



Conclusion

Our previous chapter, Chap. 8, offered something like a conclusion to the previous chapters in the way it showed how the previous chapters can each be extended to further illustrate the importance of the connection between psychology and philosophy. But, of course, other philosophers have stressed such a connection inasmuch as they have brought cognitive psychology to bear on issues of epistemology, philosophy of mind, and even metaphysics. The present book uses psychology in a very different way or, perhaps one should say, it uses a very different kind of psychology, psychology as concerned with human emotion and human development moral and otherwise. One could say that the kind of psychology evident in these pages is a kind of humanistic psychology or that it is an instance of personality psychology, but call it what you will, it is and has been very different from the kind of psychology analytic philosophers tend to draw on for philosophical purposes.

In general, analytic philosophers are quite uncomfortable with too much digging around in or with emotion, and I expect many of them will or would be uncomfortable with the methods and many of the conclusions of the present study. The earliest chapters of this book bring together Chinese and Western philosophy in a way that sees more importance in Chinese thought than analytic philosophers have ever been willing to grant. (Except, of course, that my philosophical training was analytic and that training shows in the way I argue for my philosophical views.) But if

analytic philosophers read and can somehow bring themselves to take seriously what I say in Chaps. 2 and 4 of this book, they may begin to recognize that they can learn from Chinese thought and that they can learn as philosophers from exploring phenomena like emotion and emotional empathy that have been given very little place in previous analytic philosophy. We are all living in a larger world today. There is and will be increasing pressure on analytic philosophers and Western philosophers more generally to pay attention to philosophical ideas coming from China. That sociological fact has to do with the political and economic realities of China's increasing power in the world. China now has the ability and the will to *fund* philosophical exchanges and conferences in a way that is increasingly unavailable in the West. There will be that sort of reason, then, for future philosophers East and West to pay more attention to Chinese thought than has been paid previously by analytic philosophers and by Westernizing Chinese philosophers. But there are abundant philosophical reasons as well. The arguments of the present book's Chap. 2 are intended, in part, to show skeptics about Chinese thought that such thought has in fact a great deal to teach philosophers. My *The Philosophy of Yin and Yang* and the now-completed extension of that work entitled *A Larger Yin-Yang Philosophy: From Mind to Cosmic Harmony* both seek to show this on a much larger scale. But the present book offers a substantial initial installment on such an effort of persuasion, and its multifaceted attempt to bring philosophy into connection with empathy-and-emotion-focused psychology will also, I hope, convince philosophers to pay more attention to this vivid and relatively rare way of bringing psychology and philosophy together.

Finally let me put aside this book's specific attempt to bring together psychology and philosophy and address in very general terms the question of how we should be doing philosophy in present-day circumstances. (I am indebted here to stimulating discussion with Zhang Hanzhou.) I have just said that the West needs to pay more attention to traditional Chinese philosophical ideas and concepts. But I would also like to say something directly and very pointedly to Chinese thinkers. Right now and over the recent past, Chinese philosophical thought has largely been divided between two groups: on the one hand, those who want to use Western models and techniques of philosophy rather than make any appeal to the traditions of Chinese philosophical thought in their doing of philosophy; on the other, those who think intellectual integrity and/or loyalty to Chinese tradition means avoiding all the Westernizing and all attempts at

contemporary philosophizing in favor of historical scholarship concerning the great Chinese philosophical classics. But the latter group ignore the fact that those great classics, for example, the works of Mengzi and Wang Yangming, actually do philosophy and don't limit themselves to or engage mainly in historical scholarship. The other, Westernizing group in effect abandon any attempt to revive or revitalize the Chinese philosophical tradition; they in effect give up on Chinese philosophy and cede the field to Western philosophy.

But if Mengzi and Wang Yangming were doing something worthwhile, then it makes sense to hold that it is worthwhile doing philosophy in the present age—unless one holds that all possible or relevant philosophical insight and understanding was exhausted by the earlier philosophizing. To think that we must limit ourselves to historical and comparative scholarship is to treat the earlier classics like sacred religious texts and to regard present-day thinkers as incapable of doing anything nearly as philosophically interesting or important as what the earlier thinkers did. Such self-reflecting pessimism seems totally unwarranted, a matter of mostly negative faith that denies the possibility of our being inspired by philosophers like Mengzi and Wang Yangming to produce comparable forward-looking work for our time. (This form of pessimism also, very implausibly, denies the relevance of our greater present-day knowledge of psychology to issues in philosophy.) On the other hand, those Chinese thinkers who don't think they should draw on Chinese traditions but rather look to the West for philosophical inspiration, also pessimistically give up on any attempt to revitalize their own traditional philosophizing and make it relevant to the present.

However, Chap. 2 of the present book and the two large books on yin and yang that I have written suggest a third path, a middle path between the two pessimistic extremes just described. Both extremes tell us in their different ways to give up on Chinese philosophy as philosophy, but my work indicates how much we can learn from traditional Chinese ideas and represents as a whole an argument for integrating Chinese and Western philosophy in a foundational way: that is, in a way that goes beyond historical scholarship and philosophical comparisons toward a real philosophy or mode of philosophizing that bridges Chinese and Western thought on a wide range of fundamental and current issues. I recommend this project to both Chinese and Western thinkers as a much better option than the alternative forms of pessimism embodied in the exclusive interest in Chinese historical scholarship and in the abandonment of China for

Western philosophical models that between them now predominate on the intellectual scene in China. It is time for a change.

If philosophers take up this project, then it will at one and the same time serve as a major corrective to Western thought and a revitalization of Chinese thought. If what I have said in this book and elsewhere is on the right track, then Western thought with its obsessive foundational emphasis on pure reason—an emphasis to be found in Plato, Kant, and the entrenched idea of “the mind” as separable from emotion—has gone philosophically far astray. The Chinese tradition offers a superior alternative if only the West will listen, and if the West does listen it will move, have to move, toward Chinese thought. If one accepts that, then one already recognizes the value of Chinese thought for today and for the future, and that fact, that point of view, will make it clear and obvious that there is a better alternative available to the opposed pessimisms that pervade current Chinese philosophical thinking. Both Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy need to be wrenched from their accustomed assumptions and brought together in a deeper, more synoptic, and more interesting way than either tradition has anticipated. I believe this constitutes an unprecedented opportunity not only for Chinese and Western thought but for philosophy itself.

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