

REVIEW ARTICLE

“Few Are Able to Appreciate the Flavours”: Translating the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong**

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I subscribe to the view that one’s depth of understanding of a text is closely related to one’s familiarity with the historical debates and dialogues of which it is a part.¹ However, some texts can, to a greater or lesser extent, but pried apart from their particular historical roles. For example, a contemporary undergraduate from any part of the world can read a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* or the *Symposium* of Plato and get a lot out of it that is not mere projection, even without learning much about the context of origin or later influence of these works.² In contrast, it is hard to get anything at all out of certain works without knowing what meaning they have had for particular historical communities. The *Daxue* 大學 and the *Zhongyong* 中庸 would be two examples of works that are perhaps

* I am grateful to Chu Kwok Fan and Justin Tiwald for helpful comments on the draft of this review.

¹ As Hans-Georg Gadamer argues in *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Continuum, 2004), any statement is meaningful only against a horizon of significance, a background of concepts and claims that constitute the worldview of the text. The object of interpretation or translation is to produce a partial “fusion of horizons” between the interpreter’s worldview and that of the text.

² I hasten to add that the student’s understanding would be greatly deepened by an appreciation of these factors, and that it would be hard to responsibly teach the works without some understanding of them.

impossible to read “by themselves.” In fact, we cannot translate (or even Romanize) their titles without getting embroiled in interpretive controversies. The Han-dynasty commentator Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 states that the former title should be read “*Taixue*,” the “Highest Learning,” because it is a “recording of wide learning [that] can be used to conduct government” (p. 43). In contrast, Zhu Xi 朱熹, the Song-dynasty synthesizer of orthodox Neo-Confucianism, argued that “*Daxue*” meant the “Greater Learning” appropriate to adults, as contrasted with the “Lesser Learning” given to youngsters. (The use of 大學 to mean “university” obviously grew out of this understanding.) All children should be educated in the Lesser Learning, which inculcates useful skills and virtuous habits by teaching “ritual, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and mathematics” (p. 127) along with etiquette and ritual. Children of aristocrats, along with the talented among the common people, go on to study the “Greater Learning,” which involves “thorough investigation of principle, rectifying the mind, cultivating the self, and bringing order to the people” (p. 127). We might say that the Lesser Learning teaches the *what* of everyday ethics, whereas the Greater Learning teaches the *why*. The disagreements between Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi over how to interpret the title reflect broader disagreements over the significance of the text as a whole. For Zheng Xuan, the *Taixue* is the learning appropriate to great matters of government. For Zhu Xi, the *Daxue*, while it certainly has political implications, is primarily a guide to individual ethical cultivation. (And, for all the debate over the meaning of “*Daxue*,” the interpretation of the title of the *Zhongyong* “is by far the more problematic” of the two [p. 181].)

When thoughtful scholars offer and argue passionately for widely different interpretations of a text, it is an infallible indicator that the text is important to their culture. This is certainly the case here. As Ian Johnston and Wang Ping note in the invaluable volume under review, the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* are, despite their brevity, “of particular and enduring importance in Confucian philosophy” (p. 1). Johnston and Wang’s *Daxue and Zhongyong* is a rich resource for appreciating these works and the complexity of the discussions around them. The General Introduction (pp. 1–15) gives a brief sketch of the origin, intellectual influence and general themes of each work, along with a presentation of Johnston and Wang’s translation strategy. The next two sections of the volume are on the *Daxue* (pp. 19–177) and the *Zhongyong* (pp. 181–493), respectively. The structures of these two sections are parallel. (a) Each opens with a more detailed Introduction to the specific classic, discussing its title, origin, structure, and major themes. (b) Following this there is the Chinese text of the classic as found in the *Liji* 禮記, along with the Han-dynasty commentary of Zheng Xuan, the Tang-dynasty subcommentary of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (both from the *Commentary and Subcommentary on the Thirteen Classics, Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏), and (on facing pages) an English translation of the classic and commentaries. As Johnston and Wang note, Zheng Xuan’s commentary is the most brief, and is primarily philological in nature, concerned with the meanings of key terms. Kong Yingda’s subcommentary (so-called because it is, in a way, a commentary on Zheng Xuan’s commentary) is a much more expansive literary-historical interpretation of the text. (c) Next, we are given the Chinese text of the classic as found in the *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books (Sishu jizhu* 四書集注), along with Zhu Xi’s commentary, and English translations on facing pages. Zhu Xi’s commentary is much more

concerned with the philosophical implications of the text: what does it tell us about ethical cultivation, human nature, virtue, and the Way to live? For both (b) and (c), the translations of the classic reflect the interpretations of the surrounding commentaries, but Johnston and Wang also provide their own interpretive comments and footnotes from time to time. At the end of the book are three appendices: “The Origin of the *Liji*,” “Commentaries and Translations,” and “Terminology.” Finally, there are a Bibliography (primary and secondary sources in Chinese and English) and an Index.

The interpretive complexities surrounding the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* are partially due to the changing roles that they have played in the Confucian canon. Both were among the diverse texts that were incorporated into the *Record of Rites (Liji)* during the Han dynasty. They thereby achieved canonical status as part of the *Five Classics (Wujing 五經)*. However, the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* were not initially singled out as particularly important essays within the corpus of the *Five Classics*. The commentary of Zheng Xuan and the subcommentary by Kong Yingda treat the two as merely portions of the *Liji*. However, early Neo-Confucians in the Tang dynasty, particularly Han Yu 韓愈 and Li Ao 李翱, took a special interest in the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong*, singling them out as individual texts. Then, as part of his reorganization of the Confucian curriculum, Zhu Xi made these two brief works parts of the *Four Books (Sishu 四書)*, which were intended to give a more concise, accessible, and ethically relevant introduction to Confucian doctrine than had the *Five Classics*. Zhu Xi also substantially edited and rearranged the text of the *Daxue*. (Zhu Xi’s editing of the *Zhongyong* text was much less extensive.) Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the *Four Books* became the basis of the civil service examinations in the early fourteenth century and remained so for the next 600 years. So influential has Zhu Xi’s interpretation been that many casual readers today do not even know that Zhu Xi substantially altered the *Liji* version of the texts. In addition, many people assume that the key phrase *ge wu* 格物 from the *Daxue* must mean something like “investigating things,” the interpretation Zhu Xi gives it.

According to Zhu Xi, the *Daxue* consists of a brief opening “Classic” section, which records the words of Confucius, and then several chapters of “Commentary” written by his disciple Zeng Shen 曾參. However, as Johnston and Wang note, there is no basis for these attributions (p. 21). The Classic section includes a famous set of interlocking statements, beginning with,

The ancients, in wishing to manifest luminous virtue in the world, first brought good order to their states. In wishing to bring good order to their states, they first regulated their households. In wishing to regulate their households, they first cultivated themselves. In wishing to cultivate themselves, they first rectified their minds. In wishing to rectify their minds, they first made their intentions *cheng* 誠 (true, genuine, sincere). In wishing to make their intentions *cheng* 誠, they first extended their knowledge to the limit. Extending knowledge to the limit lies in [*ge wu* 格物]. (p. 135, brackets mine)

This seems to give us a step by step guide to ethical cultivation, with the foundation being *ge wu*. Unfortunately, the received text of the *Daxue* never gives us a hint of what *ge wu* means. Zhu Xi believes that there had once been a chapter of the Commentary explaining

ge wu, but that it was now lost. However, Zhu Xi helpfully provides a paraphrase of what he thinks the missing chapter said. In order to understand Zhu Xi's interpretation of *ge wu*, we must familiarize ourselves with the distinctive metaphysical assumptions of Neo-Confucianism, according to which everything that exists has two aspects: *li* 理 (conventionally translated "principle") and *qi* 氣 (variously translated as "ether," "psycho-physical stuff," and in other equally unsatisfactory ways). "Principle" is the structure or pattern of everything that exists, and *qi* is the "stuff" that gives it spatio-temporal location. Each thing (from a speck of dust to Confucius himself) possesses the complete endowment of principle, but entities are speciated, individuated, and evaluated by having different endowments of *qi*. Let's put that in more concrete terms. Speciation: humans are distinct from flowers because humans have a more "clear" *qi* than plants, and hence are able to manifest more of the principle (as reflected in humans' more complex repertoire of behaviours and responses to other creatures). Individuation: two otherwise identical French Bulldogs are distinct entities because each has an allotment of *qi* that occupies a different region of space and/or time. Evaluation: although Robber Zhi 盜跖 and sage-king Shun 舜 have *qi* that is similar enough to make them both humans, and although they equally and fully possess principle, Shun is a better person because his *qi* is more clear, allowing the principle to manifest itself more fully, as opposed to the turbid *qi* of Robber Zhi. Although the level of clarity of one's *qi* correlates with the quality of one's character, neither *qi* nor character is fixed. Humans endowed with turbid *qi* can choose to clarify their *qi*, and become better people, through ethical cultivation, while those with comparatively clear *qi* can allow it to become turbid through lack of continued ethical effort.

This ingenious and elaborate metaphysics is nowhere developed in any of the *Four Books*, but it provides Neo-Confucians with a system that is powerful and flexible enough to interpret otherwise puzzling aspects of the classics. Consider the obscure phrase that opens the *Daxue*: the Way of greater learning lies in 明明德. Zhu Xi glosses this as follows:

"Bright Virtue" (*ming de* 明德) is something that humans get from Heaven. It is spiritual and unclouded and is equipped with the mass of principles (*li* 理) in order to respond to the myriad affairs. However, because of the limitations of their endowment of *qi*, and obscurations due to human desires, there are times when it is darkened. Nonetheless, the brightness of its original substance is never fully extinguished. Thus, learners should follow its manifestations and brighten them (*ming zhi* 明之) in order to return to its beginning [state].³

Zhu Xi identifies "brightening" the manifestations of principle with the process of "extending one's knowledge," referred to later in the Classic section, and interprets this in terms of the metaphors of "extension" found in another of the *Four Books*, the *Mengzi* 孟子. Mengzi states that we all innately have certain paradigmatic ethical reactions, but we must learn to "extend" these reactions by recognizing the similarities between the situations where we currently have them to those where we do not, but should have them. For

³ Translation mine. Cf. Johnston and Wang, p. 137.

example, a king spares an ox being led to slaughter out of compassion for its suffering, but the king must learn to extend this compassion to his own subjects, who are suffering as a result of the king's wars of aggression and exorbitant taxes (1A7). A scholar will refuse to accept a small gift given with contempt, but must learn that it is just as shameful to accept a large salary in exchange for his acquiescence with unethical policies (6A10).

At this point, the reader will be forgiven if she has forgotten that this digression was intended to help explain why Zhu Xi interprets *ge wu* as he does. His gloss reads, "*Ge* 格 is equivalent to *zhi* 至 (to reach, arrive at, extend). *Wu* 物 is like *shi* 事 (matters, affairs). To investigate thoroughly the principles of matters and things [窮至事物之理] is to wish to reach this extreme point definitively" (p. 139, parenthetical comments in original, bracketed phrase mine). Here, Johnston and Wang follow James Legge's seminal translation of *ge wu* as "investigating things."⁴ They cannot be faulted for using what has become the stock translation of the phrase: doing so helps to make the work accessible to readers of other translations. However, a careful reading of Zhu Xi's gloss indicates that *ge wu* is not so much the process of investigating things, as it is the *terminus ad quem* of that process. We might more literally translate it as "reaching things," in the sense of having extended one's understanding of principles to the point that it encompasses all the situations and activities that one encounters.

Although Zhu Xi's interpretation is ingenious, it is far from unquestionable. First, the Buddhist-influenced metaphysics of Neo-Confucianism is alien to the pre-Qin philosophers. The term *li* occurs precisely zero times in all of the *Analects*, but is found repeatedly in Zhu Xi's commentary on it, beginning with the second passage of Book 1. The character *li* is found in only three passages in the *Mengzi* (5B1, 6A7, 7B19), and it is there used in its ordinary sense of "well-patterned." Typical is the use in which someone is described as 不理於口, "not fluent in speaking." This sentence hardly cries out for the assumption that there is some metaphysical principle of the universe present in everything.⁵ Second, even within the Chinese tradition there have been serious competitors to Zhu Xi's view. Consider the much more prosaic (and common-sensical) way that Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, respectively, interpret 明明德: this "speaks of clearly displaying one's perfect virtue," and "says that the Way of highest learning lies in clearly displaying the radiance of one's virtue" (p. 45). Furthermore, whether we agree with it or not, Kong Yingda provides an interesting alternative gloss on *ge wu*:

Ge 格 is equivalent to *lai* 來 (to come, arrive). . . . If you know good profoundly, then you come to good things; if you know evil profoundly, then you come to bad

⁴ James Legge, *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean* (1893; reprint, New York: Dover Books, 1971), p. 358. Legge's brief but thoughtful footnote on *ge wu* is very much worth reading.

⁵ For further arguments that there is a fundamental discontinuity between pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist Confucian philosophy, see Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2000).

things. That is to say, good things follow a person doing good and come as a response to this whilst bad things follow a person acting badly and also come as a response to this. This says that good and bad come about as a result of what people love. (p. 51)

Although he is outside the parameters Johnston and Wang set for themselves, it is worth noting that the Ming dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming 王陽明 offered a third interpretation of *ge wu*:

. . . extending one's knowledge must lie in rectifying one's thoughts [about things]. A thing or object (*wu* 物) is a task or affair (*shi* 事). A thought always arises in regard to some affair or other. The affair that is the object of a thought is called a thing. To rectify (*ge* 格) is to correct. It refers to correcting whatever is not correct and returning to what is correct. Correcting whatever is not correct means to get rid of what is bad. Returning to what is correct means to do what is good. This is what it means to rectify.⁶

In summary, on Zhu Xi's interpretation, *ge wu* means understanding the moral structure of the universe by "reaching" the principles in "things" (actions, situations, and individual entities). According to Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, *ge wu* is about "things" in the sense of consequences. One who is fond of and versed in bad things "causes to come" bad things, while one who is fond of and versed in good things causes good things to come to him. On Wang Yangming's interpretation, the "things" in questions are the daily activities that one engages in, and there is nothing more fundamental ethically than "rectifying them," extending (in the sense of exercising) one's innate understanding and dealing with them appropriately. Unfortunately for those of us fond of definitive answers, each interpretation is possible, at least grammatically.⁷ "Ge" is such a slippery term that David S. Nivison described it "a philologist's delight," and asserted that "[n]o one will ever know what it really meant in its *locus classicus*."⁸ One of the contributions of Johnston and Wang's translation is that it makes it possible for a wider audience to appreciate this diversity within the Confucian tradition.

In order to see what is distinctive about the Johnston and Wang translation, let us compare how it and several other translations handle the opening of the *Zhongyong*: 天命之謂性，率性之謂道，脩道之謂教。 On the one hand, this is the sort of text that we

⁶ Philip J. Ivanhoe, trans., *Readings from the Lu-Wang School of Neo-Confucianism* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009), pp. 170–71.

⁷ For "ge" in the sense of "to rectify," see *Mengzi* 4A20: 惟大人為能格君心之非。 For "ge" in the sense of "to reach," see *Documents* 尚書, "Canon of Yao" 堯典: 帝堯……光被四表，格于上下。 (For a translation, see James Legge, *The Shoo King*, vol. 3 of *The Chinese Classics* [reprint; Taibei: SMC Publishing, 1991], p. 15.) For "ge" in the sense of "to come," see *Documents*, "Pan Geng A" 盤庚上: 王若曰: 格汝眾，予告汝訓。 (For a translation, see Legge, *ibid.*, p. 225.)

⁸ David S. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), p. 225.

would expect any student to be able to translate after a year of Literary Chinese. At the same time, as the efforts below demonstrate, it presents immense difficulties of interpretation. Victorian missionary James Legge was very sympathetic to what he saw as the meaning of the preceding lines:

What Heaven has conferred is called THE NATURE; an accordance with this nature is called THE PATH *of duty*; the regulation of this path is called INSTRUCTION.⁹

After quoting from some Chinese commentaries (particularly that of Zhu Xi, on whom Legge is generally fairly reliant), Legge remarks,

What is taught seems to be this:—To man belongs a moral nature, conferred on him by Heaven or God, by which he is constituted a law to himself. But as he is prone to deviate from the path in which, according to his nature, he should go, wise and good men—sages—have appeared, to explain and regulate this, helping all by their instructions to walk in it.¹⁰

Legge cannot be faulted for having an interpretive lens; it is a commonplace of hermeneutic theory that one cannot interpret without a conceptual framework of some kind. However, we might worry about the extent to which his particular lens distorts the original text. Note, for example, the easy transition he makes from “Heaven” to “God,” and the invocation of Biblical language (compare “law to himself” with Romans 2:14; compare “walk in it” with Zechariah 3:7). Nonetheless, in my judgement, Legge’s translation itself (if not his paraphrase) is quite defensible. In addition, there is certainly a general structural similarity between the views of Western monotheists and Confucians, both of whom hold that a higher power (of some kind) confers a distinctive nature (of some sort) upon humans; that ethical behaviour (which in both traditions is described using a metaphor of a “path” or “way”) consists in following this nature; and that genuine education consists in helping humans to follow this path.

It is not surprising that there should be such convergence, because early civilizations share a number of structural features. To begin with, they are agrarian, and as such they are very close to the natural world of plants and animals. Plants and animals clearly do have a “nature” that is largely constant. Variations within that nature are generally along a spectrum from creatures that more or less fully instantiate it (e.g., a skinny, diseased cow vs. a large, healthy cow). Significant deviations from that nature are generally horrific and disadvantageous (like a two-headed calf). It is easy to extrapolate from this to the conclusions that humans, too, differ only in terms of how well or poorly they realize their natures. Mengzi, whose understanding of Confucianism was declared canonical by the Neo-Confucians, made this explicit with his frequent use of agricultural metaphors for human nature:

⁹ Legge, *Confucian Analects*, p. 383.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 383–84.

In years of plenty, most young men are gentle; in years of poverty, most young men are violent. It is not that the potential that Heaven confers on them varies like this. They are like this because of what sinks and drowns their hearts. Consider barley. Sow the seeds and cover them. The soil is the same and the time of planting is also the same. They grow rapidly, and by the time of the summer solstice they have all ripened. Although there are some differences, these are due to the richness of the soil and to unevenness in the rain and in human effort. Hence, in general, things of the same kind are all similar. Why would one have any doubt about this when it comes to humans alone? We and the sage are of the same kind.¹¹

We find a similar use of an agricultural metaphor in Jesus's parable of the sower: "Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground. . . ."¹² I am suggesting that this similar use of an agricultural metaphor is not coincidental, but is grounded in the common experience of ancient civilizations in which agricultural life is close to the experience of almost everyone. These sorts of metaphors go hand in hand with a view of the proper path of life as determined by our "nature." Of course, we must never forget that there are massive and significant differences in how these agricultural metaphors and notions of human nature play out in their respective cultures. (Jesus, for example, goes on to compare the "fowls of the air" to "Satan.") I think it would be wrong, though, to fail to see the general structural similarity of the metaphors.

However, there are those who would object strenuously to the preceding interpretation as applied to Confucian texts like the *Zhongyong*. In a series of books, Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall have defended the view that ancient Confucians were committed to radical innovation.¹³ Certainly, we all agree that Confucians have always thought that we must apply the traditions and wisdom of the past in flexible and imaginative ways.

¹¹ Bryan W. Van Norden, trans., *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2008), p. 150 (6A7.1–2). For just a few of Mengzi's other uses of agricultural metaphors, see 2A2.16 (the farmer from Song who pulls on his sprouts in a misguided effort to make them grow), 2A6 (the sprouts of virtue displayed in our reaction to the child about to fall into a well), and 6A8 (the comparison of bad character to the deforestation of Ox Mountain).

¹² Mark 4:3–5ff. King James Version.

¹³ I think the clearest general statement of their view may be found in David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998). See my review in *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 2 (Summer 2000), pp. 288–89. But see also Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), and Hall and Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).

This is why Confucius allows the substitution of the less expensive caps of silk for caps of hemp in a particular ceremony (*Analects* 9.3), and why he gives opposite answers to two disciples who ask the same question (11.22). But there is a significant difference between flexible application and wholesale innovation, and Confucius is very explicit that he prefers to “transmit rather than innovate” (7.1).¹⁴ Confucius sees the sage as like an extremely talented classical musician or conductor, constrained by the score, but showing talent and imagination in its interpretation. In contrast, Ames and Hall portray Confucians as similar to jazz musicians, who appropriate the past only as a springboard to original improvisations. This interpretation is reflected in *Focusing the Familiar*, their translation of the *Zhongyong*, where the opening line is rendered thus:

What *tian* 天 commands (*ming* 命) is called natural tendencies (*xing* 性); drawing out these natural tendencies is called the proper way (*dao* 道); improving upon this way is called education (*jiao* 教).¹⁵

Ames and Hall provide us with seven footnotes on these three sentences, largely devoted to trying to convince the reader that the text does not mean what it seems to mean. One of their key arguments is their gloss on *xiu* 修, which they translate above as “improving upon”:

Xiu 修 means “adorn, arrange, repair, attend to,” and “elaborate,” as well as “cultivate.” It would seem to refer to “cultivating” in the sense of human cultural activity rather than nurturing the growth of something already predetermined. Zheng Xuan glosses this character as “building and broadening it, the human being extends and beautifies it 治而廣之，人放傲之，” perhaps alluding to the *Analects* 15.29 passage, “It is the person who is able to broaden the way 人能弘道.” Zheng’s commentary suggests a sense of “trailblazing” rather than simply repairing an existing roadway.¹⁶

However, there are several insurmountable difficulties with the argument of Ames and Hall. First, I don’t see how to get the meaning of “extends and beautifies” out of *fang xiao* 放傲. Second, they have misquoted Zheng Xuan. Here is what Zheng Xuan actually says about the meanings of *xiu* and *jiao*: 脩，治也。治而廣之，人放傲之，是曰教。Johnston and Wang correctly translate this as “*Xiu* 脩 equates with *zhi* 治 (to put in order, regulate). To regulate and expand it (i.e. the Way), and for others to imitate it, is called ‘teaching.’ ” (p. 215) In other words, Ames and Hall have mistakenly identified Zheng Xuan’s gloss on “teaching” as if it were his gloss on “cultivating.” The notion of “expanding”

¹⁴ For a brilliant discussion of the complex and ambivalent attitudes toward innovation found in ancient China, see Michael Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹⁵ Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2001), p. 89.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117, n. 6.

the Way calls for explanation, and I think Ames and Hall are correct that there is a similarity between the *guang zhi* 廣之 of Zheng Xuan's commentary and the phrase *hong dao* 弘道 of *Analects* 15.29: 人能弘道，非道弘人. However, their interpretation of 15.29 is, at best, dubious. They paraphrase the *Analects* passage as meaning that the “human being has an active, creative role in continuing, broadening, and extending the [Way], such that the [Way] is historically composite and cumulative, the human unfolding of chosen areas of importance. . . .”¹⁷ Indeed, they even go so far as to compare the Confucian sage to the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, for whom personal creativity is a primary value.¹⁸ But before we jump to the conclusion that *hong* 弘 means “innovate,” we should consider how it is actually used in ancient texts. We have a nice illustration of *hong* in the “Kang Gao” 康誥 chapter of the *Documents*, where the King gives one of his dukes very specific instructions on ruling, and then enjoins him to *hong wang* 弘王, which in this context clearly means “magnify the King” (or, more idiomatically, “bring glory to the King”).¹⁹ Consequently, *Analects* 15.29 would mean “Humans can glorify the Way; it is not that the Way can glorify humans.” Traditional commentators, while disagreeing about the details, have given similar interpretations. Cai Mo 蔡謨 (Jin dynasty) is representative: “The Way is silent and without action, and requires human beings in order to be put into practice. Human beings are able to harmonize with the Way—this is why the text reads: ‘Human beings are able to broaden [弘] the Way.’ The Way does not harmonize with humans—this is why the text reads, ‘It is not the Way that broadens human beings.’”²⁰ On the assumption that metaphors of enlarging or expanding mean something similar in Zheng Xuan's commentary, he is asserting that teaching involves “expanding” the Way in the sense of glorifying it, making it well known and respected, propagating it. Overall, Ames and Hall's *Focusing the Familiar* is perhaps best thought of as an imaginative palimpsest of the *Zhongyong*, much like Ezra Pound's *Unwobbling Pivot*,²¹ rather than a translation as those are ordinarily conceived.²²

¹⁷ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*, p. 229.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁹ For a somewhat different translation, see Legge, *The Shoo King*, pp. 387–88.

²⁰ Translation from Edward Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2003), pp. 185–86. This passage from Cai Mo survives in the *Lunyu yishu* 論語義疏 of Huang Kan 皇侃. Ironically, Zheng Xuan, whom Ames and Hall cite as evidence, and Kong Yingda, treat 弘 as equivalent to 大 in their commentaries on *Analects* 15.29 (not as equivalent to 變, 易, or 化 as one would expect if the Ames and Hall interpretation were correct). Zheng and Kong argue that the point of the passage is that a great person perceives what is great in the Way and follows it, while a petty person follows the Way without understanding it, and cannot be made into a great person by the Way. 仁者見之謂之仁，知者見之謂之知，是人才大者，道隨之大也，……百姓則日用而不知，是人才小者，道亦隨小，而道不能大其人也。(Kong Yingda, *Shisanjing zhushu*.)

²¹ See Ezra Pound, *Confucius: The Unwobbling Pivot, The Great Digest, The Analects* (1951; (Continued on next page)

Turning to something much more sober, Daniel K. Gardner's *The Four Books* is an elegant, readable, and accurate translation of selected passages from these works. He renders the opening of the *Mean* thus:

What heaven decrees is called “the nature”; to follow the nature is called “the Way”; to cultivate the Way is called “instruction.”²³

What makes Gardner's translation particularly useful is that here, and for almost every selection from the *Four Books*, he provides a translation or paraphrase of Zhu Xi's commentary:

Heaven endows each of the myriad creatures with both psychophysical stuff [*qi*] and principle. In the case of humans, principle is one with human nature. To accord with human nature, thus, is to accord with the Way. But most people will find according with human nature difficult because their psychophysical stuff, which differs with each individual, almost always obscures the nature. This is where cultivation comes in.²⁴

When read in conjunction with Gardner's “Conclusion,” which gives an overview of Zhu Xi's metaphysics (explaining key terms such as “principle” and “psychophysical stuff”),

(Note 21—*Continued*)

reprint, New York: New Directions, 1969). Pound also edited the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa into the book *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (1936; reprint, San Francisco: City Lights, 2001), and the imaginative folk etymologies of this work are reminiscent of Hall and Ames's approach to etymology in *Thinking through Confucius*. Thus, we should perhaps not be surprised when we see that Ames propagates the cocktail-party myth that the Chinese word for “crisis” is “literally a correlation of ‘danger-opportunity’” (Ames, “A State-of-the-Art Reflection on Chinese Philosophy,” in Amy Olberding, ed., *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 8, no. 1 [Fall 2008], p. 3). For a debunking of this myth, see Victor H. Mair, “Danger + Opportunity ≠ Crisis” (<http://www.pinyin.info/chinese/crisis.html>), accessed 1 October 2012.

²² For critiques of the philosophical views found in the work of Hall and Ames, see May Sim, *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Robert Cummings Neville, *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000); and Stephen A. Wilson, “Conformity, Individuality, and the Nature of Virtue: A Classical Confucian Contribution to Contemporary Ethical Reflection,” in Bryan W. Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 94–115.

²³ Daniel K. Gardner, *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2007), p. 110. See also my review of this work in *Dao* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 103–6.

²⁴ Gardner, *The Four Books*, p. 110 (brackets mine). This particular commentary is Gardner's paraphrase of Zhu Xi's view, not a translation.

the translation allows students to see what each of the *Four Books* has actually meant for Confucians over the last six centuries.

Where Gardner is simple and direct, Andrew Plaks's *Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung* is an expansive translation, intended to be maximally accessible to contemporary readers. As he explains, he aims "to reproduce what may be termed 'equivalent utterances', that is, approximations of semantic and syntactic values in context rather than strict matching of lexical units" so as to express "how a given idea would normally be expressed in English."²⁵ Plaks translates *Zhongyong* 1 as follows:

By the term "nature" we speak of that which is imparted by the ordinance of Heaven;

by "the Way" we mean that path which is in conformance with the intrinsic nature of man and things;

and by "moral instruction" we refer to the process of cultivating man's proper way in the world.²⁶

Plaks acknowledges that his reading is deeply influenced by Zhu Xi. He not only accepts Zhu Xi's reorganization of the *Daxue*, but he quotes Zhu Xi's "reconstructed" chapter of "missing" commentary on *ge wu*, and states that ". . . the notion Chu Hsi expresses here of extrapolating from one's inner experience of reality to a comprehensive understanding of the intrinsic principles governing all things in the world is fully consonant with the original vision of both the *Ta Hsüeh* and the *Chung Yung*."²⁷ I am slightly less sanguine about the consistency of Zhu Xi's metaphysics with any pre-Buddhist Chinese positions; however, Plaks is far from being a thoughtless follower of Zhu Xi or any other previous interpreter. Rather, he seeks to help the reader to appreciate the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* as texts of intrinsic and lasting significance, which "are as profound as they are subtle."²⁸ This is evident in his "Structural Analysis" of the opening line of the *Zhongyong*:

The first two [definitions], those explicating the key philosophical terms "nature" and "the Way", immediately catch the eye of the student of traditional Chinese thought. But it is the third, the redefinition of the word "moral instruction", that constitutes the real point of the opening passage. For here we are told that the Confucian act of moral instruction, the other side of the coin of self-cultivation, is to be understood as a process of perfecting (literally, "repairing" or "restoring") the Way—as if the Tao, the "Way" that has been defined immediately before this as *immanent* in the very nature of things imparted by the "ordinance" of Heaven, could be in need of any such repair. This is our first indication that the *Chung Yung*

²⁵ Andrew Plaks, *Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung (The Highest Order of Cultivation and On the Practice of the Mean)* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. xxxvi.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68, n. 5.2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxx.

will not be concerned with the ineffable substance of the cosmic Way—important as this may be for the ontological grounding of the Confucian ethical system—but, instead, with the concerted efforts required on the part of man to attain a more accessible kind of “Tao”, that is, to perfect his own way in the world.²⁹

This style of exegesis will be unfamiliar to many philosophers, but it is a well-established and valuable approach in literary studies, and one can learn much from Plaks’s often insightful observations. I, for one, found very illuminating Plaks’s explanation of why studying the *Daxue* was sometimes thought of as a subversive activity, despite the book’s canonical status.³⁰

Each of the preceding translations is valuable in its own way. However, each is dedicated primarily to giving one coherent line of interpretation of the two texts. There is nothing wrong with this, but it is somewhat ironic given the fact that the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* are texts particularly subject to multiple interpretations. In contrast, Johnston and Wang give us two translations, corresponding to the Zheng Xuan/Kong Yingda reading and the Zhu Xi interpretation:

What Heaven decrees is called “nature.” Complying with nature is called the “Way.” Properly practising the Way is called “teaching.” (p. 215)

What Heaven decrees is called “nature”; complying with nature is called “the Way”; regulating the Way is called “teaching.” (p. 407)

We see here some minor differences that are presumably due to insignificant proofreading lapses. (Even these are edifying to the beginning translator, because they show how many small points one must take into account.) The only significant disagreement is over how to render *xiu*: “properly practising” or “regulating”?

Johnston and Wang translate the *Liji* version of the *Zhongyong* in accordance with the general tenor of Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda’s commentaries, which read it (like the *Daxue*) as primarily a book intended for statesmen. Consequently, when Zheng Xuan states “*Xiu* 脩 equates with *zhi* 治” (p. 215), they read the latter term “in the sense of ‘administer’ which [they] have rendered somewhat freely as ‘properly practising,’ whether in terms of the self or in administration more generally” (p. 214). They paraphrase the relevant statement from the *Zhongyong* as follows: “The true Way is to follow this nature, to put it into practice, and by putting it to effective use, displaying it to others, so teaching them” (p. 214).

In contrast, Zhu Xi is very explicit that *xiu* is about cultivating one’s character:

If people each follow the spontaneous functioning of their nature, then, in their daily engagement with matters and things, there is nobody who does not have a proper path to follow. This, then, is what is called the Way (*dao* 道). *Xiu* 脩 is to regulate this [*pin jie zhi* 品節之]. Although nature and the Way are the same,

²⁹ Ibid., p. 74 (italics in original).

³⁰ Ibid., pp. xxv–xxvi.

natural endowment [*qi bing* 氣稟] is sometimes different, so there cannot but be the faults of “going beyond” and “not reaching.” The sage, because he acts in a way that is right for a person and regulates this [*pin jie zhi*], may be taken as a model in the world. This, then, is called teaching—for example, rites, music, punishments, government, and such-like. (p. 409, brackets mine)

Our human natures are perfectly good, identical with the proper Way to live, but because of the endowments of *qi* that embody our natures, most of us fail to be virtuous, acting either excessively or deficiently. *Xiu* is thus to reform our embodied natures through regulating practices (like ritual and punishments), so that we more fully realize our innate good nature. Using Johnston and Wang’s translation like this, to compare the differences (sometimes subtle, sometimes evident) between the Zheng Xuan/Kong Yingda interpretation and the Zhu Xi interpretation, will deepen any reader’s appreciation of the texts and open up new ways of looking at the world as refracted through the lenses they provide.

I have learned much from Johnston and Wang’s translations. However, translation is such a difficult art that it is inevitable that one will find places to disagree. To borrow the defence of Zhu Xi: “Although I am aware of my own foolishness . . . I have set aside my own lack of sophistication” (p. 131), and have dared to offer some suggestions. Let us start with one of the most enigmatic passages in the *Daxue*. Following Zhu Xi’s arrangement of the text, Chapter 6 of Zengzi’s 曾子 commentary states, “What is called making your intentions *cheng* 誠 (genuine, true, sincere) is to forbid deception in yourself [毋自欺也]—it is like hating a bad smell or loving a beautiful sight. This is called being content in yourself. Therefore, the noble man must act with care when he is alone” (p. 153, brackets mine). An intriguing statement, to be sure, but in what way is being *cheng* “like hating a bad smell or loving a beautiful sight”? Kong Yingda explains,

Like hating a bad smell refers to a foul odour which is to say that, if you see this person who does something evil, dislike and hate him like a person would hate the odour of a foul smell—[that is], the mind truly dislikes it and the mouth cannot express it.³¹ [*Like*] *loving a beautiful sight* says that, if you see something good and you like it, it is like a person loves a beautiful sight—the mind truly loves it, and the mouth cannot express it. That is to say, with respect to making one’s intentions *cheng* 誠, if one sees another person doing something good or bad, it is right that one must genuinely like or dislike it and not dissemble, for it is not possible for the outward appearance to falsely display love or hate when the mind within does not truly love or hate. (p. 55, italics and brackets in original)

So, according to Kong Yingda, being *cheng* is a matter of simple honesty or genuineness in one’s ethical reactions: one should hate evil like one hates a bad smell, in the sense that one has a strong negative reaction toward it that is evident in one’s behaviour, not just in one’s words. Similarly, one should love the good as fervently and evidently as one loves a

³¹ Instead of “and the mouth cannot express it,” I would suggest, “more than words can express.”

beautiful sight. Incidentally, I have yet to see a commentator (Chinese or Western) point out that “sight” here is *se* 色, which generally has sexual connotations in Literary Chinese (e.g., *Analects* 9.18: 吾未見好德如好色者也, “I have yet to see someone who loves Virtue like he loves sex”). This is not a trivial point. Readers who see the expression “beautiful sight” are likely to think of our pleasant but mild reaction to a pretty sunset, but the *Daxue* seems to have in mind something much more passionate and visceral.

Now, Johnston and Wang present Zhu Xi’s view as very similar to that of Kong Yingda. They state that *ziqu* 自欺 “is not self-deception in the usual sense” (pp. 32–33), and that Zhu Xi takes the injunction of this passage as simply, “there must be no dissembling” (p. 152). I submit that Zhu Xi’s view is a much more radical departure from that of Kong Yingda (and a more interesting ethical psychology). According to Zhu Xi, the previous chapter of the *Daxue* (Chapter 5 of the Commentary) describes the process by which one “investigates things” in order to “extend knowledge.” (This is the infamous “missing” chapter of the Commentary “restored” by Zhu Xi.)

What is meant by “extending knowledge to the limit lies in investigating things” is that, if we wish to extend our knowledge to the limit, this involves approaching things and thoroughly investigating their principle [in each case]. In all probability³² the intelligence of men’s minds is such that there is none without knowledge and, in the case of the world’s things, there is none without principle so, to the extent that these principles are not thoroughly investigated, then a man’s knowledge is incomplete. This is why the initial teaching of the greater learning must be to cause the person learning to approach all the things in the world and, on the basis of the principles which he already knows, to increase his thorough investigation of them in order to seek to reach this limit. (p. 151, bracketed phrase in original)

As Zhu Xi makes clear in his Preface to the work, knowledge here is primarily moral knowledge, knowledge of “what one ought to do in one’s role” (職分之所當為).³³ While coming to have ethical knowledge in this way is necessary for Virtue, it is not sufficient. One’s knowledge can be temporarily blocked by tempting desires and strong passions. (The *Daxue* gives examples of this in Chapter 7: “If the mind harbours anger and resentment, it does not attain this rectitude; if the mind harbours fear and terror, it does not attain this rectitude . . .” [p. 157].) In order to preserve one’s moral knowledge in the face of temptations and distractions, one must maintain reverence (*jing* 敬), a kind of focus on the

³² “In all probability” is not an accurate translation for *gai* 蓋 in this context. *Gai* can be a modal particle indicating uncertainty, but Zhu Xi does not wish to express any uncertainty about the fact that all humans have innate knowledge. It is a fundamental commitment of his worldview. Here, *gai* is functioning as a conjunction, warning the reader of a slight change in topic, roughly equivalent to the English “now”: “Now, the intelligence of men’s minds is such. . . .”

³³ Johnston and Wang render this phrase slightly differently: “what was appropriate for his situation” (p. 129).

principles of the Way that are found in our mind. Zhu Xi elsewhere describes it as “simply to collect your own mental energy and concentrate it on a certain spot.”³⁴ If we can maintain reverence, our *knowledge* of evil will match our *motivation* to avoid it as precisely as our recognition that a smell is noxious matches our repugnance for it; our *knowledge* of the good will match our *motivation* to pursue it as precisely as our recognition that a sight is alluring matches our attraction to it. In contrast, if we fail to maintain reverence, we will succumb to self-deception: we will abstractly “know” right from wrong, but we will be fooled by our own selfish material desires into pursuing the wrong things. This is well-described as *self*-deception because it is something we do to ourselves through our own lack of vigilance in identifying and uprooting our selfish motivations. In summary, Chapter 5 of the *Daxue* explains that in order to be virtuous, we must know what is right and wrong. Chapter 6 explains that, in addition to having knowledge, we must also make an effort to focus on that knowledge, to keep it active in the face of temptations. Now, see if Johnston and Wang’s translation of Zhu Xi’s summary of Chapter 6 makes this clear:

In fact, when the enlightenment of mind and body³⁵ has that which is not yet complete, then in what it brings forth, there must be an inability to truly use its strength and an acceptance that there is deception in oneself. Nevertheless, there are some who are already enlightened and yet are not careful about this. Then that which is enlightenment is not what one has and there will be no way of making progress towards the foundations of virtue. Therefore, what this chapter points out certainly carries on from the previous chapter and thoroughly examines it. (p. 153)

To some extent, clarity is in the eye of the beholder, but I would offer the following alternative translation:

If the enlightenment of the mind’s substance has not yet been fathomed, then there must be some expressions of this mind on which one is incapable of genuinely

³⁴ Daniel K. Gardner, trans., *Learning to Be A Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 174.

³⁵ “The enlightenment of mind and body” is a mistranslation of 心體之明. “Ti” 體, “substance,” is a technical term for Zhu Xi, which is used contrastively with “yong” 用, “function.” The classic examples are that water is “substance,” a wave is “function”; the eye is “substance,” seeing is the “function.” Consequently, “xin ti” 心體 means “the substance of the heart,” which is a way of referring to the Principles the heart is endowed with. The mistranslation is merely an oversight on Johnston and Wang’s part, though, as they elsewhere recognize the special sense of “ti” 體, as in Zhu Xi’s commentary on the Classic, where we find this: “Nevertheless, the brightness of its original substance will never die away” (p. 137). See also Zhu Xi’s commentary on *Zhongyong* 1.4, where he distinguishes between *dao zhi ti* 道之體, “the essence of the Way,” and *dao zhi yong* 道之用, “the use of the Way” (p. 411).

making an effort, so that one is reckless and deceives oneself. Nonetheless, one may already be enlightened, but not be attentive to it. Then one's enlightenment is still not something that one fully possesses, and one lacks the foundation for advancing in Virtue. Hence, the point of this chapter can be understood only as a continuation of the previous chapter.

We now see that *ziqu* 自欺 is much more than being a phoney to others (although it entails that). "Self-deception" is allowing your passions to obscure your ethical knowledge. Johnston and Wang's translations of Zhu Xi's commentary on the key passage does not help illuminate this, though:

What "deception in yourself" 自欺 means is to know that being good involves getting rid of evil, and yet what the mind gives forth is not true. . . . That is to say, if one who wishes to cultivate the self knows to become good by getting rid of his evil, then he ought truly to make use of his strength and forbid deception in himself. This causes his hatred of evil to be like the hatred of a bad smell and his love of goodness to be like the love of a beautiful sight. (p. 155)

Do we really understand from the preceding the connection between avoiding "deception in yourself" and causing your "hatred of evil to be like the hatred of a bad smell"? Consider, in contrast, my suggested translation of the same passage:

"Self deception" is to know to do good in order to eschew the bad, yet the expressions of the heart are not completely genuine. . . . This verse means that those who desire to cultivate themselves, when they know to do good in order to eschew the bad, then they should genuinely make an effort and forbid self-deception, making their hatred of the (ethically) hateful be like their hating a hateful smell, and their loving what is good like their loving a lovely sight.

In short, if I am right, Zhu Xi is drawing a distinction between the mere knowledge of right and wrong ("extending knowledge," which had been explained in Chapter 5) and being attentive to that knowledge (the state of *cheng*, which is described in Chapter 6). Consequently, for Zhu Xi, *cheng* is much more than avoiding "dissembling." It is the second part of a two-step view of self-cultivation: coming to have knowledge and then focusing on that knowledge to make it motivational in action. Interpreting Zhu Xi this way not only gives us a more nuanced understanding of his subtle views, it allows us to understand what Wang Yangming was criticizing with his doctrine of the "unity of knowledge and action" (*zhi xing he yi* 知行合一). Whereas Zhu Xi allowed for the possibility of those who know principle but do not follow it (because they have not yet achieved *cheng*), Wang flatly states, "[t]here never have been people who know but do not act. Those who 'know' but do not act simply do not yet know."³⁶ Wang insists that it is more than a technical, academic error to separate knowledge and action:

³⁶ Ivanhoe, *Readings from the Lu-Wang School*, p. 140.

. . . people today instead separate knowing and acting into two distinct tasks to perform and think that one must first know and only then can one act. They say, “Now I will perform the task of knowing, by studying and learning. Once I have attained real knowledge, I then will pursue the task of acting.” And so, till the end of their days, they never act, and till the end of their days, they never know. This is not a minor malady, nor did it arrive just yesterday. My current teaching regarding the unity of knowing and acting is a medicine directed precisely at this disease.³⁷

This criticism is directed at the view of knowledge that Zhu Xi’s commentary finds in the *Daxue*. Hence, it is crucial to be very precise in translating what Zhu Xi says about Chapters 5 and 6.

Turning to the *Zhongyong*, Chapter 1 famously states that, 是故君子戒慎乎其所不睹，恐懼乎其所不聞. Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda interpret this (correctly, I think) as, “This is why the noble man is on guard and cautious where he is not seen; this is why he is fearful and apprehensive where he is not heard” (p. 215). (In other words, the noble follows the Way even when no one is watching.) In contrast, as Johnston and Wang note, “Zhu Xi takes the verbs *du* 睹 and *wen* 聞 as active—it is about what the noble man does not see or hear rather than when he is not seen or heard” (p. 408). Translating the *Zhongyong* in accordance with Zhu Xi’s reading, they give,

[a1] The Way is something that cannot be deviated from, even for an instant; what can be deviated from is not the Way. *This is why the noble man is on guard and cautious about what he does not see; it is why he is fearful and apprehensive about what he does not hear.* [b1] There is nothing more visible than what is hidden; there is nothing more apparent than what is obscure. Therefore, the noble man is careful about his inner self. [a2] When joy and anger, sorrow and happiness have not yet arisen, call it “the centre.” [b2] When they have arisen, and yet are all in perfect balance, call it “harmony.” (p. 407, section lettering and italics mine)

Zhu Xi’s commentary paraphrases the italicized line thus: “This is why the mind-heart of the noble man constantly preserves [a state of] respect and awe. Even if he does not see or hear something, he also does not dare to be careless” (p. 411, gloss in original). This is all very good. However, Johnston and Wang leave unexplained the puzzle of what this could mean: how can the noble be cautious or circumspect about things that he cannot see or hear? Translating the *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 was not part of their remit, but that work often answers questions that puzzled Zhu Xi’s disciples as much as they puzzle us. Regarding the lines I label “a1” and “b1,” Zhu Xi states, “The former verse [a1] explains preserving the original state of the Heavenly principle; the latter verse [b1] explains restraining human desires at the point that they sprout.”³⁸ Zhu Xi then explains that ““where one does

³⁷ Ibid., p. 142.

³⁸ *Zhuzi yulei* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1986), vol. 4, p. 1503, line 3.

not hear' and 'where one does not see' do not refer to closing one's eyes or covering one's ears; they are simply the point at which [a2] 'joy and anger, sorrow and happiness have not yet arisen.'³⁹ According to the moral psychology that Zhu Xi extracts from the *Zhongyong*, humans have an original state of equilibrium, called "the centre" (中; the state described in [a2]), which they must preserve by maintaining an attitude of reverence (*jing*). But once we see and hear things, we are drawn into the world of physical temptations. At that point, we must make a conscious effort to monitor our reactions. (*Mengzi* 6A15 is the source of this part of the model.) If we successfully root out any selfish desires as they sprout, we achieve "harmony" (和; the state described in [b2]). Intuitively, what Zhu Xi is saying is that we have to start out by preparing ourselves for our encounters with the world by having an attitude of reverent focus on our ethical inclinations. But once we see and hear potential temptations, we must then self-monitor our reactions. Consequently, the parts I have labelled "a" in the quotation above correspond to one another, as do the parts I have labelled "b." (I think Johnston and Wang see all this. I'm merely suggesting that it might be worth helping the typical reader see it too.)

Chapter 13 of the *Zhongyong* emphasizes the importance of treating others as one would like to be treated oneself. For Zhu Xi, this implicitly draws a contrast between the Confucian Way, which is grounded in feelings that are "commonplace and not far removed from people," as opposed to the practices advocated by Buddhists, which are "lofty, remote and difficult to practise" (p. 431). This has implications for government, because the wise ruler governs people by appealing to the feelings he shares with them. One line of this chapter reads 故君子以人治人, which Zhu Xi's commentary glosses as, "故君子之治人也, 即以其人之道, 還治其人之身." Johnston and Wang render this, "Therefore, the noble man's (ruler's) bringing good order to others, since it is by *his* Way as a man, reflects his own good order as a person" (431, emphasis mine). The general sentiment is certainly reflective of Zhu Xi's view (and that of the *Zhongyong* itself). However, I don't think the translation of this particular line can be correct, because I cannot see how to get "reflects his own good order as a person" out of 還治其人之身. Presumably, Johnston and Wang are reading 還 as huán, "to give back," rather than hái, "also." This seems forced to me already; 即 . . . 還 . . . is a coordinating sentence pattern. Furthermore, even if they are right about 還, I would expect the clause to read 還其人之治身, in order to get the meaning they suggest. I think the line simply means, "Therefore, when the noble man brings order to people, it is precisely by means of the Way of people that he orders them." This fits in with the general sense of the chapter, which is that the wise ruler only expects of people the feelings and motivations that are already "hard-wired" into them (if you will forgive the anachronism).

Although I have offered some critical opinions, Johnston and Wang's translation still stands as a significant achievement that should be on the shelf of every serious scholar of Chinese thought. To quote the *Zhongyong*, "There is no one who does not

³⁹ Ibid., p. 1499, line 6.

eat and drink, but few are able to appreciate the flavours.”⁴⁰ So it has been with the *Daxue* and *Zhongyong* themselves: they have been read by countless students for two millennia in China and for more than a century in the West, but few have really been able to savour their significance. Johnston and Wang have produced a translation intended for “someone who intends to make a detailed study of these two tracts,” not the casual reader but the “hundredth man” (in Legge’s memorable phrase), who approaches the texts as “a pilgrim and learner, who would listen attentively to the text unfolding itself through insider interpretations and figure out what he and his community can learn from it.”⁴¹ In this, they have succeeded admirably.

⁴⁰ *Zhongyong* 4 (Zhu Xi’s numbering). Translation mine. Cf. Johnston and Wang, p. 415.

⁴¹ The quotations are from p. 11, p. 12 (quoting from Norman J. Giradot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002], p. 62), and p. 15 (quoting from Wang Hui, *Translating Chinese Classics in a Colonial Context: James Legge and His Two Versions of the Zhongyong* [Bern: Peter Lang, 2008], p. 15).