddhists, became the main preoccupation of the Neo-Confucians as well, thus drawing them closer to the Christian mystics: to Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, Bonaventure, and Pascal. However, Neo-Confucianism arose as a reaction against Buddhism, much as medieval Scholasticism began as a reaction against Averroism. An integrated, organic cosmology was developed to counteract the Buddhist view of an illusory world based on the causative action of *karma*, and, what is more important, an integrated ascetic and mystic doctrine, advocating the control of unruly desires and the practice of *ching* 敬 or inner reverence—in the spirit of the Buddhist *dhyana*[25]—also came into being. Neo-Confucianism, therefore, forged partly-Buddhist weapons to fight Buddhist abuses, especially their neglect of man's social duties. It was mainly in the sphere of ethics, that the claim of a return to Confucius and Mencius was justified. But the Neo-Confucian explanation of evil was strongly coloured by the new concern with metaphysics.[26]

According to Chou Tun-i (1017—1073), regarded by Chu Hsi as founder of Neo-Confucianism, the world, both of men and things, is the spontaneous production of the interaction between the five elements and the principles of *yin* and *yang*, which, in their turn, came from the *T'ai-chi* 太極, the transcendental

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25. *Dhyana* means meditation, or a "means for transcending the impact of sensory stimuli and our normal reactions to it". Conze, *op. cit.*, p. 100. It is translated into Chinese as "Ch'an". *Karma* refers to the good or evil acts committed in the course of transmigrations.

26. For an extensive treatment of "The Neo-Confucian Solution of the Problem of Evil", see Wing-tsit Chan's article, in *Studies Presented to Hu Shih on His Sixty-fifth Birthday, The Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, 28 (1957), 773—791.

"Supreme Ultimate". Man represents the summit of the universe, participating in the excellence of the *T'ai-chi*, and possessing the nature wich came to him through the five elements. Human nature is originally good, or, as he expresses it, *ch'eng* 誠 (sincere). Contact with external things, however, provides the occasion for evil, as a deflection from the good rather than a positive presence. If only we have no selfish desires, our hearts will be like a "mirror", quiet when passive, straight and upright when active.[27]

This "mirror" image has a long tradition in Chinese thought, going back to Chuang-tzu (fl. 4th cent. BC), who used it to illustrate the ideal of Taoist wisdom, with its impersonal yet immediate apprehension of reality. In a famous episode, the monk Shen-hsiu 神秀 (605?—706 AD) and his rival, the later *Ch'an* patriarch Hui-neng 慧能 (638—713 AD), expressed through it the irreality of the phenomenal world.[28] The image has also been used by Christians—Gregory of Nyssa (337—400), pseudo-Dionysius (5th cent.), Ruysbroeck (1293—1381), Marie of the Incarnation (1599—1672) and other mystics. Here, however, the mirror represents the Divine Exemplar, in whose likeness man is created. But Christians, Buddhists and Neo-Confucians, all saw in the "Spiritual Mirror" the need of cleansing—the

27. Chou's *T'ung-shu* 通書 (*Book of Penetration*) and *T'ai-chi-t'u shuo* 太極図説 (*Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*) are translated in full in Chan's *Source Book, op. cit.*, p. 463—481. See also Yih-ching Chow, *La Philosophie Morale dans le Néo-Confucianisme* (*Tcheou Touen-yi*) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953).

28. It might be more correct to say that Hui-neng "rejected" this image, to express in a radical form the illusoriness of objective reality. The whole episode is reported in the Ch'an scripture, *Liu-tsu t'an-ching* 六祖壇経 (*Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch*), translated by Wing-tsit Chan (New York: St. John's University Press, 1953), p. 7 f.

purging of the passions in view of keeping it pure.[29]

Chang Tsai (1020—1077) calls *T'ai-chi*, *T'ai-ho* 太和 (Supreme Harmony), or *T'ai-hsü* 太虛 (Supreme Void). It is, for him, the totality of formless *ch'i* 気 (Ether?), of which *yin* and *yang* are two modes. The gathering of *ch'i* gives rise to all things, including man, who thereby participates in the Supreme Harmony. Chang distinguishes between the two sides of human nature: the "essential" nature which is good, and the "existential" nature which may be good or bad, depending upon the quality of the *ch'i* with which it is endowed.[30] Just exactly where "essential" nature comes here, and what was meant by the word *ch'i*—whether to translate it as material principle, or as πνεῦμα or even "élan vital", remains debatable. The recognition of a certain dualism in human nature, in terms which might be explained as "essence" and "existence", received, later, the enthusiastic approval of Chu Hsi:

> The theory of the endowment of *ch'i* began with Chang Tsai and the two Ch'engs, and has contributed much to the school of the sages, and will be a great help to future scholars. That is why, with the coming of this theory, all controversy (regarding human nature) has ceased.[31]

And indeed, this distinction between essential and existential nature marks an important step forward in Chinese philosophical anthropology. It also renders obsolete the earlier, unreal

29. In a penetrating article, Paul Demiéville discusses and correlates the use of the "mirror" image in China and the West. See "Le mirroir spirituel", *Sinologica* 1 (1948), 112—137.

30. Chang's entire *Hsi-ming* 西銘 (*Western Inscription*) and parts of his *Cheng-meng* (*Corrections of Youthful Ignorance*) are given in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.*, 497—517. See also Sui-chi Huang, "Chang Tsai's Concept of Ch'i", *Philosophy East and West* 18 (October, 1968), 247—261.

31. *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 朱子語類 (*Classified Dialogues of Master Chu*) 4, quoted in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.*, p. 511

distinction between human nature as it is at birth and as it is later, since it is impossible to judge of the goodness or evil of an infant's nature. The oft-quoted parable of a man's spontaneous reaction at the sight of a child's falling into a well can only be an example of the natural reaction of a *cultured* human being, and not of raw human nature. Chang Tsai's contribution, therefore, cleared the ground for a more meaningful dialogue between Christian thinkers and Neo-Confucians.

In this respect, it can be pointed out that Paul Tillich's interpretation of the primordial Fall comes closest to the assumptions of this Neo-Confucian distinction between "basic" or "essential" nature and the "existential" state in which it is found. Tillich rejects the literal interpretation of the Paradise story and describes "actualised creation" and "estranged existence" as identical. The state of sin represents the transition from "essence" to "existence".

> ...everything (God) created participates in the transition from essence to existence. He creates the newborn child; but, if created, it falls into the state of existential estrangement... (and), upon growing into maturity, affirms the state of estrangement in acts of freedom which imply responsibility and guilt. Creation is good in its essential character. If actualised, it falls into universal estrangement through freedom and destiny.[32]

Chang also emphasized the importance of ascesis, or "self-cultivation", for the sake of improving the quality of our "endowment". Repeating, after Mencius, that "to know the heart completely is to know one's nature and to know Heaven", he

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32. *Systematic Theology* (London: J. Nisbet, 1957), p. 50. Tillich's interpretation of the Fall of Man gives rise to difficulties, which are beyond the scope of this paper. It is only asserted here that the "dual" aspect of human nature explains evil much in the same way as did the Neo-Confucians, although dissimilarities are not absent.

sees the practice of love as the means for removing the differences between the self and the non-self, and so of attaining the state of becoming one with all things. After all, man is actually part of Nature, and the truer is his unity with Nature, the better also is his own nature. In a very famous passage, he says:

> Heaven is my Father, and Earth is my Mother. Even such a small creature as I find an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the Universe I regard as my body and that which directs the Universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.[33]

A tendency towards pantheistic mysticism seems obvious. And yet, Chang's union with Nature stops far short of the Hindu *Advaita*[34] of Shankara (9th cent. AD). Not only is his means for attaining this union love, rather than knowledge, but also is this love, with all its cosmic dimensions, a Confucianist, graded love, which guards the necessary distinctions between human relations and man's relations with the cosmos. The life-giving quality of this love, however, receives due attention. In discussing Chang's teaching, Chu Hsi especially quoted his description of the work of the sage, the man of *jen* 仁 par excellence:

> ...to give heart (or consciousness) to Heaven and Earth, to establish the Way for living peoples, to continue the interrupted teaching of the former sages, and to open a new era of peace for coming generations.[35]

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33. From *Hsi-ming*, given in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.*, 497. The rest of the treatise explains the "graded" nature of this universal, cosmic love. Chang Tsai was influenced by Mo-tzu, but was careful to remain Confucianist, in his interpretation of *jen*.

34. Literally, "non-duality". The word refers to the monistic school of Vedānta, according to which the individual self and the Absolute Brahman are one and identical.

35. *Chin-ssu lu* 近思録 2: 95, in Wing-tsit Chan's translation, *Reflections on Things at Hand* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967). The translation given here, however, is direct from the Chinese. In *Pain and Providence (Erlöstes*

Except for the absence of an explicit belief in a personal Godhead, does not this mystical love of men and the cosmos recall to mind the words of St. Paul and St. John, of Henry Suso, and, closer to our day, of Teilhard de Chardin? Is not the life-giving movement flowing down from Heaven and Earth to man and then back to Heaven and Earth a worthy analogy for the understanding of the life-giving grace of Christian theology?

The two famous brothers, Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I, both accepted the distinction Chang made concerning essential nature and its "concrete" endowment in man. It is, after all, a better conceptual tool than the former, arbitrary predication of "evil" of feelings. In a passage atributed by Chu Hsi to the elder Ch'eng (1032—1085), we read:

> There are men who are good from childhood on, others who are evil from childhood on. This comes from the natural endowment of *ch'i*. While good belongs to nature, evil too cannot be said not to belong to nature....[36]

The younger Ch'eng (1033—1107) also ascribes the good and evil in human nature, to the purity or impurity of the endowment of *ch'i*. He offers the following explanation for the differentiation between basic nature and the "existential" human:

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*Dasein: Theologische Betrachtungen*), Ladislaus Boros speaks about the cosmic significance of man's life, including his suffering, and how, "in our inner being, we carry the evolutionary pressure of the universe." This is also Teilhard de Chardin's idea, as is well known. While Neo-Confucians do not speak explicityly of the value of suffering, their ideal of *jen* would tacitly include suffering and endurance.

36. *Erh Ch'eng i-shu* 二程遺書 (*Surviving Works of the Two Ch'engs*). It is not given here, which of the two brothers said this. But Chu Hsi attributes it to the elder, Ch'eng Hao. See Yu-lan Feng, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* Chinese edition, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935), 882—883. The English translation is by Derk Bodde (Princeton University Press, 1953) in 2 volumes.

> *Hsing* 性 (Nature) comes from Heaven; *ts'ai* 才 (capacity) from *ch'i*. When the *ch'i* is pure, so is *ts'ai*; when the *ch'i* is dirty, so too is *ts'ai*. *Ts'ai*—capacity—may be good or evil, *hsing*—Nature—is always good.[37]

In order to transform our endowment or capacity, the brothers recommend the reverent custody of the heart or mind, *ching* 敬, which helps us to know and experience *jen*, which in turn brings us back into the mainstream of the great *jen* in the life of the universe. Both of them repeated frequently the famous Neo-Confucian dictum: the man of *jen* is one with Heaven and Earth and all things. But while Ch'eng Hao dwelt almost exclusively on the importance of *ching*, Ch'eng I added to this "reverence" or "attentiveness" the need of extending one's knowledge, that is, the knowledge of moral matters, through assiduous study. Asked about the art of moral cultivation, he had said:

> The sincerity of the will depends upon the extension of knowledge and the extension of knowledge depends upon the investigation of things.... There is principle (*li*) in everything, and one must investigate principle to the utmost.... When one has accumulated much knowledge he will naturally achieve a thorough understanding like a sudden release.[38]

On this account, it has often been said that the elder Ch'eng inaugurated the idealistic wing of Neo-Confucianism with its unilateral emphasis on inner reverence in self-cultivation, while the younger Ch'eng inaugurated the rationalistic wing, which recommended, besides *ching*, the practice of *ko-wu*, the "investiga-

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37. *Erh Ch'eng i-shu* 19. No explanation is given as to why *ch'i* might be impure and give rise to evil. Hence, to attribute evil to *ch'i* implies the admission that evil is a natural fact.

38. *Ts'ui-yen* 粹言 (*Selected Sayings*), in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.,* 560—561. While Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi, by insistence on *ko-wu* 格物, investigation of things and their principles, approach the current of "gradual enlightenment" in Ch'an Buddhism, the idea of "sudden release" quoted here suggests a "sudden" enlightenment to which one prepares self by assiduous study.

tion of things", as an essential means towards self-transformation and sagehood. This divergence within Neo-Confucianism itself resembles the divergence between the Augustinian (or Franciscan) and the Thomist (or Dominican) schools in medieval European scholasticism, with the difference or emphasis on love or knowledge. And if Chu Hsi (1130-1200), the great synthesizer, can be compared to St. Thomas Aquinas (1206—1280), so can Lu Chiu-yüan 陸象山 (1139—1193), his friend and "rival" thinker, be compared to St. Bonaventure (1221—1274).

A man of letters, a historian, a government official and a philosopher, Chu Hsi attached himself to the ideas of Ch'eng I, reaffirmed the basic doctrines of Confucianism and brought its development over the centuries into a harmonious whole—while giving it a new complexion. Taking over from Chou Tun-i the concept of *T'ai-chi* or Supreme Ultimate, and uniting it with that of *li* 理 (reason or principle of organization), to which Ch'eng I had already given prominence, he taught that the Supreme Ultimate consists of *li* in its totality, and is complete in all things as well as in each individually. It explains the reality and universality of things. There is, however, another element, *ch'i*—Chang Tsai's word—which explains the physical form and the individuality of things. While seemingly dualistic, *li* and *ch'i* are never separate.[39] They have been compared to form and matter in Aristotelian philosophy, on account of which Chu Hsi, who saw no need for a Creator,—as would

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39.   Alfred Forke ranks Chu Hsi as the greatest Chinese philosopher. See *Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie* (Hamburg: 1938), 198. He and others have compared Chu to St. Thomas Aquinas. See also Paul E. Callahan, "Chu Hsi and St. Thomas: A Comparison", *Papers on China* (Harvard Universiy: 1950), vol. 4, 1—23.

Thomas Aquinas—has been looked upon as a materialist by many missionaries in China, who fulfilled the function of interpreting Chinese thought to the West.    This is what Stanislas Le Gall, SJ, says of Chu Hsi:

> ...beau diseur autant que philosophe détestable, cet homme est parvenu à imposer, depui plus de sept siècles, à la masse de ses compatriotes une explication toute matérialiste des anciens livres.[40]

Was Chu Hsi a materialist?    Since the concept of "materialism" comes from the West, it might be more enlightening to put first the question, was Aristotle, who regarded matter as eternal, a materialist?    If the answer is negative, on account of Aristotle's belief in spiritual causations, and especially in an "Unmoved Mover", we may next examine Chu Hsi's "Supreme Ultimate", which is as impersonal as Aristotle's God, but which can hardly be reduced to a uniquely material principle.    The question of why God would permit the occurrence of evil, or man's potential for evil, however, never arose in Neo-Confucianism, since the Supreme Ultimate, not being a personal Absolute, cannot accept responsibility for evil.

As for the presence of evil in human nature, Chu Hsi accounted for it by taking over the distinctions made by Chang Tsai and the two Ch'engs:

> Whenever there is *li*, there is *ch'i*.   Whenever there is *ch'i*, there is *li*. Those who receive a *ch'i* that is clear, are the sages in whom Nature is like a pearl lying in clear water.    But those who receive a *ch'i* that is

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40.    *Chu Hsi: sa doctrine, son influence* (Shanghai: 1923), p. 1.    Henri Bernard gives a more favourable interpretation of Chu in "Chu Hsi's Philosophy and Its Interpretation by Leibniz", *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 5 (August, 1937), 9—18. Chu Hsi has also been compared to Spinoza by O. Graf OSB, in "Chu Hsi and Spinoza", *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Philosophy* (Amsterdam, 1949), 238—242.

turbid, are the foolish and degenerate in whom Nature is like a pearl lying in muddy water.[41]

Neither Chu Hsi nor any other Neo-Confucian attempted to explain why one man may receive a purer *ch'i* and another a trublid endowment. This is just taken for granted. The distinction, after all, is an ontological, not a moral one. Morality enters the picture only when human nature moves from tranquility to activity, when "feelings" have been aroused or stirred; in "philosophical" language, when free volitional acts have been posited. Granted this understanding, a contemporary explanation of dualism in man as the occasion for evil is perfectly consonant with the Neo-Confucian proposal:

> To say that man is fallible is to say that the limitation peculiar to a being who does not coincide with himself is the primordial weakness from which evil arises.[42]

A partial explanation of "turbidity" in human nature is given in Chu's theory of "desire", *jen yü* 人慾 (human desire), also called *ssu yü* 私慾 (selfish desire) in the individual. This "desire", which is characteristic of all men, is of metaphysical origin. Distinguishing between "nature", as the pre-stirred state of the human heart or mind, and "feelings" as the post-stirred state, he says:

> Desire emanates from feelings. The heart (or mind) is comparable to water, nature is comparable to the tranquillity of still water, feeling is comparable to the flow of water, and desire is comparable to its waves.

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41. *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 4. Let it be remembered that the Neo-Confucians, after Mencius, held that all men can be sages. Thus, "turbidity" of *ch'i* does not necessarily present an invincible obstacle for moral perfection. One only has to cleanse the pearl of its mud. See also Callahan, *op. cit.*, p. 7—8.
42. Paul Ricoeur, *Human Fallibility* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965), p. 224.

Just as there are good and bad waves, so there are good desires...and bad desires.[43]

As a means towards overcoming bad desires and promoting good ones, Chu Hsi proposes wide and extensive learning:

What sages and worthies call extensive learning means to study everything. From the most essential and most fundamental about oneself to every single thing or affair in the world, even the meaning of one word or half a word, everything should be investigated to the utmost, and none of it is unworthy of attention.[44]

Chu Hsi's contemporary, Lu Chiu-yüan, objected to the dualistic explanation of *li* and *ch'i* as components of the universe and of man, as well as to the undue emphasis on learning. Lu regards all things as one: the human heart or mind is *li*, and since the universe is also *li*, the two are really one, as microcosm and macrocosm. There is no need, therefore, to pursue wide knowledge. One only has to know the heart exhaustivly. For this reason, he has been described as an idealist philosopher.

Lu shows no interest in *ch'i*. In discussing human nature, he merely says that goodness is prior and innate, while evil is posterior and acquired. A key to the understanding of evil is *wu-yü* 物慾 (material desire), which, however, is not explained.

Where there is good, there must be evil. (The transition from one to the other) is truly (like) turning over one's hands. Goodness is so from the very beginning, whereas evil comes into existence only as a result of such a 'turning over'.[45]

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43. *Chu-tzu chüan-shu* 朱子全書 45:4 (Complete Words of Master Chu) in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.*, p. 631.
44. *Chu-tzu chüan-shu* 3:26, in Chan, *ibid.*, p. 610. It must be pointed out, that even for Chu Hsi, knowledge has for its goal, virtue.
45. Quoted from Lu's *Yü-lu* 語錄 (Recorded Dialogues) by Sui-chi Huang, in *Lu Hsiangshan, A Twelfth Century Chinese Idealist Philsopher* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1944), p. 50

This is not, metaphysically speaking, an adequate explanation of evil. Indeed, it explains nothing. However, Lu probably had no intention of explaining anything, least of all, the presence of a mystery. Lu simply recognizes evil and attempts to deal with it positively. Being opposed, as were all Neo-Confucians, to the pessimistic Buddhist outlook on life, he evinces a belief in human perfectibility, so characteristic of Chinese thought. If he differs from Chu, it is mainly for practical reasons. Chu advocates the investigation of things in the view of attaining virtue, while Lu saw moral cultivation in terms of self-knowledge followed by the practice of innate, human virtues. His argument is that sagehood ought to be sought within man, rather than beyond him. "If we know the fundamentals in our study", he says, "then all the Six Classics are our footnotes."[46] And also:

> The universe is my heart and mind, and my heart and mind is the universe.
> Sages appeared tens of thousands of generations ago.
> They shared this heart; they shaared this principle.
> Sages will appear tens of thousands of generations to come. They will share this heart; they will share this principle.[47]

All that Lu talked about, was this "heart" or "mind". And yet, unfortunately, he has never explained its nature fully. Christian literature has much more to say about this fundamental principle of all human activity, the deepest recess of the person and his mystery, whether that be called heart, mind or soul:

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46.  *Hsiang-shan chüan-chi* 象山全集 (*Complete Works of Lu Hsiang-shan*), 34: 1, given in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.*, p. 580.
47.  *Hsiang-shan chüan-chi*, 22: 5, *ibid.*, p. 579—580. I should like to point out that the Chinese word *hsin* 心, translated as heart or mind, includes the connotations of both these English words. It refers to the deepest principle in man from which all acts flow.

The superior parts of our soul are like a living mirror of God, where He has printed His eternal image and where no other image can come.... All that God knows distinctly, in the mirror of His wisdom... all that is truth and life, (in so far as) this life is Himself, for there is in Him nothing outside His own nature.[48]

Lu's teachings did not yield as much influence as Chu's, which were incorporated into the official examinations in 1313. They were nearly forgotten when Wang Shou-jen (1472—1529) came to the scene, more than three centuries after Lu. A statesman, a general, and a man of letters as well, this great philosopher of the Ming dynasty shone alone where others before him had to share the limelight. Reviving Lu's "school of the heart (or mind)", Wang disagrees with Chu's dualism in metaphysics and in anthropology, as well as in the dual emphasis on inner reverence and "outer" investigations. He complains that scholarship—which should be a pursuit of wisdom—has degenerated into an interest in "fragmentary and isolated details" outside of the self. He reaffirms the all-embracing nature of the heart, and especially of its innate power of knowing good and evil—*liang-chih* 良知 (moral intuition). To reach sagehood, man merely has to develop to the full his innate *liang-chih*, which is nothing other than *T'ien-li* 天理, the principle of Heaven:

Our nature is the substance of the heart (or mind), and Heaven is the source of our nature. To exert the heart to the utmost is to develop fully one's nature. Only... (then can one)... 'know the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth.'[49]

Wang's notion of the *liang-chih* is the culmination of the basic

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48. Quoted from Ruysbroeck's *Miroir du salut eternel*, by Demiéville, *op. cit.*, p.136.
49. *Ch'uan-hsi lu* 伝習録 (*Instructions for Practical Living*), quoted in Chan, *Source Book, op. cit.*, p. 672. "Know the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth" is a quotation from *Chung-yung* (*Book of the Mean*), 20.

Neo-Confucian spirituality, the summation of the mystical thought already present in Mencius. If the ideal of sagehood implies the unity between man and Heaven—the word referring earlier to a personal Absolute, and later to a less anthropomorphic and more impersonal *T'ai-chi*—then the heart, with its innate moral intuition, is doubtless the place where this communion takes place. The concept of the man who practises inner reverence, and comes into communion with the Absolute, is very close to the ideal of Christian mysticism:

> German mysticism often named as its ideal the man 'of the heart' (innig), the 'collected' (gesammelt) man, that is, whose whole activity is an exhaustive expression of his innermost centre and his innermost vital decision, and who therefore remains 'collected' in this innermost centre without being dispersed in anything alien to his decision.[50]

The philosophy of both Lu and Wang has been described as "subjective ontological monism". Subjective and monistic they certainly were, but their monism was not strictly an "ontological" one. By saying that "the heart contains everything", they did not necessarily deny the existence of an objective universe. Far from it. Both men were practical moralists, not speculative metaphysicians. If they have given the impression of teaching an "ontological monism", it is on account of the absence of an explicit principle of "analogy" in Chinese thoyght, whick keeps it open to mistaken, univocal interpretations. And so it is my contention that the "rationalist" and "idealist" currents of Neo-Confucianism represent two approaches to spirituality, which are related to the divergence of the schools of "gradual" and "sudden" enlightenment in the development

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50. Karl Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

of *Ch'an* Buddhism, but which, perhaps, present even a greater resemblance to the two current movements in Christian, especially Roman Catholic, spirituality. The "rationalists" resemble the traditionalists, who emphasize the practice of moral virtues, and therefore, man's role in his search for moral perfection, and the "existentialists"—for lack of a better name, the word "mystical" being ambivalent—who highlight the role of God, of grace, and of direct interpersonal relationship between the soul and its indwelling Guest.

Is it besides not possible, that, in our present dissatisfaction with the Greek—Aristotelian—"happiness" ethics implicit in Christian morality, the idea of moral self-fulfilment, such as expressed in the doctrine of *liang-chih*, contains great potential for fruitful reflection? Moral self-fulfilment needs not necessarily be selfish, especially when man's relationship and openness to God is recognized.

> Man's purposiveness and striving, thus, reside in his seeking creatively, not to be *happy*, but to *be*. The Christian doctrine of grace can be totally integrated with this idea if we keep in mind that the free self-creation of man takes place in the presence of God....[51]

Such a perspective would free Christian morality from certain oft-valid charges of the exploitation of religious "illusions". Besides, it denies nothing fundamentally genuine in the "happiness" principle. As Paul Tillich has remarked, the Greek word εὐδαιμονία has suffered much in its English translation of "happiness", which, in turn, has deteriorated badly in meaning.

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51. Leslie Dewart, *The Future of Belief: Theism in a World Come of Age* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), p. 32, note 23. Dewart makes no reference to dialogues with non-Christian thinkers, a need which has been pointed out by his reviewer, John W. M. Verhaar, SJ, in an article already cited.

*Eὐδαιμονία* means basically, and in itself, "fulfilment with divine help and consequent happiness", that is, relegating happiness—including pleasure—to the status of "companion" to fulfilment.[52]    When rightly understood, such moral self-fulfilment should therefore imply no spiritual hedonism.

Alle the same, the fact of evil becomes a great problem in Wang's optimistic philosophy.    Even the emotions, which have been the "scapegoat" in Chinese moralism, are regarded by him as functions of *liang-chih*:

> When the seven feelings (七情)[53] follow their natural course, they are functions of the intuitive knowledge (*liang-chih*), and cannot be divided into good or evil.  But at the same time one should not allow them to have any attachment (to things) because such attachment on the part of any one of them constitutes selfish desire and obscures the *liang-chih*.[54]

Towards the end of his life, Wang propounded "Four Maxims" which were to arouse great controversy after his death.    These read:

1. The absence of good and evil characterizes the original substance of the heart.
2. The presence of good and evil characterizes its exercise of thought (or volition).
3. The knowledge of good and evil characterizes its innate knowledge.
4. The doing of good and ridding of evil characterizes its correction of things.[55]

A    logical interpretation of the First Maxim would imply that Wang regarded human nature, which he identifies with both *li* (reason) and *hsin* (heart), as being originally neither good nor

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52. Paul Tillich, *Morality and Beyond* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 29.
53. These refer to pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate and desire.
54. *Ch'uan-hsi lu* 3, in Chan's full translation, *Instructions for Practical Living* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 229.
55. *Ibid.,* p. 244. The translation given here, however, is direct from the Chinese.

evil.   This was the interpretation of Wang Chi 王畿, a disciple
of Shou-jen, who favours complete "spontaneity" or non-inter-
ference with the heart (or mind).   Such an attitude brought about
many abuses, together with a disdain for moral self-cultivation.
Another disciple, Ch'ien Te-hung 錢德洪, argues that distinctions
between good and evil exist, and that moral efforts are required
to do good and overcome evil.   The difficulty, of course, lies in
the seeming self-contradictoriness of the Four Maxims, and
of the First Maxim with regard to Shou-jen's constant teaching
that true knowledge of the heart—knowledge united with action
—is sufficient for the attainment of sagehood.   A later scholar,
Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲 (1610—1695), explains that the First
Maxim refers merely to a certain stage of personal development,
at which neither good nor bad volitions arise.   The misunder-
standing has been taking the "post-stirring" stage of *liang-chih*
for the "pre-stirring" stage, which means, confusing volitions
or moral activities with the principle of these activities, the heart
or mind itself.[56]   While the suggestion of "personal develop-
ment" is not entirely satisfying, the distinction between "pre-
stirring" and "post-stirring" is an important one.   It seems
that Chinese thinkers have usually insisted on the basic goodness
of the human heart as a fundamental principle of morality, in
a system in which a supra-human principle, even if present,
has always been ambiguous.   In spite of his logical bent, Hsün-

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56.   See *Ming-ju hsüeh-an* 明儒学案 (Philosophical Records of the Ming Scholars),
      1: 10.   This work is available in Chinese only.   Even today, writers are
      not agreed on what Wang Shou-jen (Yang-ming) meant by his First Axiom.
      Ch'ien Mu 錢穆 approves of the explanation given by Wang Chi.   See
      *Sung-Ming Li-hsüeh kai-shu* (*Essentials of Sung-Ming Philosophy*, (3rd ed.,
      Taipei, 1962), p. 199.

tzu, like Wang Ch'ung after him, has never adequately explained how a basically bad human nature can be transformed into a sage. For orthodox Confucianism knows nothing of "grace"— as does Christianity. As far as Wang Shou-jen is concerned, all we can say is that, had he not died at the age of 56, he might have left us a lucid explanation of his Four Maxims.

The difference between the "pre-stirring" and "post-stirring" states of the heart or mind is important because of the implicit recognition of freedom and its exercise, which alone can confer a moral quality on our interior or exterior activity. This is fundamental to any moral system, and that is why, we may say, the mystery of evil resides in that of freedom. In discussing "The Theological Concept of *Concupiscentia*", Karl Rahner points out the essentially "natural" character of "concupiscentia", as something immediately given with human nature, even in its "pure" state. Speaking in existentialist terms of the human person as "man in so far as he freely disposes of himself by his decision", and of human nature as "all that in man which must be given prior to this disposal", he describes "theological" *concupiscentia* as a tension or dualism between "person" and "nature":

> There is much in man which always remains in concrete fact somehow impersonal, impenetrable and unilluminated for his existential decision; merely endured and not freely acted out. It is this dualism between person and nature... that we call concupiscence in the theological sense. While it does... find its concrete experiential expression in a dualism of spirituality and sensibility, it is not identical with the latter.[57]

This *concupiscentia* cannot be qualified as "morally evil", since it precedes the free decision. Rahner, however, is aware that,

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57. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* I, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

in Romans 6-8, "concupiscence" has been termed "sin", ἁμαρ-
τία. He reasons, therefore, that it can be called "evil" in one
sense: in so far as it is only present in man in its concrete form,
in virtue of "the Fall of the first man", as an *experienced* contra-
diction in man himself, admittedly so according to Paul, Augus-
tine, the great Scholastics,the Reformers and Pascal. In this
case, it is the "concupiscence", not of "pure nature", but of
"fallen nature".[58] As regards moral endeavour as "recovery"
of a certain "integrity", he also makes a distinction between
the "integrity" of Adam in Paradise, and the recovered "inno-
cence" of the perfect Christian:

> In Adam the person's freedom... made it possible for him exhaustively
> to engage his nature both in a good and in an evil direction. The
> freedom of ... the (Christian) saint is the freedom of a man who has
> succeeded in surrendering his whole being... to God totally.[59]

Human fallibility, after all, is related to man's finite, created
freedom, without which there can be no love in mutual friendship
between God and the creature. That is why, if the mystery of
evil is rooted in that of freedom, freedom, in turn, is rooted
in the mystery of love. Besides, from the Christian viewpoint,
it is yet another mystery which distinguishes between Neo-
Confucian and Christian answers to the problem of evil:

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58. *Ibid.*, Although there is no "primordial Fall" in orthodox Chinese thought,
     there has been, in popular Buddhism, a tendency to regard human beings
     as having been originally good, but having later become evil in the course
     of history. According to some popular texts, the dividing line came at
     the end of the Chou dynasty (early 3rd cent. BC). This idea probably
     derived from that of *kalpa* (world era) in philosophical Buddhism. But
     the Confucians did not explicitly discuss such a possibility, although they
     usually acclaimed the goodness of former sages, and decried the moral
     degeneration of their own days. See Eberhard, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
59. Karl Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

the mystery of the Cross of Christ. Without eradicating evil, it gives meaning to suffering, and strength to the sinner repentant of he evil he has posited through his fallibility, and fallibility—or, technically and specifically, "concupiscence" —is, after all, "the form in which the Christian experiences Christ's sufferings and suffers them himself to the end".[60]

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60.   *Ibid.*, p. 382.